

The Iraqi Kurdish Novel, 1970-2011: A Genetic-Structuralist Approach

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Abstract

This thesis explores the emergence and development of the Iraqi Kurdish novel between 1970 and 2011, aiming to demonstrate that it engages with political discourses, and that the political situation influenced the themes and structural development of the novel. It will seek to elucidate why, when we examine the history of Kurdish literature over the last fifty years, the first point that may attract our attention is its emergence from the political events. Based on this notion the current study has been divided into three historical phases; 1970-1991, 1991-2003 and 2003-2011. A chapter has been dedicated to each stage, examining two novels from each period, one from the Soranî and one from the Behdînî dialect.

Chapter Two discusses the historical background of Iraqi Kurdistan and its influence on the emergence of the novel. Chapter One has been allocated to establishing the methodological background of the textual analysis, which has adopted Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralist theory. Such a theory, I will argue, proves helpful in order to discover the link between socio-political conditions and the form of literary works within a society, as Goldmann himself tried to do through his theoretical approach. Chapter Six discusses the results of the study.

The thesis demonstrates how the political situation has formed the Iraqi Kurdish novel in terms of both formal and thematic structures, examining the notions of both the 'hero' and the 'world vision' in the novels. It explores the reasons behind the dominant tragic world vision in the first stage, the hopeless worldview in the second, and the self-critical vision in the third phase. In addition, it examines the problematic nature of the hero in the novels, from their emergence until 2011.

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Transcription

Kurdish Alphabets				
Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ق	-		ق	q
ک	a		ک	k
ی	i		گ	g
ب	b		ل	l
پ	p		پ	! ,
ت	t		م	m
ج	c		ن	n
چ	ç		و	u, w (semi-
ح	h		ۆ	consonant)
خ	x		وو	o
د	d		ه	û
ر	r		ه	h
ڕ	rr		ی	e
ز	z		ئ	î, y (semi-
ژ	j			consonant)
س	s			ê
س	ş			
ش	,			
خ	x			
ف	f			
ف	v			

Chapter One

Introductory Chapter

The current study belongs to the branch of the sociology of literature, particularly the sociology of the novel. It tackles the development of the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan from 1970-2011, under the impact of political conditions. Although this critical approach has emerged over the past several decades in European and American literary criticism, it is still new in Kurdish literary criticism. The current study will be the first academic study of the Iraqi Kurdish novel in this field, and it will show that there is a relationship between the development of the Kurdish novel and Kurdish society itself.

Kurdish literature, as is the case with the literature of other nations, reflects social, economic, cultural and political conditions. However, the division of Kurdistan into four different countries, led to the division of Kurdish literature (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, p.135), such that each part of Kurdistan has founded and developed its own literature according to its social and political conditions. Thus, Hashem Ahmadzadeh (ibid, p. 176) concludes that “[i]n studying the Kurdish novel, the divided character of Kurdistan must be taken into consideration”. The present study explores how socio-political changes have shaped the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan in terms of both thematic and formal structures.

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of the political situation on the economic conditions, and then to examine the influence of both the political and economic conditions on the theme and structure of the Iraqi Kurdish novel from 1970 to 2011, in both Soranî and Behdînî (Kurmançî) dialects. It therefore adopts theoretical and methodological approaches which consider analyzing novels in terms of both the technical structure and the context (socio-historical structure). For that the principal theoretical framework of the study is Lucien Goldmann’s genetic structuralist approach. Goldmann’s approach first deals with a literary work as a coherent and an integrated whole (he called this process ‘comprehension’) and then connects these artistic structures of the creative work to a specific social context of contemporary importance (this he called ‘explanation’). This means that Goldmann deals with the literary text in terms of both formal and thematic structures, unlike

other approaches which appeared after his own genetic structuralism, such as the colonial and post-colonial, and the nation and narration, approaches. These latter focus on context only and pay less attention to the form of the literary creation.

Another reason for choosing genetic structuralism as a framework for analysis is that this method is an approach which is widespread in its use in Middle Eastern literary criticism, particularly in Arabic and Turkish literature. As Iraqi Kurdish literature forms a part of the wider Middle Eastern literature, it seems appropriate to test the genetic structuralist approach in the field of Kurdish literary criticism, particularly as Arabic literature may be considered the nearest foreign literature to that of Iraqi Kurdistan. The Arab critic Jamil Hamdaoui (2011) points out that a large number of Arab critics and academicians, particularly Moroccan critics, accept the concept and application of the genetic structuralist approach.¹ Similarly, in Turkish literature, for example, even looking only at academic studies published after 2005, we can see at least ten which used genetic structuralism as an approach.² However, in Iraqi Kurdish literature the current study will be the first attempt to test this theory.

¹ For a list of the Arabic studies which had applied genetic structuralism in various literary genres up until 2008, see

Hamdaoui, J., 2011. '*Al-Manhaj al-Bunyawi al-Takwini 'inda Abd al-Rahmān Bo'ali*' (Abd al-Rahmān Bo'ali and Genetic Structuralist Approach). *Webpage Arabblogs*. Available at: www.arabblogs.com/archive/2011/6/1335757.html. Accessed 18/10/2013.

² The following is a list of the academic studies published after 2005 which used genetic structuralism as an approach to study Turkish literature, arranged by myself: 1) Atalay, I. and Er, A., 2013.

'Oluşumsal Yapısalcilik Bağlamında "Sorunsal Kahraman" Ve "Dünya Görüşü" Kavramları: Bernard-Marie Koltes'in *Bati Rihtimi (Quai Ouest)*' (Concepts of Worldview and Problematic Hero in the Context of Genetic Structuralism: *Quay West* by Bernard-Marie Koltes). *HUMANITAS International Journal of Social Sciences*. No. 2. Autumn 2013. Pp 27-47. Available at:

<http://humanitas.nku.edu.tr/article/download/5000105946/5000099056>. Accessed 23/04/2014;

2) Beşe, A., 2006. 'Clifford Odets'in Awake and Sing! Adli Yapıtına Oluşumsal Yapısalci Bir Yaklaşım' (A Constructivist Structural Approach to Clifford Odets's Awake and Sing). *KKEFD/OKKEF*. N. 14. Pp. 143-158. Available at: <http://e-dergi.atauni.edu.tr/ataunikkefd/article/download/1021004124/1021003948>. Accessed

12/05/2015; 3) Gökçimen, A., 2006. 'Berdinazar Hudaynazarov'un *Kumlular* Romanı Üzerine Toplumbilimsel Bir İnceleme' (A Sociological Study on the *Kumlular* novel of Berdinazar Hudaynazarov). *Journal of Modern Turkish Studies /Ankara University*. Vol. 3 No. 4. Pp. 25-35. Available at: [http://mtad.humanity.ankara.edu.tr/III-4_Aralik2006/oz3-42006/54_3-](http://mtad.humanity.ankara.edu.tr/III-4_Aralik2006/oz3-42006/54_3-4oz_gokcimen.htm)

[4oz_gokcimen.htm](http://mtad.humanity.ankara.edu.tr/III-4_Aralik2006/oz3-42006/54_3-4oz_gokcimen.htm). Accessed 23/04/2014; 4) Güvenç, A. Ö., 2014. *Yaşar Kemal'in İnce Memed Romanı Üzerine Oluşumsal Yapısalci Bir İnceleme* (Yaşar Kemal's Novel *Thin Mammad*, A Study on Genetic Structuralist Approach). Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı. Available at:

<http://www.nadirkitap.com/yasar-kemal-in-ince-memed-romani-uzerine-olusumsal-yapisalci->

Although many different critical approaches have been developed since Goldmann's theory, for a society without a nation-state which has started serious steps towards self-determination, such as Kurdish society within Iraqi Kurdistan, it would be useful to test such a theory as Goldmann's, which considers both technical and socio-historical structures. It is clear that Goldmann's theory "is located firmly within the third conception of the relationship between literature and society ... the question of how literature arises in society" (Routh, in Routh and Wolff, ed., 1977, p. 151). Such a theory will be helpful in order to discover the link between the development of the society and the form of its literary works, as Goldmann himself tried to do through his theoretical approach.

In his methodology of the new European novel, Goldmann linked the development of the European novel to the development of bourgeois society. However, as the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan is a postcolonial novel, development of the Kurdish novel is linked to political discourse more than to the development of bourgeois society. Because of the revolutionary and colonial circumstances of the Kurdish people, the bourgeoisie in Iraqi Kurdistan society is not the same as the European capitalist bourgeoisie. Rather, it is that bourgeoisie which Frantz Fanon called 'national bourgeoisie', a term which he used to distinguish the class benefitting from colonialism, which, in comparison to the peasant class, had a weak awareness of national consciousness. Fanon (2004, p. 98) argues that "the national bourgeoisie, which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime, is an underdeveloped bourgeoisie". In terms of the role and activity of this class in the community:

The national bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries is not geared to production, invention, creation, or work. All its energy is channelled

[bir-inceleme-ahmet-ozgur-guven-kitap4953983.html](http://www.academia.edu/9551246/OLU%C5%9EUMSAL_YAPISALCI_B%C4%B0R_YAKLA%C5%9EIM_CEM%C4%B0LE_and_CENG%C4%B0Z_AYTMATOV_AN_APPROACH_GENETIC_STRUCTUREALIST_JAMILA_and_CHINGHIZ_AITMATOV). Accessed 20/02/2015; 5) Güzel, B., 2014. 'Oluşumsal Yapısalcı Bir Yaklaşım: Cemile & Cengiz Aytmatov' (An Approach Genetic Structuralist: Jamila & Chinghiz Aitmatov). *Academia* Website. Available at: http://www.academia.edu/9551246/OLU%C5%9EUMSAL_YAPISALCI_B%C4%B0R_YAKLA%C5%9EIM_CEM%C4%B0LE_and_CENG%C4%B0Z_AYTMATOV_AN_APPROACH_GENETIC_STRUCTUREALIST_JAMILA_and_CHINGHIZ_AITMATOV. Accessed 13/02/2016; and 6) Tiken, S., 2009. 'Fakir Baykurt'un Yılanların Öcü Adlı Romanına Oluşumsal Yapısalcı Bir Yaklaşım' (A Genetic-Structuralistic Approach to Fakir Baykurt's Novel *Yılanların Öcü*). *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*. Vol.13 N.1. pp 43-56. Available at: http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/YENI%20TURK%20EDEBIYATI/servet_tiken_fakir_baykurt_olusumsal_yapisalci_yaklasim.pdf. Accessed 23/04/2014.

into intermediary activities. Networking and scheming seem to be its underlying vocation. The national bourgeoisie has the psychology of a businessman, not that of a captain of industry. (ibid)

As this type of national bourgeoisie corresponds to the Kurdish bourgeoisie, the present study will take the political factors into account with regard to the development of the Kurdish novel, i.e. I will apply the genetic structuralist approach in a mode which is consistent with the social conditions of the Kurdish community. This will involve a consideration of Kurdish society as an eastern society and a part of the postcolonial community, an examination of how changes in society, economy and the form and theme of literary works may be linked to the political situation of the society.

When we look at the history of contemporary Kurdish literature, we can clearly see its emergence from the 'depth of political events'. The reason is the historical, geographical, social and political background of the Kurdish situation and the division of the Kurdish people between four different states (Yûsiv, 2011, p.10). This means that in the Kurdish case one can take advantage of Goldmann's notion of the development of the European novel only by relating the development of the Kurdish novel to the development of the socio-political conditions as a general hypothesis framework plan. However, for the practical body of the study, after examining the technical aspects of the novel, it seems useful to explore a homology between the structure of the consciousness of an author's social group and the structure of his literary works, following Goldmann's main methodology in *The Hidden God*.

By using this methodology one can observe the changes which have occurred in the formal structures of the Kurdish novels as a result of the changes in socio-political contexts. These changes can then be used as mediating factors to explore the nature of the writers' world vision in each historical stage (see the methodological sub-section, p. 30). So, I will argue that the changes of socio-political conditions have changed the world view and formal structure of the Iraqi Kurdish novel, and that this can be elucidated by relating it to the ideology of the social classes featuring in the samples in this study. These different ideologies can be understood with reference to the changing situation in Iraqi Kurdish society during the different historical phases considered in the study. In other words, the present study explores

how the novels written in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1970 construct fiction from socio-political events.

This study provides a basis for further studies in this field of Kurdish literature i.e. the relationship between novel, society and political discourse. It also shows the development of the Iraqi Kurdish novel through different historical stages. In addition, it may encourage researchers on the one hand to undertake further academic study of other literary genres, such as poetry, short story and drama, within the framework of genetic structuralism; and on the other hand, to study the Kurdish novel as it appears in other parts of Kurdistan.

Scope of the Study

Politically Iraqi Kurdistan has passed through three important historical stages since 1958, the beginning of Republican rule in Iraq. Each of them has had its particular influence in terms of politics, sociology and economics. Indeed, by 1958 “the situation in the Middle East *in general* was very different from that of the years immediately preceding” (Pelletiere, 1984, p. 115, *italics added*). For Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan the occurrence of the July 14 1958 Revolution changed the system of government from a Monarchy to Republican rule.

Georgis Fat-hullah (1998, pp. 23-24) argues that the 1958 Revolution shattered the restrictions imposed on the Kurdish struggle by breaking the ‘international alliance’ against Kurdish people, which was led by the Baghdad Alliance. The Revolution guaranteed the immediate demands of the Kurdish national party in exchange for its support for General Abd al-Karim Qasim, who released the members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) who had been imprisoned. Furthermore, Qasim halted the prosecution of Kurds, allowed the issuance of the Kurdish party’s newspaper and other newspapers and ordered the return from exile of the Kurdish party’s leader Mulla Mustafa Barzani and his comrades. However, Fat-hullah (*ibid*) stresses that the most important achievement for the Kurdish party in 1958 was that the new Iraqi government, headed by Qasim, approved an Article in the Interim Constitution, which recognized the equality of the two peoples, Arab and Kurdish, in their rights within the same country - for the first time in Iraqi history. It can be seen

that these different events in this historical stage have had repercussions on every aspect of Kurdish society, including literature.

This stage continues up until the Kurdish uprising against the Iraqi regime in 1991. The most striking feature of this phase is that the Kurdish people politically, alongside the above-mentioned achievements, faced major challenges and difficulties, such as mass murder, the process of Arabizing the Kurdish areas,³ and the conducting of genocide (Anfal) against the Iraqi Kurds,⁴ in addition to the repercussions of widespread illiteracy among the people. This created a serious social and economic crisis, which had a deep influence on Kurdish society.⁵ In terms of literary works, as a result of a certain freedom of expression in this phase, a number of magazines and newspapers were published in Iraqi Kurdistan, such as the newspapers *Xebat* (Struggle), *Hawkari* (Co-operation) *Al-Nur* (The Illumination), and the magazines *Beyan* (Declaration), *Kurdistan* and *Rizgari* (Freedom). These journals participated in the evolution of the literary movement in the region. In addition, the establishment of a few academic organizations, such as the Kurdish department in the University of Baghdad and the establishment of the University of Silêmanî, alongside the appearance of a number of intellectual organizations, such as The Union of Kurdish Writers, had their influence on the development of Kurdish literature in Iraq (Botanî, 2007, p. 60).

Moreover, the Kurdish writers in this stage took advantage of the translation movement in Arabic literature. In other words, the Kurds' contact with 'modernity and

³ Arabization was an active process pursued by the Baathist government to convert the national identity of any nation to an Arabic national identity. There are various forms of Arabization; such as colonization of the land of non-Arabs (for example Kurdish land), assimilation of Kurds, Turkmans and Assyrians, and deportation of a small group of other nations to live within Arabic society (Aziz, 2013). Although Beth Osborne Daponte, et al. (1997, p. 1259) have a narrower definition of Arabization, by saying "Arabization involved relocating Arabs from southern to northern Iraq to live near and work on oil fields", it reveals the main purpose of Arabization, which was to control the rich Kurdish oil areas.

⁴ After the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the Iraqi regime began to launch an attack against the Kurdish people in the Kurdish region in 1987, on the pretext of crushing the peshmerga or Kurdish nationalist forces (Hassanpour, 1994, p.6). The term 'Anfal' is an Islamic term, referring to the spoils of money and plunder from the wars with the infidels, as well as being the name of the eighth Surah of the Holy Qur'an. Although the term is an Islamic term, the Iraqi regime's using it against the Kurdish people was against the Islamic Sharia, because according to the Holy Quran it is only permissible against the infidels in case of war between Muslims and infidels. As Refiq Şwanî (2002, p. 8) points out, the Iraqi government used this term in complete contradiction to Islamic law, as part of a policy of 'genocide' against Kurdish nationalism in 1988. Since then, this term in Kurdish society has referred to 'genocide', dispossession, disappearances, being buried alive, and to those whose fate is unknown.

⁵ The most important episodes have been discussed in the General Background chapter of this study.

its cradle' was not directly from Europe, but through the sovereign countries i.e. Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, p. 155). Ahmadzadeh (ibid, p. 156) argues that although the number of translated books after 1958 reached about sixty-two, most of which were short stories, the translations were mostly indirect i.e. "from the original language to another language and later into Kurdish". Furthermore, according to Kakemem Botani (2007, p. 39), in the mid-1960s European post-modern literary works and books on the new socialist realism were translated into Arabic. They were mostly published in Beirut, and then arrived in Iraqi bookshops. The young Kurdish writers used to read these books in order to bring innovation into their own literary works. The Kurdish poets were first influenced by these foreign literary works, and then the short story writers. However, the most important episode which concerns the present study in this stage is the emergence of the novel in the region. This took place in 1970, as a new genre appearing under harsh socio-political conditions.

The Kurdish novel continued its development, despite the unstable socio-political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan during the second historical stage, which began with the Kurdish mass uprising throughout Iraqi Kurdistan in March 1991, and ended with the US war against Iraq in 2003. After the Kurdish uprising in 1991, Kurdish mass migration occurred because of the Kurds' previous experience with Saddam Hussein's regime; for example his attacking Halabja (a small town in Iraqi Kurdistan) with chemical weapons, and the Anfal campaign, or the Kurdish genocide, which was launched against the Kurds by Saddam Hussein's government in 1988. According to Jasim Tawfiq Xoşnaw (2004, p. 103) approximately three million Kurds migrated to the Turkish and Iranian borders. Subsequently Iraqi Kurdistan was protected from Iraqi attacks by United Nations Decision Number 688 on April 4 1991, and then by the 'no fly zone' imposed on the Iraqi Air Force by the Coalition Forces (particularly the USA, Britain and France), called 'Operation Provide Comfort', on April 7 1991 (ibid, p. 62).⁶

Despite the protection from Saddam's regime afforded to the Iraqi Kurds in this stage, they faced other crises. Politically, on the one hand, they did not have an official federal system; they were simply protected by the UN from Iraqi government

⁶ According to Xoşnaw (2004, p. 62) this Iraqi Kurdish region which was protected by the UN consisted of 65% of Iraqi Kurdistan, lying north of the latitude 36 degrees.

attacks (Amêdî, 2013, p. 53). On the other hand, for the first time there was an election, held on May 19 1992; “this regional election led to the formation of the first Kurdistan National Assembly and the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government” (KRG, 2014).⁷ However, several internal political problems occurred, such as the Iraqi Kurdish civil war (Birakujî) (1994-1997). This civil war led to the division of Iraqi Kurdistan between two major parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (Leezenberg, 2005, p. 632). Subsequently the Iraqi Kurdish people suffered an exacerbation of existing infrastructure problems, in terms of roads, schooling and freedom of expression (Al-Atrushî, 2000, p. 150). Economically, as a result of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1991, the United Nations Security Council imposed an economic blockade on Iraq; at the same time Saddam’s regime prohibited the Kurdish region from receiving ‘basic foodstuff’ and medical supplies. Consequently Iraqi Kurdistan suffered from a double economic blockade (Xoşnaw, 2004, p. 70).

During this stage, these problems had their influence on literary production in Iraqi Kurdistan, and this was particularly the case for the novel. In terms of quantity, in the Behdînan area between 1991 and 2003 only six novels were published.⁸ But in the Soranî area, after the end of civil war in 1997, the Kurdish novel experienced a conspicuous improvement in terms of both quantity and techniques.⁹ Since 2003, numerous novels have been written and published throughout Iraqi Kurdistan; for example, in the Behdînan area alone, six novels were published in 2005.¹⁰

The third stage began with the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime in 2003. When compared with the two former stages, the political changes at this stage led to

⁷ See the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG’s) website, <http://www.krg.org/p/p.aspx?l=12&p=229>

⁸ The novels published in the Behdînan dialect during this stage were: 1. *Gulistan û Şev* (Gulistan and Night) by Hassan Silêvaney, 2. *Kurê Zinarê Serbilind* (Son of Proud Zinar) by Sidqî Hîrorî, 3. *Evîn û Şewat* (Love and Fire) by Sidqî Hîrorî, 4. *Geriyay li Babê Berze* (Search for the Missing Father) by Enwer Muhammad Tahir, 5. *Ew Aşê Derav lê Wergêray* (The Mill Whose Watercourse has been Moved) by Naji Tîhâ Berwarî, 6. *Buhijîn* (Assimilation) the second volume by Nafi’ Akrey (prepared for publication by Muhammad Selîm Siwarî).

⁹ See Chapters Two and Four of the present study.

¹⁰ The six novels published in Behdînan during 2005 were; 1. *Sotîngeh* (The Holocaust) by Bilind Muhammad, 2. *Janên Sînahî* (The Visions’ Pain) by Tehsîn Navîşkî, 3. *Bîst Sal û Êvarek* (Twenty Years and an Evening) by Sebrî Silêvanî, 4. *Dawiya Şervanekî* (The End of a Fighter) by Ismet Muhammad Bedel, 5. *Viyan di Demekê Jandar da* (Love in a Painful Time) by Muhsin Abd al-Rahman, and 6. *Gund* (The Village) by Muhammad Salîm Siwarî.

a burgeoning of the novel. A series of changes that occurred in politics in the region had their impact on Iraqi Kurdish literature, particularly on the novel. Iraqi Kurds had gained psychological stability, they no longer feared attacks by the Iraqi regime. The new Iraqi constitution had guaranteed the Kurds national rights and placed their federal semi-independent regional government on a new footing.¹¹

The Kurdish region had developed economically, and when the Kurdistan Parliament approved the law on the extraction of oil in August 6 2007, for the first time the Kurdish people had control over their own natural resources such as oil and gas (Amêdî, 2013, pp. 199-200). Furthermore, the emergence of the opposition (*Bizutnewey Gorran* - The Movement for Change), in the Kurdistan parliamentary elections in April 2009 had a major influence upon every aspect of life and led to a reduction in the power of the two main parties in the Kurdistan regional government.¹² In addition, the development of education and the increase in the number of both private and public universities were crucially important events during this stage. Consequently, the Iraqi Kurdish novel flourished, suggesting that political emancipation was accompanied by an upsurge in literary production and development.

¹¹ The Kurdistan Regional Government, for the first time, officially took part in the Iraqi elections of January 30, 2005. As for the regional elections, Katzman (2010) indicates that "After the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) elections of June 12 2005, the Kurdistan National Assembly (that is, the parliament of the Kurdistan Regional Government) selected Masoud Barzani to be "President of Kurdistan." This reflected Barzani's strategy of shoring up his regional base in the north rather than focusing on the central government. Elections for a four-year government were held on December 15, 2005".

¹² For more information concerning the emergence of the movement for change in Iraqi Kurdistan see: 1) http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/8553321.stm , and 2) <http://www.gorran.net/Content.aspx?LinkID=112&Action=2>

Theory and Methodology

1. Theory

Genetic Structuralism and the Kurdish Novel

A number of methodological approaches and theoretical schools have appeared to explain four basic approaches in the field of literary studies; writer-, text-, reader- and context-oriented approaches. Some methods are oriented towards the writer, i.e. concerned with the biography of writers and the social context of literary works. By contrast, others, such as formalism, structuralism and post-structuralism, put emphasis on the text and see the text as self-enclosed. In addition, some approaches have appeared which make the reader the centre of the research, such as reader-response criticism and reception theory. The fourth group of critical approaches is those which focus on context (context-oriented approaches), such as feminist literary theory and Marxist literary theory (Klarer, 2004, pp. 73-74).

Genetic structuralism is a context-oriented approach; it links the process of the creation of the literary work to the 'mental structure of a certain group' in society. With the structuralist approach one can take the writer's consciousness of a specific literary tradition in a particular kind of society into consideration. The importance of testing this approach on the Iraqi Kurdish novel is that it allows the researcher to observe the development of the Kurdish novel in terms of the form and content of the novel within the framework of the development of socio-political conditions. In other words, genetic structuralism is concerned with both the internal unity of a text and the socio-political context of the work, i.e. it stresses the literary work as a 'significant whole'. Thus, it may be an appropriate approach for an exploration of the development of the Iraqi Kurdish novel under different socio-political circumstances, rather than other critical approaches which are concerned with the relationship between the novel and the context without paying sufficient attention to the form, such as nationalism and postcolonialism.

There is no doubt that there is a relationship between literature and nations; this relation reaches such a degree that some scholars link the emergence of a nation with its literature. Aldous Huxley writes "novelists and poets are 'to a very large extent' the inventors of their nations" (quoted in Ahmadzadeh, 2003, p. 15). Probably the most famous scholar who stresses the link between novel and nation is Benedict

Anderson, particularly in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, which has become an influential work in the field of the analysis of the novel's role in the creation of nations. He (2006, p. 36) links the role of the novel in the emergence of nations with 'print-capitalism'. However, this approach pays more attention to contextual issues, without giving any clear explanation of formal structure of the novels.

Hashem Ahmadzadeh in his book *Nation and Novel* has convincingly discussed the link between Kurdish nationalism and the Kurdish novel. He considers whether the role which the novel played in the formation of European communities (nations) could be the same in Kurdish society. In his study Ahmadzadeh (2003, p. 18) argues that contemporary technology such as satellite television broadcasting, has had more of an influence in developing the consciousness of a nation state than has the novel. An example of this is Medya TV's role in shaping the concept of a Kurdish nation in "Greater Kurdistan" during the 1990s.

Consequently studying Kurdish literary works, particularly the novel, within the framework of any literary theory or school of literary criticism may not be an easy process. It may even be difficult to deal with colonial and postcolonial theories in examining Kurdish literature. The reason is that after the end of the period of European colonization, the Kurds were colonized by neighbouring countries, whereas "the traditional meaning of colony refers to overseas colonized people, to which the Kurds do not belong" (Hussein, 1985, p. 51). Thus, to what extent researchers can accept these sovereign countries as colonizers, is an unsolved debate. Thereby the attempt to test any literary theory or school needs great care.

For this reason I will use the theory of genetic structuralism with care, since I realize that it is not always easy to find direct similarities between Kurdish society in the three mentioned historical stages (before 1991, 1991-2003 and post-2003) and French society, in which Goldmann explores the development of the *nouveau roman*.

Kurdish society had been politically colonized, and socially was under the control of *Aghas* (tribal leaders) and *Sheikhs* until 1991. Politically, Iraqi Kurdistan had only slightly developed until it gained the status of a federal region in the early 2000s. However, the tribe, society and religion still, to some degree, had an influence on individual behaviour in this region. Economically, as 'Arif Hîto (2011, p. 225) argues,

Kurdish society has not passed through the real capitalist stage and the era of the aristocratic class; however, there are upper and lower classes, and the *Agha* system, resulting in a distinct difference between rich and poor.

In contrast, France was the biggest colonial power after Britain. French society participated in the industrial revolution, and as Goldmann (1975) argues, it has passed through three capitalist stages: 'cartel capitalism' 1880-1914; 'crisis capitalism' 1918-1939; and 'consumer capitalism' post-1945. Consequently, according to Goldmann, in French society the appearance or disappearance of the hero in the novel is linked to economic life. Thereby:

the novel with a problematic hero, corresponded to the liberal economy...the novel of a non-biographical character, corresponded to societies in which the liberal market, and, with it, individualism, had already been superseded.

(Goldmann, 1975, p. 29)

Moreover, in Kurdish society one cannot see writers of the likes of André Malraux, who agreed with radical solutions to capitalist society's problems in the 1930s, and then rejected such solutions and accepted individual solutions. In addition, among Kurdish novels it is hard to find writers similar to Alian Robb-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute, pioneers of the *nouveau roman*. As well as this, the first Iraqi-Kurdish novel was only published in 1970, whereas, according to Goldmann, the French *nouveau roman* emerged some thirty years before.

The present study will make use of genetic structuralism as a model of literary criticism, incorporating several critical terms, such as world vision, significant structure, real consciousness and possible consciousness, which may be appropriate in the examination of the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel, offering ways of thinking about literary form and political circumstance that operate outside of the classical Marxist narrative of class struggle. However, because of the difference that exists between the French and Kurdish novels and contexts, one cannot apply genetic structuralism, and other such theories, to the Kurdish novel in exactly the same way as Goldmann did to the French novel and the works of Pascal and Racine or Malraux, Robb-Grillet and Sarraute.

We will now consider the question of why Goldmann's genetic structuralist approach has been chosen rather than other sociological approaches, such as that of Georg

Lukacs. If we compare Goldmann's genetic structuralism with the approaches of other sociologists of literature such as Lukacs, it can be argued that although Goldmann based his ideas on Lukacs' theory of the novel, he then went on to develop and refine Lukacs' concepts.

In his pre-Marxist *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukacs adheres to Hegel by accepting the novel as a 'bourgeois epic'. An epic which, dissimilar to its traditional 'counterpart', uncovers the 'homelessness and alienation' of people in modern society, whereas in 'Greek classical society' people are at home in the world (Eagleton, 1981, p. 27). In addition, in his pre-Marxist work, Lukacs is interested in the hero's relationship to 'an alien world' (Orr, 1977, p. 4). In his book *The Theory of the Novel*, he indicates that the 'radical antagonism between the hero and the world' is the main feature of the novel, in contrast to 'the hero in Greek epic' (Swingewood in Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972, p. 72). However, in his post Marxian works, Lukacs's principal "concern is how the totality of the literary text reflects the social reality of a given historical epoch" (Orr, 1977, p. 4).

In *The Historical Novel*, Lukacs (1969, p. 138) argues that "the novel's manner of portrayal is *closer* to life, or rather to the normal appearance of life, than that of the drama". That means Lukacs' theory is interested in the literary 'social function in society' more than in its literary characters (Swingewood in Routh and Wolff ed., 1977, p. 136). Subsequently "[l]ike Plekhanov, Lukacs accepts a mechanical correlation between creative literature and the class structure" (Swingewood in Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972, p. 54). He is concerned with the 'external dimension' of the literary work (Hall, 1979, p.4). However, Goldmann attempts to find dialectical relations between literary work and the social group/class.

Moreover, Lukacs' touchstone of literary creation is the writer's attitude towards socialism:

It is enough that a writer takes socialism into account and does not reject it out of hand. But if he rejects socialism...he closes his eyes to the future, gives up any chance of assessing the present correctly, and loses the ability to create other than purely static works of art. (Lukacs, 1963, p. 60)

What can be observed from Goldmann's theory of genetic structuralism, is that despite the fact that his theory is established on the bases of Lukacs' pre-Marxist

and later Marxist vision of the sociology of literature, as Raymond Williams (1977, p. 53) argues, Goldmann “undertook a radical reevaluation of the ‘creative subject’”.¹³ This observation of Williams’s is a recognition of the importance of his approach in the field of the sociology of literature.

As for the concept of the problematic hero, in light of the Heideggerian idea, for Goldmann this conveys “the existentialist search for authentic values in a degraded capitalist world” (Orr, 1977, p. 34). In other words, Goldmann was influenced by the notion of the ‘problematic hero’:

But he departs from Lukacs in trying to outline his own sociological method. He rejects *mimesis* in favour of a procedure for establishing a homology of structures between literature and social consciousness. Here literature is no longer the mechanistic reflection of the consciousness of distinctive social groups, but a significant ordering of that consciousness which did not previously exist. (ibid)

It is the view of Goldmann that there is a correlation between the literary work and the social group, and this relation corresponds to the relations between the internal elements of the work and the work as a whole. That means there are homologies between the structure of the work and the mental structure (Goldmann, 1975, p. 158). Genetic structuralism:

[A]s science is an attempt to discover *necessary* relations between phenomena attempts to relate cultural works with social groups qua creative subjects proves... much more effective than any attempt to regard the individual as the true subject of creation. (ibid)

Moreover, when Goldmann analyses the internal structure of the novel, unlike Lukacs, he does not refer to its relations with the world outside of the text (Laḥmadāni, 1990, p. 66). In addition, in the genetic structuralist approach to literary works the individual only expresses the mental structure of a group, and he or she does not create a world view. Society can also possess the structure of

¹³ According to Alan Swingewood (1975, p. 24) Goldmann’s ‘collective subject’ means that genetic structuralism stresses “literature as a creative process, each literary work developing historically and organically from the conjunction of the writer’s social position and the value of his group and class”

consciousness entirely (Mayrl, 1978). Thus, for Goldmann “the greatest representative writers are those able to express the maximum potential consciousness of their class” (Routh in Routh and Wolff, ed., 1977, p. 153). Perhaps this consciousness is “the possible (‘complete’) consciousness of a social formation” (Williams, 1977, p. 197). Here, Goldmann (1976, p. 18) observes that only exceptional individuals can express the ‘collective consciousness’ more precisely than the ‘other members of the group’. That is why he says we must reverse studying the relations between the individual and the society, unlike the studies which have traditionally been done by historians. Instead we must first understand the social and ideological characteristics of a society, and then study the objective meaning of the writers' works. This will then enable us to have a better understanding of their works and their relationship with their particular social group.

Goldmann established and developed a number of specific concepts such as world vision and significant structure (Laḥmadāni, 1990, p. 66). Here, I will outline some of Goldmann’s concepts of genetic structuralism in order to further clarify the methodology of the current study:

World vision

World vision is that phenomenon which sociologists have attempted for a long time to describe ‘under the name of collective consciousness’ (Goldmann 1976, p. 15). In addition, in Goldmann’s words:

What I have called a ‘world vision’ is a convenient term for the whole complex of ideas, aspirations and feelings which links together the members of a social group ... and which opposes them to members of other social groups. (ibid, p. 17)

That means a world vision expresses what a certain social group, to which the writer belongs, wants to achieve in its conflict with the opposing group. As Alan Swingewood (1975, pp. 23-24) makes clear, “[a] world vision express ‘the whole of life’ and constitutes ‘the maximum possible awareness’ of a specific social group and class”. Jabir ‘Usfur (1998, p. 109) argues that Goldmann’s conception ‘world vision’ is an epistemological base for grasping the relationship between the parts and the whole within each structure of the cultural works of creation, including literature. On the one hand, it involves grasping the relationships between the structures of cultural

creations themselves. On the other hand, it focuses on the relationship between all of these and the comprehensive structure which governs and organizes them. Finally it involves a focus on the relationship between these structures and the historical situation for the social group or class in question.

Two other interrelated concepts are associated with this vision of the world; the first, Goldmann calls '*real consciousness*', which is confined to the awareness of the present only. It is:

The result of the limitations and deviations that the actions of other social groups and natural and cosmic factors cause class consciousness to undergo. (Goldmann, 1969, p. 118)

This kind of consciousness is associated with the problems which are experienced by the social group or class, in relation to other, conflicting classes or groups. The main feature of the stage of real consciousness is that the social group does not itself have solutions, such that it might successfully combat the problems it is facing at the hands of the opposing social class (Abdul Azeem, 1998, p. 57). A good example of real consciousness is in the period between 1975, after the collapse of the Kurdish revolution, and 1990, before the Kurdish uprising, when coupled with their poor living conditions, there was a sense of inferiority among Kurds who were living under the authority of the Baathists, and they were unable to change this reality. In addition, during the second historical stage, more precisely between 1991 and 1997, the public (poor and underprivileged) class of Kurdish people in Iraq suffered from harsh socio-economic conditions because of the civil war in Iraqi Kurdistan and the international economic blockade on Iraq. However, there was only a consciousness of such conditions, and they were not able to change them. Reflections of these themes can be observed in Kurdish novels (Chapters Three and Four of this study) in both content and formal structures.

The other concept related to a world vision is a '*possible consciousness*', which originates from real consciousness, but goes beyond it, having an awareness of the future. It is linked to perceptions which are posed by the class to solve problems and reach a degree of balance in the relations with other classes or groups. When possible consciousness reaches a degree of internal coherence, which makes a heterogeneous totality of perceptions concerning the problems which face the class

and the way of solving them, and when the degree of coherence in totality increases to create a wider and more universal structure of social perceptions, possible consciousness will become a world vision ('Usfur, 1998, p. 110). In the first stage of the Kurdish socio-political conditions, for example, real consciousness transformed into possible consciousness by resorting to revolution and uprising in order to change the reality of existence. Furthermore, by seeking another alternative to the existing government (more precisely, the two major political parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party 'KDP' and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan 'PUK') in order to eliminate administrative corruption, activate the law and to improve the economic situation, the third stage, after 2003, is another example of possible consciousness.¹⁴ The sense of injustice in the above-mentioned examples can be considered as a kind of world vision of Kurdish society in a particular historical period.

Significant structure

A significant structure is the form of content for a certain artistic work, corresponding in a functional manner to the particular group whose views and values are being articulated. The researcher attempts to describe the relation between that group and its social and natural environments to successfully provide an explanation of the work (Mayrl, 1978). As Goldmann (quoted in Swingewood, 1975, p. 23) asserts, all human activity has its own significance, all human beings are aiming to make coherent significant structures of their thoughts. Here it can be said that literary creativity as a human activity, has a privileged form and establishes coherent significant structures close to the social, political and ideological aspirations of the group. According to Swingewood (1975, pp.24- 25):

Genetic structuralism seeks to identify the significant structures within each literary work and those external to it in the group, and is in essence

¹⁴ Following the Kurdish uprising, particularly after 2003, with the defeat of the Baathist regime and the advent of freedom in Iraq, came the first experiment by the Kurds to liberate themselves and manage their own affairs after a century of struggle and conflict. This new experiment caused the division of the Kurdish people into two social classes: the public class, including peasants and revolutionaries, and the national bourgeoisie, consisting of local officials who were beneficiaries of the status quo and who thought more about their personal interest than the public interest. Awareness of this situation led to the formation of the opposition group which ultimately became the political opposition party under the name of Gorran (the Change Movement) and in February 17, 2011 in Silêmanî they led a huge mass protest against the Kurdistan regional government. However, they could not make a radical change. The emergence of the opposition bloc in parliament has had advantages for the public class.

a continual movement, a shuttling forwards and backwards from the text to the social structure of the writer's group.

In genetic structuralism we reach the significant structure through our dealings with small parts of text; however, these parts should not be neglected while we examine the holistic view of the text as a whole. This significant structure would concurrently be subject to the writer's vision of the world, which at the same time expresses the group or social class to which the writer belongs (Abd al-Azeem, 1998, p. 63).

The analytical chapters of this study show the nature of the relationships between the Kurdish writers' groups and other social groups; through understanding the small parts of each novel in the framework of the explanation of the text, this process uncovers the view of the novel as a whole.

Homology of structure

This is the relationship between the internal world of the literary work and its external world i.e. a specific social structure. What Goldmann means by a "homology of structure", is that the internal structure of a literary work bears a close parallel relation to a specific social structure" (Swingewood, 1975, p. 23). From the genetic structuralist point of view:

[T]he collective character of literary creation derives from the fact that the structures of the world of the work are homologous with the mental structures of the certain social groups or is in an intelligible relation with them, whereas on the level of content, that is to say, of the creation of the imaginary world governed by these structures, the writer has total freedom. (Goldmann, 1975, p. 159)

This means that there is a homology between the world of the work and the structure of the consciousness of the writer's social group. This notion of Goldmann's constitutes the basic hypothesis of genetic structuralism, which assumes that 'neither the individual, nor the collectivity (in the romantic sense) is the subject of the cultural creation, but the social group through the writer' (Webb, 1981, p. 42). Furthermore, the imaginary universe is the expression of the writer's individual consciousness to the collective consciousness of his group or class.

The practical chapters of the current study attempt to find the parallel relations between the internal structures of the Kurdish novel and the structure of Kurdish society in a particular phase.

Comprehension

This is the process of interpreting the internal (formal) structure of the literary work. According to Goldmann (1967, p. 500), "comprehension is the bringing to light of a significant structure immanent in the object studied".

As Muhammad 'Azām (1996, p. 42) points out, genetic structuralism seeks four structures for a literary text; internal structure, intellectual or ideological structure, social structure and historical structure. These structures are integrated and interact with each other. If the internal study of the text allows us to take a step towards understanding the laws which govern the internal structure, this understanding requires 'explanation'. This relation is what should be sought in the cultural structure. However, this remains an abstract comprehension; if it does not lead to explanation it becomes, in turn, something which needs to be explained, which requires the third structural approach (social).

The first level of the analytical chapters of the current study consists in the analysis of the formal structure of the novels, in terms of hero, time and place; this constitutes the 'comprehension' process.

Explanation

This is a consideration of the structure itself as a function of the wider social structure. If the comprehension is a study on the level of understanding of the internal structure of the literary work, the explanation will be a social study at the level of the broader external structure (Abd al-Azeem, 1998, pp. 25-26). As Goldmann (1967, p. 500) says:

Explanation is nothing other than the incorporation of this structure, as a constituent element, in an immediately embracing structure, which the research worker does not explore in any detailed manner but only in so far as such exploration is necessary in order to render intelligible the genesis of the work which he is studying.

As for the relationships between the process of explanation and comprehension in the analyzing of the literary work, Goldmann (ibid) writes “comprehension and explanation are not two different intellectual processes, but one and the same process, related to different co-ordinates”. In Goldmann’s methodology there is a constant homology in all creative work - especially in the novel – between its reality and subject, formal structure and thematic structure, the historical and social moments and the creative moment, the context of the controversy novel and the social context of the controversy (Laḥmadāni in Abd al-Aẓeem, 1998, p. 54).

It is important also to consider criticisms of genetic structuralism. Working in the human sciences is unlike working in the pure sciences, in which results may show absolute truths. In the field of human sciences almost all truths and perspectives are relative; therefore it is natural if there are some differences on the same subject. For the same reason the theory of genetic structuralism as a branch of human science is not free from criticisms, disadvantages and even deficiencies. Thus, a number of criticisms have been addressed at Goldmann’s analytical approach by sociologists and literary critics. For example, Goldmann uses the notion of the group as mediation to be a:

[B]ridge between the individual writer and society as whole, [which] while accounting for the specific nature of the writer’s existence, tends to eliminate the broader social forces: the result can lead to a mechanical, not dialectical, relationship of writer to group and society.

(Swingewood, 1975, p. 31)

Moreover, Terry Eagleton (1981, p. 34) claims that “[h]is whole model... is too trimly symmetrical, unable to accommodate the dialectical conflicts and complexities, the unevenness and discontinuity, which characterize literature’s relation to society”. Pierre V. Zima (1978, p. 12) observes that Goldmann’s concept of ‘significant structure’ is problematic, in that it does not provide any semantic theory within which it would be possible to define the concept of significance in relation to narrative, syntactic and semantic aspects of the text. In addition, Hameed Laḥmadāni (1990, p. 48) states that Goldmann is talking about literary structure; however, his conception is non-procedural, and it is a loose and general concept. He only says that there is

an internal structure in the literary work, which the researcher must analyse. But he does not give an answer to these two questions:

What is the nature of this structure?

What are the means and vehicles which enable us to analyse it? (ibid)

However, the above-mentioned criticisms addressing Goldmann's theory as a branch of the human science do not mean that his theory should be eliminated from the arena of literary critical approaches. As has been observed, genetic structuralism as a theoretical approach has so far been used in a number of academic fields of research in different countries, including the analysis of the literature of eastern societies.

As becomes clear, Goldmann has used his theory of genetic structuralism to uncover the most important forms of vision in European thought; rationalism, empiricism, the tragic vision and the dialectical vision. However, as for his methodology concerning the novel, Goldmann attempted to show how the development of the European novel embraced capitalism. The industrial foundations forced people to pay more attention to the details of everyday life, and eventually caused the formal structure of the novel to be changed:

There is a rigorous homology between the literary form of the novel... and the everyday relation between man and commodities in general, and by extension between men and other men, in a market society.

(Goldmann, 1975, p. 7)

Goldmann, then, changed his mind concerning this notion of the analysis of the literary work. One can observe this in his final work on Jean Genet's drama, written just before his death (see page 31 of this study). This might be an indication of his preference for his previous methodology which he used in the analysis of Racine's plays and the philosophical works of Pascal in *The Hidden God*. Whatever the facts of this, Goldmann's theory can and could apply to different texts and contexts from different societies; indeed, mostly, his hypothesis of finding the homology of structure between the mental structure of a certain social group and the internal structure of the literary work. During his analysis of Racine's plays, Goldmann found a tragic vision in his works, which was the world vision of the members of a declining social

class. Alasdair MacIntyre (1964, p. 72) points out that Goldmann anticipated that the same worldviews would occur in different historical periods.

The following is a summary of Goldmann's five main theoretical principles of the genetic structuralist approach, which he wrote in a 1967 article:¹⁵

- (1) A concern with mental structures which shape the empirical consciousness of a certain social group and the imaginary universe created by the writer.
- (2) Mental structures are not individual but social phenomena i.e. the force behind cultural production comes from the social group, not individual authors, whose function it is to transpose external reality through their own creativity.
- (3) Literary works contain a structure which is homologous to a wider social structure (so that even an imaginary universe can be homologous with the experience of a particular social group).
- (4) The homology of structures gives unity or coherence to literary works.
- (5) Mental structures which are transposed into an imaginary universe created by the artist are nonconscious processes (i.e. not unconscious in the Freudian sense) and can therefore only be brought to light by research of a sociological, rather than a literary or psychological, type. (Goldmann, 1967, pp 495-496)

Having said this, I will attempt to test Goldmann's theory as a main theory for this study as far as is compatible with the nature of the Kurdish novel and the socio-political and economic stages which have been experienced by the Kurdish people, and the impact of these conditions on the emergence and the development of the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan. Because of the appearance of a number of socio-political changes in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdish novel has evolved at least in terms of

¹⁵ These major principles of Goldmann's theory have been summarized in Webb, I., 1981. *Social Class and the Tragic Vision in Hardy's Novels: an Examination of Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Presented to the University of Lancaster. p. 60.

quantity alongside these changes. Thus, I see it may be important to use an approach which links the development of the novel to the socio-political context, to explore the development or non-development of Kurdish literature in terms of both form and content. For this reason the current research attempts to test this methodology to find out whether it would be helpful to explore; firstly, what is the nature of the vision in Kurdish novels, and secondly, how has the Kurdish novel changed in terms of structure and theme as a result of political changes?

It is clear that before 1991 Kurdish society under Iraqi rule in southern Kurdistan was under political pressure, did not have freedom of expression and also lacked an infrastructure.¹⁶ It will be shown that the Kurdish novel at this stage was in an underdeveloped state as compared to other stages in its emergence and development, when the political situation had changed, and there had been accompanying changes in economic conditions, and to some degree in social customs and traditions (see above, pp 14-16). As a result some changes appeared in both the form and the content of the novel, as will be shown in chapters Three, Four and Five of this study.¹⁷ This process of the development of the Kurdish novel corresponds with Goldmann's view when he says that the need for a new form of a novel links with social transformations. (Goldmann, 1975, p. 134).

2. Methodology

As can be seen, Goldmann used two different methodologies. His first approach concentrates on the existence of homologous relationships between the internal structure of the work and the mental structures of a certain social group i.e. the world

¹⁶ The Kurdish nationalists prefer to use the term southern Kurdistan instead of Iraqi Kurdistan, northern Kurdistan instead of Turkish Kurdistan, eastern Kurdistan instead of Iranian Kurdistan and western Kurdistan instead of Syrian Kurdistan because they believe that Kurdistan is a separate land and its people have different nationality. In the current research, both the terms Iraqi or Turkish Kurdistan, and southern or northern Kurdistan, have been used.

The term 'southern Kurdistan' was used for the first time by the Kurdish writer Ali Seydo al-Gorani in 1939. He "published a book entitled *From Amman to Amadiyah: A journey through Southern Kurdistan*" (Bengio, 1998, p. 117).

¹⁷ This is with the consideration that writers who belong to the same generation do not necessarily have the same ideas, or are representative of the same society, even in one particular nation. Goldmann (1975, p. 161) argues that the seventeenth century generation of French writers, such as Pascal, Descartes and Gassendi, and also Racine, Corneille and Moliere are very different from each other and there are even contradictions between their opinions.

vision of the author's social group in a certain historical period. In this approach he puts emphasis on the processes of 'comprehension' and 'explanation' in analytical procedures. This is the methodological approach of his most famous book *The Hidden God* in analyzing Racine's plays and Pascal's philosophical works. His second method is concerned with the novel; in his book *Towards a Sociology of the Novel* Goldmann maintains that the form of the new novel has been altered by the changes in the economic situation in Western capitalist society. Furthermore, Goldmann (1975, p. 11) argues that "the collective consciousness loses all active reality and tends to become a mere reflection of the economic life and, ultimately, to disappear".

However, as most of his critics believe, the best method of analysis may be in using the approach Goldmann adopted in *The Hidden God*. Perhaps Goldmann himself recognized this fact. He "at the time of his death was engaged in research into the plays of Jean Genet (*The Theatre of Genet*), based on precisely the same kind of genetic structuralist method he had previously used in *The Hidden God*" (Webb, 1981, p. 74.). That is why Irene Webb (*ibid*) asks:

why this type of analysis, based on a world view, should be the right approach for Genet's plays, but inappropriate for the novels of Malraux, is not made clear.

Then she herself makes clear that "in any case, the work on Genet, brief though it is, indicates far greater potential than his analyses of the modern novel" (*ibid*).

As for the current study I will keep the notion of his second method in mind as a general framework for the study i.e. I will use the notion of the development of the novel as a consequence of the changes in socio-political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan, but not of the changes which occurred in the economy of the capitalist society as he argued in his analysis. The main methodology to be used in the analysis of the samples in this study will thus be that which Goldmann employed in his analysis of the works of Racine and Pascal. By conducting this combination of his two approaches I will explore the degree of change that has occurred in the Kurdish novel, in terms of both form and content, as a consequence of the change in socio-political contexts in different historical periods.

This approach allows us to study novels, on the one hand as self-contained works, and on the other hand as resulting from a certain social reality, following two stages, according to Goldmann's approach, namely 'comprehension' and 'explanation'.

However, as has been mentioned in the theoretical sub-section, one of the critiques which was addressed to genetic structuralism is that the approach has not clarified how to analyze the internal structure of the literary work. In other words, Goldmann does not specify the way in which he analyses the elements of the novel when he analyses Malraux's (and Nathalie Sarraute's and Alain Robbe-Grillet's) novels. Consequently, after outlining the theme of the novels, I will begin with a descriptive analysis for the first level i.e. for analyzing the formal elements (character, time and place) of the novels. Although Goldmann's approaches to analysing literary creation mainly focus on the notions of world vision and hero, this study will examine additional formal techniques found in the Iraqi Kurdish novel, namely the settings of time and place.

By this process one can reach the "concept of 'whole-part' that means analyzing a literary work should start with the smaller parts and then be related to the whole hypothesis to find out the coherent and comprehensive structure that is, according to Goldmann, the worldview of the novel" (Muniroch, 2007). Concerning the interrelationship between the whole and the parts, Goldmann cites Blaise Pascal, who says that "I consider it equally impossible to know the parts without knowing the whole, and to know the whole without knowing the parts" (Goldmann, 1969, p.128). This idea is precisely consistent with what Goldmann tried to do in his theory of genetic structuralism.

As Mayrl (1978) indicated, Goldmann went on to incorporate both processes of interpretation and explanation by oscillating between the whole and its parts. In Goldmann's words "In the practice of research, immanent interpretation and explanation through the surrounding structure are inseparable" (Goldmann, 1967, p. 501). This process will allow the discovery of the coherent and comprehensive structure of the novel. As Goldmann (ibid, p. 506) says, "search for the internal coherence of the [literary] work", and this will give an indication of its world vision.

As for the explanation of the novels, in order to explore world vision between the novels, the writers and socio-political context, I will follow the approach taken by

Goldmann in his examination of the world view of Pascal's and Racine's works, and will examine mediating factors such as socio-economic conditions and the biography of the novelists.

There is no doubt that socio-economic circumstances had their influence on every aspect of Kurdish people's lives in Iraqi Kurdistan. As Andrea Fischer-Tahir makes clear, during the 1990s, when the Kurds suffered from socio-economic crises such as civil wars and the double economic blockade, tens of thousands of people who despaired of life in the region migrated to Europe. However, she (ibid) maintains that:

after the Iraq War of 2003, the opening of the region to foreign investment capital, the full reintegration of Kurdistan into the Iraqi oil economy, the construction boom and market expansion all contributed to enhancing the cities of Erbil, Dohuk, and Sulaimaniya.

These changes in economic background are not only significant in studying Kurdish social life, but are also important in exploring Kurdish people's way of thinking. Regarding these changes occurring in the economic structure of Iraqi Kurdistan and their influence upon other sectors, Gareth R. V. Stansfield (2003, p. 40) states that:

Of further interest are the changes which the Kurdish economic structures have been forced through, and the impact that such rapid changes have had. The changes inflicted upon Iraqi Kurdish society by the impact of damaging GOI (Government of Iraq) policies and events can be seen clearly in the economic sector.

Thus, these socio-economic changes in the region will be used as mediating factors in investigating the world view of the writers and their social groups in different historical phases.

Moreover, in order to achieve a better understanding of the novels, and the possible existence of a relationship between the authors' biographies and their novels, I will provide relevant biographical information about the novelists' lives and their social origins. Antonina Harbus (2011, p. 210) asserts that autobiography and biography have contributed to the development of narrative fiction, particularly the novel. Thus, concerning the interactive link between novel/fiction and autobiography, Paul John Eakin (1985, p. 3) argues that "it is as reasonable to assume that all autobiography

has some fiction in it, as it is to recognize that all fiction is in some sense necessarily autobiographical”.

In this regard, in *The Hidden God*, Goldmann suggests that biographical and psychological factors can be helpful “in explaining those elements of the work which are inconsistent with the world vision”, although they are insufficient for a “full explanation of the work” (Webb, 1981, p. 48). For this reason it may be useful to take the biographical factor as one of the mediating factors in the ‘explanation’ process. Goldmann (1976, p. 19) maintains that:

He (the historian) should not be satisfied with merely noting the inconsistencies and variations which prevent the work in question from being an absolutely coherent expression of the world vision which corresponds to it; such inconsistencies and variations are not merely facts which the historian should note; they are problems which he must solve, and their solution will lead him to take into account not only the social and historical factors which accompanied the production of the work, but also, more frequently, factors related to the life and psychological make-up of the particular author.

That is why in *The Hidden God*, Goldmann gives some detailed biographical information about Pascal, justifying this by saying that:

in the case of Pascal, the possibility of illustrating the life by the work, and vice versa, seemed so strong that I have decided to write this chapter. (ibid, p. 168)

This process of engaging socio-economic and biographical information in the analysis of data will help to uncover the significance of the social structure, and its homology with the ‘mental structures’ of Kurdish society - that is to say, the parallel relationship between the internal structure and the Kurdish social structure - by gathering information on the wider structure (‘explanation’). This will elucidate the worldview of the writer’s social group towards the opposing social group.

Materials

Deciding which materials to select is a difficult process, because almost every researcher hopes to be objective in his/her selection. However, any selection process is not free from subjective factors. Researchers have used many methodologies, such as choosing canon, bestsellers and prize winners, in order to promote objectivity. But none of them is free from criticism (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, pp. 28-30).

In my opinion, there are two factors which have a key role in any selection process. Firstly, the topic of the research should play a thematic role in the novel selected. Secondly, the theoretical methodology has to be taken into consideration when choosing materials i.e. the critical approach has an important role in the selection of materials. However, these two factors are not sufficient in order to choose materials in a way which is free from subjectivity, as for each topic or critical theory there may be a considerable number of literary works. Consequently, the objective selection of samples requires other criteria.

In the light of the above-mentioned factors, the selection for the current study will mainly depend on three criteria. Firstly, the writer's fame is an important criterion in making a selection within the framework of Goldmann's theory. As this study examines the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan under the impact of different socio-political conditions, according to the plan for the study two novels have been chosen for each stage. Goldmann has an explicit position on the choice of the sample; according to him:

The great writer (or artist) is precisely the exceptional individual who succeeds in creating in a given domain, that of the literary (...) work, an imaginary, coherent, or almost strictly coherent world, whose structure corresponds to that towards which the whole of the group is tending; as for the work, it is, in relation to other works, more or less important as its structure moves away from, or close to, rigorous coherence. (Goldmann, 1975, p. 160)

However, here the question of the great writer will remain an open one in a society such as Kurdish society, which does not have a common standardised language and 'circulating literary works'. Secondly, for the purpose of promoting maximum

objectivity in selecting famous writers, the criteria used according to the plan of study is the influence of the writer's works in the particular stage and dialect. In other words, two other conditions have been taken into consideration to reduce elements of subjectivity: 1) the general perception of the society towards the writer, and 2) how widely the work is read, according to its frequency of publication and its translation into other languages, or how widely it is discussed among researchers and critics through their writings, such as articles, books and academic theses.

Thirdly, the Kurdish dialects must be considered. There are a large number of studies concerning the dialects of the Kurdish language by both Kurdish and orientalist linguists, who have classified Kurdish into various dialects.¹⁸

Although there are four dialects in Iraqî Kurdistan (Sorani, Kurmancî "Behdînanî", Gorani "Hewramî" and Lorrî "Feylî"), only two dialects (Sorani and Kurmancî "Behdînanî") are used for education and as literary languages.¹⁹ Sorani is used in Hewlêr (Erbil), Silêmanî and Kirkuk, while Kurmancî is mainly used in Duhok and the north and northeast of the Mosul plain. For each of these two dialects, and through each stage of the development of the Kurdish novel, one novel has been chosen; on the condition that the novel should fulfill the first and second criteria.

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned criteria, below is a list of the chosen novels, written in both Iraqî Kurdish dialects; according to their date of publication. Each practical chapter starts with a brief biography and a discussion of the author's work.

1. Muhammad Mokrî, *Segwerr* (Barking), 1982.
2. Nafi Akray, *Buhjîn* (Assimilation), 1989.
3. Kakemem Botanî, *Dirz* (Crack), 1997.

¹⁸ Linguists have paid much attention to the Kurdish dialects. Therefore, in Kurdish linguistics, more studies have been undertaken in the field of dialectology than in other spheres of language analysis, and dialectology has become a special feature of Kurdish language studies (Ahmad, 2011, p. 68). Abd al-manaf Ramadân Ahmad (2011, pp. 68-70) lists most of the classifications for the Kurdish dialects; some are listed here: for Şerefxan Bedlîsî (1596) four dialects (Kurmancî, Lorrî, Kelhorî and Gorani); for P. Lêrx (1857) five dialects (Kurmancî, Lorrî, Kelhorî, Gorani and Zazayî); for E. B. Saone (1913) four dialects (Kurmancî, Lorrî, Gorani and Zazayî); for Basile Nikitine (1926-28) four dialects (Lorrî, Kelhorî, Gorani and Sorani) and for D.N. Mackenzie (1961) two dialects in Iraqî Kurdistan.

¹⁹ According to Hassanpour (1992, p. 19) "in Iraq, Kurmanji has also been called "Badinani" after the name of the former Badinan principality... "Sorani" is a recent labeling after the name of the former principality of Soran".

4. Enwer Muhammad-Tahir, *Geryan li Babê berze* (Search for the Missing Father), 2002.
5. Sebrî Silêvaney, *Meryema: Kiçe Jinek ji Zemanek din* (Mariama, A Woman from Another Time) first published in 2008; translated into English in 2009.
6. `Abdullah Serrac, *Silêkuk Hoklêr* (Silêkuk Hoklêr), 2011.

Previous Studies

Although the novel has been established in western literature since at least the start of the eighteenth century, in Kurdish literature it is still in the process of evolution. Furthermore, in terms of criticism there is in general little literature which has been written about the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel, and still less about its emergence under the impact of the political conditions. Although a number of studies have examined the Kurdish novel in general, or the novel in Iraqi Kurdistan, or the Kurmancî novel in Turkish and Syrian Kurdistan, no study of the novel in Iraqi Kurdistan tackles the three above-mentioned historical stages. Additionally, there are a number of studies which analyse different aspects of the Kurdish novel, such as place, time, event and protagonist in all dialects and areas.

The first type of study to consider the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel is concerned with the novel in a particular part of Kurdistan. Muhammad (1990), Pasha (1993),²⁰ Germiyanî (1996) and Rashîd (2007) survey the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan. As a consequence of the Iraqi regime's censorship, the works of Muhammad (1990), Pasha (1993) and Germiyanî (1996) deal with the political conditions with caution and reservation. Germiyanî's work discusses the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel in

²⁰ Abd al-Rahman Pasha's book *Al- Rîwaye al-Kurdiye* (The Kurdish Novel) is a collection of some interviews about the Kurdish novel with Kurdish scholars and novelists, as well as with Alain Robbe-Grillet, a French writer and filmmaker. These interviews were published as a series in *al-Iraq* newspaper in the 1980s in Arabic. The major question in these interviews is how can the Kurdish novel be developed? Furthermore, he briefly refers to Kurdish political conditions and the issue of the Kurdish novel. This work of Paşa is considered as a first attempt at discussing the situation of the Kurdish novel. The first edition was published in Iran in 1993 and the 2nd edition published in Hewlêr in 2001.

Iraqi Kurdistan from 1927 to 1994 in relation to the political conditions. However, unlike the present study, there is no division of the political stages in his work i.e. he does not distinguish between the historical stages in Southern Kurdistan before and after the Kurdish uprising in 1991. According to him the increase in the number of novels in Southern Kurdistan in the second half of 1980, is related to the role of the Iraqi revolution of July 14 1958. As Germiyani (1996) did his M.A. study at the University of Baghdad before the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, he could not precisely refer to the political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan at that time. For this reason he ignores the role of the Kurdish March 11 1970 Manifesto in the development of literary works, as a result of obtaining more freedom of publication than in the previous periods. Consequently Germiyani's debate concerning the development of the Kurdish novel in relation to the political situation has, to some extent, a lack of accuracy.

In the same way Muhammad's work (1990) analyses the political conditions in general and with a clearly reserved argument; as a consequence, to some degree, his work lacks substantiation and clarification. He (1990, pp. 9-13) indicates that the harsh political situation under the 'Ottoman empire', 'British imperialism' and then the Iraqi regime until 1970, and also the illiteracy and poverty in Iraqi Kurdistan, hampered the rise of the Kurdish novel.

Moreover, although Sabir Rashid's book *Romanî Kurdî; Xwêdinewe û Pirsîyar* (The Kurdish Novel; Study and Questions) which mainly focuses on the emergence and the nature of the Iraqi Kurdish novel, is written in 2007, its argument concerning the impact of the socio-political conditions is unclear. Rashid refers to different factors which have caused the late onset, and the slow development, of the Kurdish novel compared with the other literary genres in Kurdish literature. He briefly points to five major reasons for this. One of the reasons which he mentions is the 'political, economic, social and cultural conditions', but without any detail or explanation of why and how this was the case.

As for the theoretical framework, unlike the present study, the above-mentioned studies use descriptive analytical approaches i.e. they do not follow a specific analytical approach in their analysis of the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel. However, the current study is an attempt to test Lucien Goldmann's

approach in order to explore the development of the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan caused by the changing socio-political conditions from 1970 until 2011.

There are two other studies, Medeni Ferho's book *Rewşa Romana Kurdî* (The Situation of Kurdish Novel) in 2011 and Clémence Scalbert-Yücel's article 'Emergence and Equivocal Autonomization of a Kurdish Literary Field in Turkey' in 2012, which tackle the position of the Kurdish novel in Turkey. Both of them focus on political factors and the impact of the political situation on the Kurdish novel in Turkey. Scalbert-Yücel's work is an academic article, which in its theoretical framework follows Pascale Casanova's theory of small literary worlds and Bourdieu's concept of 'fields'. Scalbert-Yücel (2012) shows the relation of independence to a "double macrocosm": understanding 'the sphere of Kurdish politics' as a '(minority) political sphere' and the development of their literature in the framework of 'nation-state(s)' in the Turkish state and diaspora in the European states. Scalbert-Yücel discusses the situation of the Kurdish people in terms of the mother language and politics in the Turkish state in three different historical stages - the 1960s, 1990s and 2000s - and their influence on the Kurdish literary activities. She focuses on the language, and the impact of the ban on the Kurdish language on the fragmented nature of Kurmancî, and consequently its literary world.

Scalbert-Yücel highlights the role of European countries, particularly Sweden, in the emergence and development of Kurdish literature, including the novel. She states that the second generation of Kurdish writers in diaspora in the 1980s turned towards writing short stories and novels. Kurdish literature flourished in Turkey after permission to publish in Kurdish was given in the 1990s. However, most publications belonged to political organizations. Because of the political situation even the writers were political "[a]ll authors writing in Kurmanci in Turkey are bilingual; writing in Kurmanci has emerged from a political, or at least a committed stance" (Scalbert-Yücel, 2012, p. 366).

As for Ferho's work, it lacks methodological accuracy; not even an introduction is included. However, it might be a good source for studies which are concerned with the political context and the novel in Northern Kurdistan, as it is a political analysis of the Kurdish situation and society in the northern part of Kurdistan. It discusses the relationship between politics and literature; in particular it explains the Turkish policy

for the dissolution of the Kurdish people, and focuses on the significance of national awareness for the Kurdish novelist. Ferho (2011) claims that the theme of the novels in this part of Kurdistan is autobiographical, and the novelists do not include their people's suffering, Turkish injustice and European fanaticism towards them, in their works. Additionally he refers to the way in which the Ottoman Empire negatively impacted on Kurdish society and how, when the new nation-states were being formed in the Middle East, they adopted the same approach.

The second type of study to consider the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel deals with the novels in a specific dialect. The works of Hîto (2011), Yûsiv (2011) and Allison (2013) are concerned with the Kurdish novel in Kurmancî. Although Yûsiv's book *Romana Kurdî* (The Kurdish Novel) is a short study and primarily concerned with the Kurdish novel in Turkish and Syrian Kurdistan, it takes a broader focus than the two other works i.e. Yûsiv (2011) attempts to give some preliminary information about all the Kurmancî novels, unlike Hîto (2011) who focuses only on Kurmancî (Behdînî) novels in Iraqî Kurdistan, and Allison (2013) who discusses Kurmancî novels in Turkey and Soviet Armenia.

Yûsiv (2011) indicates that the Kurdish novel emerged in 1935 with the work of Erebe Şemo, in the former Soviet Union, and that further novels were then written by Elîyê Evdirrehman in 1958, also in the former Soviet Union, Rahîm Qazî in 1961, in Iranian Kurdistan, and Ibrahim Ahmed in 1972, also in Iraqî Kurdistan. All these novels were published more as political projects than as literary works. Although Yûsiv (2011) refers to the emergence of the Behdînan novel in Iraqî Kurdistan, he does not mention the social and political conditions in Iraqî Kurdistan.²¹ His emphasis is on the Kurmancî novels and the impact of the political situation on their development in both Turkish and Syrian Kurdistan. He concludes that the principal reason for the delay in the emergence of the Kurdish novel and its slow development is that it received no organisational support. However, the book lacks a methodological and theoretical plan.

²¹ Helîm Yûsiv (2011, p. 59) refers to Behdînan, Iranian Kurdistan-Kurmancî, Zazakî and the former Soviet Union Kurdish novels in an appendix to his study to show a panoramic view of Kurdish-Kurmancî novels. He said that he depended on Askarê Boyk and Tahseen Navishkî to present some basic information about the Kurds in the former Soviet Union, and about the Behdînan novel, because of "the lack of the academic studies about Kurdish literature" (ibid).

Êîto's work (2011) consists of a set of psychological – social studies of the novel in the Behdînan area. In its introduction he points to a very brief history of the novel in the Behdînan region, and to the general themes of novels in this area. Êîto believes that there is a similarity in the themes of the novels from Iraqi Kurdistan. The reason for this similarity is due to a set of objective factors such as social and political factors. As for the theoretical and methodological approaches, Êîto (2011, p. 10) states that he does not follow a particular theoretical framework, but that he has drawn on a number of theories at the same time. He emphasizes that his work is an attempt to apply the insights of psychiatry, psychology and social science which are used in the field of medicine, to works of literature. According to him this approach will be helpful in identifying the diseases and psychological conditions, social context and behavioural background, and the psychological formation of characters.

Allison's work (2013) is a chapter entitled 'Memory and the Kurmanji Novel: Contemporary Turkey and Soviet Armenia'. It is concerned with the emergence and development of the Kurdish-Kurmancî novel, with memory as a dominant theme in the Kurmancî novel in the Republic of Turkey from 1980 until the early 2000s, and in Armenia during the Soviet period up to the 1970s. Allison focuses on the role of folkloric and historical episodes in forming the Kurmancî novel, and also on the influence of Russian and Armenian literature on the Kurdish novel.

Moreover, in her study Allison compares the situation of the Kurdish language politics in both Soviet Armenia and the Republic of Turkey, and their impact on Kurdish cultural activities, particularly on the Kurdish novel. Furthermore, she discusses the ideological climates, particularly in the Soviet Armenian context. The study tackles two writers as exemplars; Mehmet Uzun and Heciyê Cindî. Allison, in studying memory, follows Bakhtin's term of the operation of speech genre, the term which "covers both oral genre and other, more literary genres, taking into account their interaction with each other and with the praxis associated with remembering" (p. 191).

The third type of study concerned with the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel is more general than the other types of study. This group of studies examines the Kurdish novel in every part of Kurdistan. In addition, it pays more attention to the impact of the socio-political conditions on the Kurdish novel,

particularly the work of Mehmed Uzun (2003) and Hashem Ahmadzadeh (2003), and to a lesser extent Salah Jalal (2012).²²

Considering the socio-political factors as the main factors which play a key role in the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel, Ahmadzadeh has undertaken a scholarly investigation of this issue. He (2003) focuses on the emergence and development of Kurdish and Persian novels in a comparative study. In the light of Benedict Anderson's notions of the link between novel and nations he discusses the factors which contribute to the emergence of the novel in both Iranian and Kurdish literature; he uses the reader-response approach in his analytical chapters. Ahmadzadeh analyses the Kurdish novel in general without considering a certain dialect or period of time. In terms of the rise of the Kurdish novel he discusses the novels separately according to their nation-states of origin (different parts of Kurdistan). As he argues, the fragmented nature of the Kurdish nation in terms of social, political, geographical and linguistic dialects is an obstacle to considering a unified national literature. However, he does not refer to novels written in the Behdînî (Kurmançî) dialect. In fact, apart from an elite of Kurdish scholars, Kurdish speakers of other dialects are unable to read Behdînî novels; and in other Kurmançî-speaking areas such as Turkey, Syrian Kurdistan and in the former Soviet Union, the process is hampered because of the Arabic alphabet.

Although Uzun's work is an anthology of literature, it discusses the emergence and development of Kurdish literature over the twentieth century in a very long introduction.²³ He (2003) begins from Iraqi Kurdistan when the United Nations allowed the use of Kurdish language, which led to the establishment of newspapers and magazines which played a significant role in the awareness of Kurdish people. As a result the Kurdish short story emerged and then the Kurdish novel. However, Uzun solely focuses on the Soranî area and does not mention the Behdînan novel. Additionally he mentioned the rise of the Kurdish novel in Iranian Kurdistan and in

²² Although Salah Jalal tries to survey the Kurdish novel in general, he does not take any sample to demonstrate his results. In addition, this book lacks methodological accuracy. Jalal argues that it is impossible to define the Kurdish novel without a study of its roots, and he believes that Kurdish critics have not defined its identity. He claims that the Kurdish novel is still evolving in many aspects, due to cultural issues, and that Kurdish culture has been unable to deal with this genre of literature.

²³ Mehmed Uzun was primarily a novelist.

the former Soviet Union, with a brief explanation of the socio-political conditions there.

However, the current study, unlike Ahmadzadeh's and Uzun's works, aims to explore the development of the Kurdish novel only in Iraqi Kurdistan, in both Soranî and Behdînî (Kurmançî) dialects, under the impact of socio-political conditions from 1970, the year of the emergence of the first published novel in this area, until 2011, and has used Lucien Goldmann's theory of genetic structuralism in this study.

Outline

This study of the Iraqi Kurdish novel comprises an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. Chapter Two consists of two parts; the first part concerns the general background of the historical and political situation of Iraqi Kurdistan. Subsequently, the second part of Chapter Two recounts how novels came to be written in the various Kurdish dialects. Because of the fragmented nature of Kurdish society, politics, linguistic dialects and writing system, the emergence of the Kurdish novel in each region is discussed separately. As a result of this lack of national unity, it proves necessary to consider the literary production of each state independently. The aim of reviewing this general background is to bring to light how the political events during this period explicitly or implicitly impacted upon Kurdish society in Iraq and then upon novels written in both the chosen dialects of Kurdish.

Chapters Three, Four and Five analyse the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan. For each socio-political stage, as mentioned above, a separate chapter has been allocated. In addition, for each stage two novels have been chosen as samples to be analysed according to the sample selection criteria clarified in the Materials sub-chapter. Finally, in the concluding chapter, the results provided by the above-mentioned data analysis will be discussed, by comparing the three stages of the emergence and development of Kurdish novels under the given socio-political conditions.

Chapter Two:

Iraqi Government Politics against the Kurdish People 1958-2011, and the Rise of the Kurdish Novel

Introduction

The present chapter will examine how the conflict between the Iraqi government and the Kurdish national movement affected Kurdish people in social, cultural, psychological and economic dimensions. It seems to me that explaining these political events is of considerable importance for understanding the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel. As John Orr (1977, p. 4) points out, "No sociology of the novel can exist without a historical consciousness". If the industrial era, commodities and economic development formed the European novel, as Goldmann has highlighted in his methodology of the development of the European novel, the primary factor in the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel may be the political conditions and the economic and socio-political developments affecting Kurdish literature, as has been suggested in the Introductory Chapter.

The purpose of writing this brief history is to show the historical conflict between two major social groups which make up Iraqi society; the group in control (made up mostly of Arabs), and the opposing group (mostly comprising Kurds). This conflict has become the key theme in most of the Iraqi Kurdish novels from their emergence to the present day. This historical background may help the reader to understand the nature and type of the socio-political conflicts within the Iraqi Kurdish novel. For the genetic structuralist approach, the real problem that should be discussed is the relationship between the form of the novel itself and the structure of the social environment which brought it into being (Yaseen, 2007, p. 37). Goldmann's approach:

[S]eeks firstly to identify certain structures within particular texts, and secondly, to relate them to concrete historical and social conditions, to a social group and social class associated with the writer and to the world vision of that class. (Laurenson and Swingewood, 1972, p. 68)

This means that the study of the historical-political context will assist in determining how a particular textual structure arose in a given historical period. This notion of correlations between the text and context may help us to understand how the political situation has caused Kurdish society to fragment, and has furthermore caused economic, educational and social backwardness. Thus, it seems to me that for understanding the shape of the Kurdish novel in terms of both contents and formal structures, it is essential to understand the political reality which has a direct impact on literary works and social life in Kurdistan. The effects of these events will be shown in the next chapters in the field of literature, particularly the novel, by analyzing, investigating and comparing data.

With the aim of positioning the Iraqi Kurdish novel within the wider framework of Kurdish novels, the second part will then consider a general discussion of the question of the emergence of the Kurdish novel in each dialect and state.

Part One: General Background of Iraqi Kurdistan

Socio-Political Factors Impacting on the Development of Iraqi Kurdish Literature 1958 to 2011

Discussing contemporary history, politics and intellectual activities in Iraqi Kurdistan requires us to mention the Iraqi Kurdish September Revolution of 1961, whose influence was felt in every aspect of Iraqi Kurdish society. Looking at the historical sources, one can observe that the appearance of the September Revolution had a direct relationship with the conversion of the ruling system in Iraq from a Monarchy to Republican rule in 1958, when the conflicts between the Iraqi regime and the Kurds moved into a new phase. These conflicts were the root causes of the tragedies which later befell the Kurdish people.

Abdul Karim Qasim's revolution began on July 14 1958, when he overthrew the monarchy and pronounced the Republic of Iraq by a coup d'état. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), with the other democratic parties in Iraq, supported his

revolution (Vanly in Chaliand ed., 1993, p. 150). Mulla Mustafa Barzani - the leader of the KDP - and his companions returned from exile at the invitation of Qasim (McDowall, 2007). The Temporary Constitution, announced on July 27, re-established certain freedoms. Article 3 stated that:

Iraqi society is based on complete co-operation between all its citizens, on respect for their rights and liberties. Arab and Kurds are associates in this nation; the constitution guarantees their national rights within the Iraqi whole, (Vanly in Chaliand ed., 1993, p. 150)

As İsmet Şerif Vanly (ibid) states, this was the first time “national rights” for the Kurdish people had been ensured in the constitution of a country which contained a Kurdish population. However, this liberalism was only for the short-term. Significant differences arose between Qasim and Barzani, the leader of the KDP, leading to armed conflict.

At the end of September and the beginning of October 1961, Iraqi warplanes intensively bombed various areas of Iraqi Kurdistan (Lazarev, et al., 2006, p. 282). Between 1961 and 1969 David McDowall (2007, p. 326) states that about 60,000 people were killed and more than 3000 villages destroyed in Iraqi Kurdistan. These harsh socio-political conditions led to the appearance of the Iraqi Kurdish September Revolution in 1961. This Revolution was a significant one in the history of Iraqi Kurdistan in terms of social, cultural and political conditions, as we will see in the next sub-sections of the present chapter. During the period of the Revolution i.e. 1961-1974, four governments changed in Iraq, mostly because of the Kurdish question. The last of these was the Baathist government, which came to power through a coup against the previous ruling family on July 17 1968 (Vanly in Chaliand ed., 1993, p.153). During the years of the September Revolution the history of southern Kurdistan repeated itself. When the central Iraqi government weakened, they gave a number of national privileges to the Kurdish people, but when the state became stronger again they rejected the Kurdish demands and launched a war against the Kurdish people (Chaliand, 2010).

The Baathist regime, convinced that it was impossible to solve the Kurdish question by military force alone, was forced by the unstable conditions to continue to hold

peace negotiations with the leaders of the Kurdistan Democratic Party. In January 1970, the new Vice-President Saddam Hussein stated: at the moment the country is in a situation where the destiny of the revolution in Iraq is linked to the resolution of the Kurdish question (Lazarev, et al., 2006, p.306). On March 11 1970 the president Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr announced that they had reached a proper and democratic agreement, and the March 11 Agreement was signed. However, the Baathist regime continued with its Arabization policy and imposed unilateral orders concerning the future of the Kurds; this raised doubts about the convention, and the tense situation led to growing Kurdish distrust of the central government. In the early days of the March Agreement, the Iraqi regime carried out a series of racially-motivated acts, such as the demographic changes in the Kurdish areas, unprecedented in the former history of Iraq (Barzani, 2004).

Finally, in March 1975, the Shah of Iran and the Iraqi Vice President Saddam Hussein signed the Algiers Convention, which dissolved the March Agreement (Lazarev, et al., 2006, p. 314). Subsequently, the terrorism and oppression in Kurdistan from 1975 onwards took on a totalitarian character, once the Iraqi authorities had eliminated the Kurdish armed movement (Muhoy, 2008, p. 382).

The Iraqi regime continued to destroy Kurdish villages; the work of William Archer (1994, p. 64) shows that approximately 4,500 Kurdish villages were destroyed by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s. The Baathist regime launched what it called the "Anfal" operations, involving mass killings of tens of thousands of innocent women, children and the elderly people with chemical weapons (WMD).

Considering the above-mentioned socio-political occurrences, the points which are most relevant to the emergence and development of the Iraqi Kurdish novel are the Iraqi Kurdish September Revolution, the 11 March Manifesto and the Iraqi Kurdish Opposition in May 1976. I will therefore start by discussing these historical events in order to show firstly, how the unstable socio-political situation of the Iraqi Kurdish people made the emergence and the development of the Kurdish novel a difficult task; and then to demonstrate that whenever the political situation changed for the better, literary and intellectual activity correspondingly developed in a positive way.

The Iraqi Kurdish Revolution of September 1961, Seeking Kurdish Cultural Rights

'The September Revolution' of the early 1960s had a profound effect on the social and cultural life of the nation, and in some measure facilitated the possibility of the emergence of the novel in Kurdistan. It came about because of specific social and political factors.²⁴ Jalal Talabani - as a member of the leadership of the Kurdish revolution - (1971, p. 188) has defined the Kurdish Revolution as a revolution of national liberation to dispose of slavery and liberate the homeland from foreign domination; that is to say it aimed to develop the Kurdish community in the best possible way, eliminate social and economic backwardness and build Kurdistan as an advanced and modern society. Furthermore, Talabani (ibid, p.189) states that the Revolution aimed to establish the national governance of the Kurdish people according to the principle of the right to self-determination on the basis of autonomy, or Federal Union, for [Iraqi] Kurdistan.

In analysing the reasons behind the Revolution, Kurdish politicians and historians refer to measures by which Qasim had attempted to assimilate Kurdish people; Talabani (ibid, pp. 289-291) indicates nineteen measures; however, the actions which relate to the cultural and educational fields are six in number;

1. Freezing the Directorate-General of Kurdish Studies and transferring it into a mere joint directorate between the Ministry of Education and the Directorates of Education in Silêmanî and Hewlêr (Erbil).
2. Depriving the Kurdish students of the possibility of study in their mother tongue in middle and high schools.
3. The closure of newspapers and magazines in Kurdish, for example *Xebat, Kurdistan, Azadî, Şewt al-Akrād and Rastî*.
4. Tightening the acceptance of Kurdish students, particularly in the Military Colleges, and not promoting Kurdish military officers to higher ranks.

²⁴ Al-Barzinjī (2007, p.139) points out that the reason behind the September Revolution was the political circumstances in which Kurdish society found itself at that time, which generated psychological, social, economic and cultural pressures. These conditions interacted with each other, and led to the emergence and establishment of this Kurdish revolution.

5. Neglecting the use of the Kurdish language as an official language in government departments.²⁵
6. Non-assignment of Kurdish employees in the Kurdistan region, and giving them a very small percentage of jobs in the field of employment in general, particularly senior and sensitive jobs.

Restrictions in education and cultural activities on the one hand, and the difficult circumstances of the revolutionary period on the other hand, were the main reasons which led to the delay in the emergence of the Kurdish novel. For this reason we will now examine issues surrounding education, printing and journalism, all of which relate to the emergence of the novel in Iraqi Kurdistan in this period.

Education

Since the establishment of the Iraqi state, *until 1991*, a site of the continuous conflict between the Kurds and the Iraqi state was education (Hassanpour, 1996, p. 372, *Italics added*). In spite of the Kurdish nationalists' endeavours in order to improve education, Iraqi Kurdistan faced a high level of ignorance among the general population, and the task proved harder than had been expected. After the Iraqi Revolution in 1958, Kurdish efforts to improve the educational sector were hampered by opposition from Arab nationalists, who stood against Kurdish initiatives in this field (Muhammad, 2010, p. 70).

During this period - the conditions remained the same until the Kurdish 11 September Revolution - only about thirteen out of a thousand Kurdish children could access primary education (ibid). Moreover, due to a policy of restricting educational opportunities for Kurdish children, the phenomenon of a decreasing number of

²⁵ A campaign against the Kurdish language was wide ranging, even to the point of the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture changing the names of agricultural crops which had Kurdish names, such as Kurdish wheat, whose name was changed to 'north crops' (Al-Barzinjī, 2007, p. 148). Qasim's government attempted to assimilate Kurdish people in different ways. Another example is a series of articles which appeared in Qasim's government newspaper explicitly calling for the assimilation of the Kurdish people. For instance, *Al-Thawra* newspaper published in issue 555, on February 17 1961, 'that anyone who belongs to Iraq, the Kurd, the Negro or the Armenian, however, lives in an Arab country, is considered to be an Arab according to the dictates of reality' (see Celil, 2012, p. 278). Furthermore, Qasim began an Arabisation policy by working to change the Kurdish names of schools and public places and cancelling the Kurdish national celebrations.

children transferring to secondary school became a major problem; only 3% of children could join secondary school. Consequently nearly half a million children were deprived of education, almost all of the children in Iraqi Kurdistan (Qaftān, 2004, p. 39). The percentage of illiteracy in Hewlêr, for instance, reached 96% in 1952. This proportion was greater than the total illiteracy level in Iraq as a whole, which was 92.5%; in the Kurdish villages the situation was worse. One of the major reasons, beside the lack of schools, was that Kurdish children left school because the language of education was Arabic (ibid, p.40).²⁶

The Kurds during the British control and mandate of Iraq (1918-1932) had constantly “demanded native tongue education on all levels, primary, secondary and tertiary...” (Hassanpour, 1996, p. 372). Consequently, the League of Nations had recognized the right of Kurds to native language education, and the British authorities had allowed the use of Kurdish in primary schools as the official teaching language. However, Britain refused to allow the Kurdish language in secondary schools and higher education, even when used bilingually (Kurdish and Arabic) (ibid). According to Cemal Nebez (2007, p. 30) during the period of the monarchy, even primary schools did not follow the directive to use Kurdish as the language of teaching. There was only one Kurdish primary school in Hewlêr, three schools for boys and none for girls in Silêmanî, and in Behdînan no Kurdish school at all.

Then, soon after the 14 July 1958 Revolution, the Republican government decided to improve the education sector in Iraq; the government initiated the establishment of new schools and appointed more teachers (Hassanpour, 1992, p. 317; Muhammad, 2010, p. 71). However, in the early 1960s education in Kurdistan deteriorated, when the Iraqi government departed from a democratic approach (Botanî, 2002, p. 45). The government did not allow the recovery of Kurdish education and intellectual life, but hampered their development and banned native tongue education in secondary schools and the teaching of Kurdish history, language and literature (Qaftān, 2004, p. 68). In other words, the government ignored Kurdish demands and announced the importance of the Arabic language for Kurdish pupils, even in primary schools (Hassanpour, 1992, p. 317). Although during the September revolution in 1961 the

²⁶ The number of schools in Iraqi Kurdistan was small; the number of both nursery and primary schools in the provinces of Kirkuk, Silêmanî and Hewlêr was 196 schools in 1952-1953 i.e. according to some statistics there was only one school per thirty-five thousand people (Kakesor, 2004, p. 241).

same demands were repeated by Kurdish teachers, students and politicians, successive Iraqi governments did not allow a native tongue education until the 11 March 1970 Agreement (ibid).²⁷

The aforementioned attitude towards the Kurds caused the weakness of education and increased illiteracy in Kurdistan at the time of the September Revolution. The Revolutionary Command felt that such conditions as these would influence the revolution and the Kurdish people (Muhammad Ismail Muhammad quoted in Muhammad, 2010, p. 72). As a consequence of the ceasefire between the Revolutionary Command and the government in 1966, the former founded 200 primary schools in the area which was under their control; however, this attempt only filled 5% of the actual need for schools in Kurdistan. Hundreds of students who had finished their primary education and left school in the Revolution's areas of control, could not continue their studies because of the lack of secondary schools. There was only one secondary school, in Gelale, whose staff were from the Party's (the KDP's) politburo (Barzani, 2004).

In order to stand against the spread of illiteracy, the Revolutionary Command started a campaign in 1967 by establishing of a number of primary schools in the liberated areas (Muhammad, 2010, pp. 74-75).²⁸ However, these schools faced serious difficulties, such as insufficient staff, a shortage of books and buildings. Many times students would take lessons in caves and shelters because of the bombardment by the Iraqi regime's warplanes (ibid, p. 76). In spite of these difficult conditions a small number of these schools persisted until the March Agreement in 1970.

²⁷ A year after the beginning of the September Revolution (i.e. 1962) the Iraqi Teachers Union in their Fourth Congress, spurred by the authorities, made these decisions relating to the education in Kurdistan: unifying the curricula in the whole of Iraq in Arabic; replacing the word 'Kurdistan' with 'Northern Region' in books and curricula; encouraging Kurdish writers to write in Arabic; abolishing the post of Director General of Kurdish Studies; cancelling the project of establishing a College of Education in Kurdistan; rejecting the holding of a Congress for the Kurdish teachers; and cancelling the establishment of a Kurdish Academy of Sciences because of the existence of the Iraqi Academy of Sciences (Botanî, 2002, pp. 45-46).

²⁸ In its fourth meeting, the Revolutionary Command founded the Department of Health and Education in the Executive Office of the Party in 1968, and allocated a special budget for it. This department then began opening training courses for teachers in order to be able to continue the process of education in rural areas (see Muhammad, 2010, pp. 74-76). The teachers were chosen on the basis of their ability to read and write, regardless of their qualifications and certificates (ibid).

Here, one can argue that the lack of development of literature is a natural consequence for a society which was deprived of its educational rights and whose people suffered from displacement and danger.

Print

In 1957, just before the fall of the monarchy in Iraq, the Kurdish intellectual Cemal Nebez published a booklet entitled *Xwêndewarî be Zimanî Kurdî* (Education in the Kurdish Language); he (in 3rd ed. 2007, p. 15) complains in his booklet that there had never been a situation where one book per month was published in Kurdish; sometimes only one book was published every year, or even every two years. Nebez (ibid, pp. 16-17) asserts that until the publication of this booklet there was no publishing house in Kurdistan except three old-fashioned printing presses.

The first Kurdish press was established in Silêmanî by the British Mandate in 1920, called *Çapxaney or Matba'ay Hukumat* (Government Press) (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, pp.146-147; Hassanpour, 1992, p. 171).²⁹ Before the Republican system in Iraq, there were two private printing presses in Iraqi Kurdistan, which were founded by Kurdish intellectuals; (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, p. 147; Hassanpour, 1992, pp. 172-173).³⁰

By 1937 there were still only three printing presses in Iraqi Kurdistan, one in Hewlêr and two in Silêmanî. According to Mistefa Nerîman (1988, p. 262) after the collapse of the monarchy in 1958 another, very active, press was founded in Silêmanî in 1958, and printed 161 books from its establishment until 1975, in addition to several periodicals. Furthermore, during the September Revolution and just before the 11 March Agreement, two other private printing presses were founded in Iraqi Kurdistan; *Salahaddin* in 1963 in Hewlêr, and *Raperîn* (Uprising) in 1967 in Silêmanî.

²⁹ In the late 1860s, for the first time, the first printing press was established in the Kurdish towns of the Ottoman Empire: "Bitlis (1302=1865-6 or 1311=1893), Diyarbakir (1305=1868-9) and Van (1307=1889-90). They were all established, owned and operated by the government for printing in Turkish" (Hassanpour, 1992, p. 170). All Kurdish publications which were published during "the Ottoman Empire period were printed outside Kurdistan in Cairo, Istanbul and Baghdad" (ibid).

³⁰ These two private printing presses in Iraqi Kurdistan were *Matba'ay Zarî Kirmancî* established by Hussein Huznî Mokriyanî in 1926 in Rewandiz, which his brother Gîyoy later named *Kurdistan*. The second printing press, *Jiyan* (or *Jîn*) was established by Pîremêrd in 1937 in Silêmanî (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, p. 147; Hassanpour, 1992, pp. 172-173; Nebez, 2007, p. 16).

However, the former “did not print any Kurdish literature” (Hassanpour, 1992, p. 175).

Hassanpour (ibid, p. 178) points out that between 1958 and 1977 the number of published books in Kurdish reached 856 books in different disciplines; however, before 1958 only 266 books were published. By 1986, 2502 books were published in Kurdish in Iraq; this number constituted 80% of all published Kurdish books. In other words, only 345 books were published outside Iraq during the same period, which made up 20% of all Kurdish books (Nerîman, 1988, pp. 399-402). The number of printing presses and publications shows, on the one hand, how the different Iraqi regimes, since the establishment of Iraq, controlled publication in Iraqi Kurdistan; and on the other hand, the role of the September Revolution in making the Kurds more aware of their language and national issues.

This brief review of printing and publication in Iraqi Kurdistan indicates some of the difficulties placed in the way of the development of Kurdish prose and literary forms, particularly the novel.

Journalism

If we look at the history of Kurdish journalism, we can find that the Kurdish national movement paid particular attention to newspapers and magazines as a part of its struggle to preserve Kurdish culture and language. In this regard, the Iraqi Kurdish national movement felt that the absence of a daily press was one of the apparent shortcomings of the Kurdish press. As Ahmadzadeh (2003, p. 154) maintains, the establishment “of the first daily *Azadî* (Freedom), in 1959 shows how underdeveloped the Kurdish press has been through the first six decades of the 20th century”. Thereby, several attempts had been made to establish a Kurdish daily press from 1959 until 1974; however, all of them only lasted for a very short time. Amir Hassanpour (1992, p. 244) rightly indicates that “[t]he permanent feature of the Kurdish press is the late appearance of dailies and their ephemeral nature”. Below is a table of daily newspapers between 1959 and 1974:

Name of Daily	Date of Publishing	No. of issues
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Azadî	1959-1960	156
Rastî	1959	23?
Xebat	1959	14
Dengî Kurd	1960-1961	75
Kurdistan	1961	6
Deng û Bas	1966-1967	?
Rûnakî	1969	2
Birayefî	1974 (Jan.- Feb)	26

Source: A. Hassanpour (1992, p. 244)

The table makes clear how the Kurdish liberal movement endeavoured to establish a daily newspaper soon after the downfall of the monarchy, and how during the September Revolution none of them lasted more than one year. The reason for the obstacles which hampered them, as Hassanpour (ibid) points out, was mainly political, besides the technical and financial problems. Preventing the publication of the newspaper *Xebat*, the organ of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, soon after its appearance, was clear evidence of political hindrances. This newspaper was banned because of publishing the speech of Jalal Talebanî, a member of Central Committee of the KDP, on the occasion of 'Newroz', the Kurdish New Year's Day (Botanî, 2004, p. 73). In such circumstances "one of the important demands of the Kurdish autonomist war of 1961-1975 was the freedom to publish Kurdish journals" (Hassanpour, 1992, p. 257).

Relating this to the novel, Ahmadzadeh (2003, p. 150) refers to two important roles of journalism in promoting the emergence of the Kurdish novels at this period of time; firstly, it contributed to the development of Kurdish prose writing, particularly the Kurdish short story, and secondly, it played a part in the enrichment of the Kurdish language. However, in Kurdish literary tradition it was uncommon to publish novels in magazines and newspapers, as had been the case with European and Arabic writing; except for a few attempts, such as publishing three parts of *Nazdar ya Kiçî Kurd le Ladê* (Nazdar or the Kurdish Girl in the Village) in 1936 in *Rûnakî* (The Light). But, as a result of "closing the Magazine the entire novel was never published" (ibid, p.153). Two other attempts were: three parts of *Janî Gel* (People's Suffering) by Ibrahim Ahmad were published in *Rizgarî* (Liberation) in 1969; and

Îisên 'Arif published his novel *Endêşey Mirovêk* (The Thoughts of a Man) by instalments in the late 1980s in *Hawkarî* (Co-operation) (ibid).

As a consequence of all the above-mentioned factors and circumstances, the September Revolution struggled to achieve both national and cultural rights. Although some of its achievements in this regard were only short-lived, it must be recognized that the September Revolution did ensure positive results in terms of cultural, political and economic factors; the March Manifesto is the clearest example of this.

As a relationship can be seen between the novel, and people's educational level and their cultural activity in a given society, we may argue that historical factors are significant in determining the development of the novel within that society. For this reason, we may find that the possibility of the development or non-development of the Kurdish novel is actually related to Kurdish society itself, and to its historical phases.

The Kurdish 11 March 1970 Manifesto and the Emergence of the First Iraqi Kurdish Novel

The March Manifesto was one of the greatest of the September Revolution's achievements. The September Revolution forced the Iraqi government to stop the assimilation policy against the Kurdish people, recognize the Kurdish question within the framework of the country's constitution and begin negotiations with the Revolution's leaders.

As politicians and historians believe, the Kurdish war was one of the reasons for the fall of several governments in Iraq between 1958 and 1968, when the Baathists took the rule of Iraq. This caused the new government, which was led by Ahmed Hassan Al-Baker and Saddam Hussein, to give 'serious concessions' to the Kurds, and on 11 March 1970 they signed an agreement assuring them significant autonomy (Utrecht, 1990, p. 38). In March 1970 Saddam Hussein himself, the principal Baathist sponsor

of the agreement, journeyed to Kurdistan to meet Mulla Mustafa Barzani and to reassure the Kurds about good will of the Baathist government (Gunter, 1992, p. 14).

In the light of the negotiations between the two parties, the Baathist government announced the Manifesto, which included 15 Articles, on March 11 1970.³¹ Declared within these Articles were the Kurds' rights, which they had demanded during their struggle.³² As for cultural rights, according to the Agreement (see Footnote 31), the Kurdish language would be the official language beside Arabic in the Kurdish areas. In addition, the government's promise to develop both education and cultural activity in the Kurdish areas was a significant gain for the Kurds at that time. Among the other important achievements relating to education, Barzani (2004, p. 139) maintains that the Agreement guaranteed a limited number of secondary schools and a university which would use only Kurdish at undergraduate level in studying Kurdish

³¹ After both parties agreed, the Manifesto was declared by the Baathist government on March 11 1970, and included 15 Articles. The following are the Articles which concern language and culture:

1. (Article 2) The Kurdish language to be the official language in the Kurdish areas beside the Arabic language. The Kurdish language would be studied in the rest of Iraq as a second language within the border drawn up by the law.
2. (Article 3) Given the backwardness that was inflicted on the Kurdish area in the past in both cultural and educational fields, the government would develop a plan to address this by the following:
 - A. Speeding up the implementation of decisions of the [Iraqi] Revolutionary Command Council about the language and cultural rights of the Kurdish people, and directing the curriculum for Kurdish national affairs on radio and television by the Directorate-General for Kurdish culture and the media.
 - B. Returning students who had been dismissed or forced to leave school because of violence in the region of their school, regardless of their age, or finding an appropriate resolution for their problems.
 - C. Multiplication of the opening of schools in the Kurdish region, and raising the level of education, accepting a fair proportion of Kurdish students into universities and military academies, and according them a fair number of scholarships.
3. (Article 6) The government recognized the right of the Kurdish people to the establishment of student, youth, women's and teachers' organizations of its own, and that these organizations should be members of similar such organizations in Iraq (See: Talabani, 1971, pp. 354-358; Barzani, 2004, pp.150-151. and Lazarev, et al., 2006).

³² The parties agreed to take four years to prepare the autonomy law and implement the terms of the agreement. Lazarev, et al. (2006, p. 309) point out that such a long time-span (four years) gave an opportunity to the Baathist regime to later erase a number of issues of principle concerning autonomy for the Kurds, and turn it into an incomplete program of local self-administration under strict control.

language and literature.³³ Another cultural achievement was that the government allowed Kurds to establish the Kurdish Writers Union in Baghdad on October 2 1970 (Botanî, 2007, p.77).

In considering the March Manifesto, it is important to note the improvement in the publishing houses and printing presses during this period. Hashem Ahmadzadeh (2003, p. 147) rightly states that “the early years of the 1970s have been considered as the golden era for Kurdish printing in Iraqi Kurdistan”. It may be useful to draw out the significance of their establishment in relation to the development of literature and the novel in Iraqi Kurdistan. The printing presses allowed the wider publication and dissemination of literary works and hence facilitated the spread of novels. Here, I will refer to the Kurdish printing presses which were established between 1970 and 1974.

Kurdish Printing Presses in Iraq Following the 1970 Agreement

In Kurdistan			
Name	Ownership	Year	Place
Kekey Felañ	Private	1972-74	Silêmanî
Duhok	Private	1970-73	Duhok
Zanko	Government	1973-78	Silêmanî
Municipality	Government	1974-	Hewlêr
Ministry of Education	Government	-----	Hewlêr
Culture & Youth Press	Government	1984-	Hewlêr
Outside Kurdistan			
Merîwanî Press	Private	1975	Baghdad
Kurdish Academy Press	Government	1972-78	Baghdad

Source: Nerîman (in Hassanpour, 1992, p. 176)

³³ Before the agreement on March 11 1970, a Kurdish University was opened in Silêmanî city in 1968, pursuant to an agreement in July 1966 (Celîl et al., 2012, p. 292).

This increasing number of the printing presses coincided with the appearance of the first printing press in Duhok province in 1970. Subsequently, in the light of the Articles of the Manifesto which were particularly related to cultural issues, a number of magazines began publication.³⁴

Besides the March Agreement allowing the establishment of private printing presses and journals, the Kurdish Academy of Sciences was founded in November 1970, and was officially allowed to issue Kurdish publications and publish in various parts of Iraq (Celîl et al., 2012, p. 292). According to Hassanpour (1992, p. 192) during the four years of the March Agreement, 280 Kurdish titles appeared in Iraq in different disciplines. These new conditions of publication in Iraqi Kurdistan facilitated the emergence of the first Kurdish novels; *Aştî Kurdistan* (Kurdistan's Peace) by Muhammad Salih Sa'id in 1970, and *Janî Gel* (The People's Suffering) by the prominent Kurdish writer and politician Ibrahim Ahmed, published in 1972, although originally written in 1956 (Rashîd, 2011, p. 98). In spite of the fact that only these two novels were published in the 1970s i.e. that it was a weak beginning for the Iraqi Kurdish novel, this attempt can be considered as a basis for the steady improvement of the Iraqi Kurdish novel in the second half of the 1980s.

However, after four years of peace, interference by neighbouring countries, as well as the unwillingness of Iraq's ruling circles to grant true autonomy to Iraqi Kurdistan, played a key role in the failure of the March manifesto.³⁵ Consequently, this led to its collapse in 1975, in an agreement known as the Treaty of Algiers made between the Vice President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein and the Shah of Iran (Lazarev, et al., 2006, p.314; McDowall, 2007, p.338).

³⁴ In Duhok governorate, for instance, several magazines were issued, such as *Çiya* (the Mount) in November 1970, *Rewşen* (Illumination) in March 1972, and *Hîvî* (Hope) in May 1973 (Hesen, 2012). During the March Agreement i.e. between 1970 and 1974, thirty-six journal titles appeared in Iraq in both Soranî and Behdînî dialects (Hassanpour, 1992, p. 258). In addition, in both Hewlêr and Silêmanî governorates Kurdish became the official language for education and cultural activities.

³⁵ The work of Gunter (1992, p. 17) indicates a set of principal reasons for failure, such as problems relating to the autonomous area's borders which were mentioned in Articles 4 and 14, in addition to the Kirkuk issue of whether or not it should be a part of Kurdistan. Also, the new Interim Constitution issued by the government in July 1970, 'did not include' Article 10 which considered "the national rights of the Kurdish people" and Article 8 which promised to "halt the policy of Arabization". In addition, nearly 40,000 Faili Kurds, who had lived in Baghdad and Khanaqin for 'generations', were expelled. Furthermore, the Baathist government attempted to assassinate both Idris (Barzani's son) and Barzani himself.

Thus, it could be concluded that one of the most important results of the September Revolution was the 11 March Manifesto, which had a significant influence on the development of Kurdish literature. Although it lasted for only four years, it ensured cultural rights for Iraqi Kurds. The increasing number of publishing houses, journals and all its other educational and cultural achievements, alongside a degree of freedom of expression, facilitated the emergence of the first novel in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Kurdish Opposition of 26 May 1976 and the Development of the Iraqi Kurdish Novel

When the September Revolution was ended by the Agreement of Algiers on 6 March 1975, the Iraqi armed forces practised 'terrorism', 'looting' and mass expulsions of the Kurds; dozens of refugees were displaced from their homes and crossed the border into Iranian Kurdistan, and thus the previous gains for the Kurdish people were eliminated (Lazarev, et al., 2006, p. 314). Then:

The regime created a security belt along the Iranian and Turkish borders, which progressively widened from 5 km to eventually 30 km in places. This involved the razing of at least 500 villages in the first phase and may have reached 1400 villages by 1978. At least 600,000 and probably very many more men, women and children were deported to Mujama'āt, (collective) resettlement camps. (McDowall, 2007, p.339)

These actions of the Iraqi regime caused the dissolution of the KDP and the Revolution. However, soon after, highly confidential discussions began in 1975 between the cadres and the leaders of the party in exile, under the authoritarian governance of Iran. Masoud Barzani and Idris Barzani mandated a group of people to form a temporary leadership of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, and their first meeting was in Naghadah city in Iran (Amêdî, 2013, p. 117).

In November of the same year the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was formed.³⁶ After that in 1979 the United Social Party of Kurdistan (USPK) was formed under the leadership of Dr. Mahmud Uthman. These three groups posed a 'serious threat' to the Iraqi government (Ghareeb, 1981, *passim*).

On 26 March 1976 the Peshmerga forces attacked the Iraqi regime's headquarters in different areas; in this way the 'May Opposition' was announced and issued their first statement, on behalf of the 'Provisional Command', proclaiming that 'the Kurdish People reject the reality of the collapse. Iraqi Kurdistan is the real field of struggle' (Amêdî, 2013, p. 118). Groups of Peshmerga were deployed throughout Iraqi Kurdistan and acted in the form of armed partisans, and the Opposition's publications, such as *Xebat* (Struggle) newspaper and *Seda Kurdistan* (Echo Kurdistan) were published (*ibid*).³⁷ The Kurds continued their opposition against the Baathist regime until 1988, when the Anfal campaigns started (*ibid*).

In the crackdowns by the Baathist government after the Treaty of Algiers, cultural activities by Kurdish scholars continued as a form of resistance. Kurdish writers continued writing poetry, stories and then novels, in which they resorted to the use of the symbol in their literary works, fearing the regime's censorship.

As for the novel, it has been observed that until 1982 only three novels had been published in Soranî in southern Kurdistan; *Pêşmerge* (Partisan) in 1961, *Aştî Kurdistan* in 1970, and *Janî Gel* in 1972 (see 'Arif, 1987, p. 15).³⁸

We can see from what has been discussed so far that the political situation had a direct influence on Kurdish publications in Iraqi Kurdistan, and had particularly

³⁶ As Ghareeb (1981, p. 182) has indicated, the PUK 'received the backing' of Ali al-Askari, who was famous at that time as the bravest man among the Peshmerga.

³⁷ The KDP's conference, held in Berlin in August 1976, called for "partisan warfare" to be launched in Iraq, and raised the slogan "Democracy for Iraq and Real Autonomy for Kurdistan" (Amêdî, 2013, p. 119). However, on March 1 1979 Mulla Mustafa Barzani died in Washington. In July 1979, in a special meeting of the leaderships of the KDP, Masoud Barzani was selected as the president of the Party and decided to hold its Ninth Congress.

³⁸ Although Hussein 'Arif (1987, p. 15) states that there were four novels published between 1970 and 1983, by accepting *Meseley Wijdan* (The Question of Conscience) which was written by Ahmed Muxtar Caf in 1927 or 1928, and was printed in 1970 as a novel, this work is barely accepted as a novel by most Kurdish critics. Also Kurdish critics do not accept Rahîm Qazî's novel as an Iraqi Kurdish novel, because he is from Iranian Kurdistan. This means that only two novels were published in Iraqi Kurdistan up until 1982.

hampered the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel. For that reason it is hard to agree with Ibrahim Qadir Muhammad (1990, p. 12) when he claims that the reason for the lack of Kurdish novels in southern Kurdistan was the writers themselves. One can generalize Hassanpour's idea concerning the relationship between journals and political context, to include literary works in general and the novel in particular, by asserting that:

the considerable number of journals published by political and cultural organizations that have been able to operate when the central governments were not able to exercise effective authority.
(Hassanpour, 1992, p.258)

Thus, during the period of the March Agreement, the Kurdish literary movement inspired the Kurdish writers to continue writing, and pay more attention to prose writing. Consequently, by all accounts the second half of 1980s was the golden era for the Kurdish novel in this part of Kurdistan. As Sabir Rashīd (2007, p. 9) indicates, more than 20 novels were published in Iraqi Kurdistan between 1986 and 1995, in cities and *şax* (mountains). The latter refers to novels written by Kurdish novelists who were with the Kurdish opposition to the Iraqi regime, in the mountains of southern Kurdistan.³⁹

According to Rashīd (ibid, pp.11-12) a number of Kurdish novels were published in the *Şax* (mountains) and their literary values were discussed by those Kurdish writers who were in the mountains with the Kurdish opposition, leading to the development of a movement of literary criticism.⁴⁰ Furthermore, a number of novels were translated into Kurdish/ Soranî during this period (i.e. the second half of the eighties). Pasha (2001) has made a bibliography of these works, including 19 novels translated into Soranî and only one into Behdînî by Sallah Sa'dullah.⁴¹ In addition to this, many magazines and other publications were published in the mountains, such as the magazines *Metîn* and *Gulan*.

³⁹ Sometimes the *Edebî Şax* (the mountain literature) is called a clandestine literature.

⁴⁰ The following are some of the novels which were published in the mountains during the 1980s: *Segwerr* (Barking) in 1982, *Heres* (The Defeat), the first volume in 1985, *To'le* (The Revenge) in 1985, and *Heres*, the second volume in 1987, all by Muhammad Mokrî; *Koçî Sor* (The Red Migration) in 1989 by Heme Kerîm 'Arif; and *Kêwî Mezin* (The High Mountain) in 1989 by Karwan 'Abdulla (see Rashīd, 2007, pp. 11-12).

⁴¹ There has been very little translation of novels into Behdînî, below ten works in total.

It must, therefore, be recognised that in this period a strong feeling of nationalism appeared in Iraqi Kurdistan; people felt themselves to be strangers in Iraq, even in Kurdistan itself, owing to the presence of the Baathist Arab colonists. As a form of resistance, the Kurdish intellectuals worked alongside the peshmerga, but with a different kind of resistance, by publishing their literary works and other publications. In addition, the Opposition's radio broadcasts were instrumental in sensitizing Kurdish society. Consequently, one can argue that there is a strong relationship between the emergence of the Iraqi Kurdish novel and the Kurdish national movement. The latter took the form of a resistance against the Iraqi government's aggressive policy towards the Kurdish people, which first deprived the Kurds of cultural and educational rights, and then tried to eliminate them by force. However, through their revolutions, the Kurds' struggle did ensure cultural gains, which although limited in nature, favoured the emergence of the Kurdish novel in this historical stage.

The Iraqi Kurdish Uprising 1991-2003, and its Socio-political and Economic Consequences

Following the defeat of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War, the Iraqi Kurds started an uprising in northern Iraq (Kurdistan) in March 1991. This uprising led to the Kurds creating a de facto state and government in the region (Gunter, 1995, p. 46). After the uprising, a large area of Iraqi Kurdistan was protected from Iraqi government attack by the United Nations' Decision Number 688. Subsequently the Kurds unified their ranks by establishing the Iraqi Kurdish Front (IKF); according to Gunter (1996, p. 226) such a union as this had almost never occurred in the past. The IKF consisted of eight different parties, and brought into being the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) by holding parliamentary elections in May 1992. Furthermore, on October 4 1992 "the Kurdistan Parliament proclaimed Kurdistan to be a federal state within Iraq" (Aziz, 2011, p. 85).

However, the Iraqi government neither recognized the elections nor the resultant federalism, and in addition neither donor agencies nor foreign governments

recognized the 'legitimacy of the KRG' (Natali, 2007, p. 1114). They even abstained from working "through the *Kurdish* official administrations or related institutions for fear of implying their recognition of the KRG" (McDowall, 2007, p. 382). Consequently the Kurdish people felt dissatisfied with their situation, and felt that they were not an official region. They feared the international community was neglecting the Kurds by giving the green light to the Iraqi regime. Subsequently the rich did not dare invest their money in major projects. In addition, because of the unstable situation the society was not secure; there was looting, kidnapping, burning of cars, energy theft (using electricity in an illegal way), as well as the widespread presence of Iraqi government propaganda (Tenia, 2002, p. 23).

Moreover, according to Ismail Tenia (ibid, pp. 23-24), in order to spread fear and anxiety in the region, through their intelligence service the Iraqi regime constantly conducted terrorist operations, such as explosions and assassinations, in Kurdistan. On February 27 1995 about one hundred people died and one hundred and fifty were injured as a result of an explosion in Zakho town; most of them were workers and children.⁴² In addition, on July 19 2000, the Abu Sina Hotel in Silêmanî was destroyed by an explosion. Furthermore, a number of important people, such as Dr. Muhammad Bacelan, Dr. Nazdar Bamernî, Dr. Nafi' Akreyî and 'Usman Sensor, a member of parliament, were assassinated.

The Iraqi regime attempted to break down the security and stability of the Kurdistan region, and the neighbouring countries did likewise. One of these countries was Turkey, which constantly tried to become involved in such actions. Tenia (2002, p. 27) points out that on May 18 1994, nineteen Turkish warplanes bombarded the Qaladizê area under the pretext of the existence of elements of the PKK. According to Tenia the Turkish warplanes bombarded and infiltrated the borders of the Iraqi Kurdistan region five times between 1997 and 2000.

As for the internal relationships between the political components, the two major political parties, namely the KDP and the PUK, did not accept the results of the 1992 elections. This attitude of the two parties towards the forming of the KRG caused further chaos and instability in the region. By 1993, the two sides had agreed on a

⁴² At that time the KDP accused the PUK, and the PUK accused the PKK, of carrying out this criminal act. Similarly the Iraqi government accused Turkey of carrying out the explosion.

formula for power-sharing, i.e. the 50/50 principle, as a compromise to end the strife between the two parties.⁴³ This principle led to an equal division of power between the parties equally in all the region's ministries, and (these ministries) becoming more partisan (Gunter, 1999, p. 75, Aziz, 2011, p. 85). McDowall (2007, p. 385) makes clear that the consequence of this power-sharing was a strained condominium, which stretched down as far as the teaching staff in schools and the police on the street.

The neighbouring countries' involvement played a major role in the tensions between the two parties. Gareth R. V. Stansfield (2003, p. 179) concludes that:

With regard to the geopolitical involvement of foreign powers, Iraqi Kurdistan may be seen to be increasingly the geopolitical centre of the Middle East. With the tension between Iran and Turkey remaining high, these states continue to play out their rivalries through their proxies in Iraqi Kurdistan, which are currently the KDP for Turkey and the PUK for Iran, although these allegiances are rarely stable. Obviously, Iraq is heavily involved in the affairs of the region, as are a host of other Middle Eastern and foreign powers. The Iraqi Kurdish region in particular has the ability to act as a pivotal region in the Middle East, with the ability to impact upon the affairs of several countries.

Stansfield makes clear that the neighbouring states do not allow themselves to show a civilized picture of the Kurds to foreign countries, particularly the western countries. The key reason is that the development of the Iraqi Kurdish government might threaten the neighbouring states by bringing about a demand by their own Kurdish populations for a similar region of their own. Therefore they constantly involve themselves in the region's affairs. It has become clear that such involvements created serious problems between the two major parties, which eventually led to the civil war between them in 1994, and the Iraqi Kurdistan region was then divided into two 'statelets' (al-Khafaji, 1996, p. 35).

In effect, there was not just one civil war between the two major parties, but several civil wars occurred between different political groups during the period 1993-2001.

⁴³ According to Gareth R. V. Stansfield (2003, p. 202) the actual results of the elections were as follows: the KDP won 50.27 % and the PUK 49.73 % of the vote.

Hawrê Baxewan (in Tania, 2002, pp. 28-30) indicates that these internecine conflicts were as follows: in December 1993 between the PUK and the Kurdistan Islamic Movement (KIM); in November 1993 between the KDP and the Kurdistan Socialist Party of Iraq (KSPI); in May 1994-1997 the most serious civil war, between the KDP and the PUK, in which around 2,000 people were killed; in 1997 again between the PUK and the KIM; in 1997 between the KDP and *Parta Karkerên Kurdistanê* (PKK); in September 2000 between the PUK and the PKK; and in 2001 between the PUK and the *Jund al-Islam* Group. These wars led to the deaths of hundreds of people in Kurdistan, and to the migration of large numbers of others, mostly to European countries. Subsequently life became difficult in the cities, particularly in Erbil, due to their descent into anarchy and chaos. Furthermore, the unstable socio-political situation led to the withdrawal of a large number of foreign NGOs from the region (Leezenberg, 2005, p. 638).

Economically the Iraqi Kurdistan region was under double economic blockade, being under both that imposed by the UN (as it was a part of Iraq) and by that imposed by the central Iraqi government. According to McDowall (2007, p. 382) Saddam's economic blockade on the Kurdistan region was almost total by August 1992, and in July of that year the supply of fuel was completely cut off. Subsequently, by "October the price of kerosene was two hundred times that in July 1990, rice eighty-fold" (ibid).

Moreover, the significant decline of the rate of the Iraqi dinar against the US dollar was another economic problem. Before the Gulf War the price of the dinar was about 3.33 dollars; however, in 1994 this price had declined to 90 dinars per dollar. In addition, as a result of the lack of raw materials and spare parts for machines, some factories, such as cement factories and those manufacturing cigarettes, dairy products, textiles and alabaster, were forced to stop working, which led to the unemployment of workers (Tania, 2002, pp. 33-34). Consequently by 1995 about 70 per cent of the active educated Kurds depended on "international humanitarian relief and its income-generating" (Bozarslan in Natali, 2007, p. 1114). According to Bozarslan (ibid) "the overly inflated dollar market and extreme wage differentials" led the educated Kurdish populations to depend on the 'INGOs or US-financed projects' for work rather than the KRG.

These harsh socio-political conditions influenced literary production, particularly the novel. In terms of technique and style it did not see any development in the present stage until 1997, when the civil wars ended and economic situation slightly improved in the region.

In 1997, because of two important occurrences, economic conditions improved slightly. The first was the ceasefire between the two major parties, the KDP and the PUK. The second was the issuance of Decision Number 986, the UN's Oil-for-Food Program. Indeed, this program played a key role in mitigating the severity of the economic situation in the region. As a part of the Oil-for-Food program in July 1997, the first share of foodstuffs was distributed using ration cards; at the same time, the rate of the US dollar declined to 18 dinars per dollar in the Kurdistan region (al-Doski, 2002, p. 90).

As a result of this Decision, Iraqi oil was exported in return for food and medicine in the first stage, and then in the second phase substantial funds were allocated for the establishment of infrastructure projects, whether inside the region or inside Iraq (ibid, p.89). Azad Ahmed Se'dun al-Doski (ibid) states that under the terms of Decision 986, by November 30 two thousand projects to the value of \$1,425 billion had been set up throughout the region; these were able to absorb the labour force, which in turn lowered the unemployment rate.

As for private sector activities in the region at this period of time, M. Barwari (in Natali, 2007, p. 1117) points out that:

From 1995 to 2000 small factories for food industrial projects increased from 60 to 169, while the total number of small industrial projects in the region, excluding Kirkuk, reached 608. All these factories except two belonged to the private sector.

The private sector also had a role in the construction field; however, the public sector was still more active than the private sector, because of the regional government policy and procedures.

Despite the above-mentioned economic improvement at this stage, according to Natali (2007, p. 115) the majority of Iraqi Kurdish people remained on a very low

income. They therefore used to depend on the extended family system of 'diaspora remittances' to obtain much-needed revenue. Civil servants frequently went without pay, the salaries of teachers were very low, some only on about US \$7 per month, and distributions of food were made every other month. As Michiel Leezenberg (2005, p. 640) indicates, the local population's very low income was "supplemented by a food basket worth \$50 every month". These harsh economic circumstances continued in Iraqi Kurdistan until the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. As will be discussed in Chapter Four of the present thesis, they had a clear influence on the production of literary works, particularly the novel.

Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, and its Impact on Socio-political and Economic Conditions of Iraqi Kurdistan 2003-2011

Turning to political developments post-2003, and their consequence in terms of both economic and social transformation in Iraqi Kurdistan, it may be important to bear in mind that although the region was protected from Saddam's attack from 1991 until 2003 by the Decision of the UN, as has been discussed previously, the Iraqi government was influenced in causing a range of problems for the Kurds. Thus, the occupation of Iraq by multinational forces in 2003 can be considered as the real transitional phase witnessed by the Iraqi Kurdistan region (Amêdî, 2011, p. 65). Following a referendum, a new constitution for Iraq was approved on October 15 2005. The Constitution of the Republic of Iraq adopted a federal system under Article (1), whose introduction explains the nature of the sovereignty of Iraq and the optional free union between its people. In addition, Article (3) confirms that Iraq is a multi-ethnic country with different religions and sects. Chapter Five of the Constitution clarifies the position of the region's authorities, particularly Article (117 / first paragraph), which approves Kurdistan as a federal region, with the right to its own constitution (ibid, pp. 205-206). The Kurds formally initiated discussions on "guarantees for their physical, political, economic and cultural security as a group and as individuals" (Wolff in Lowe and Stansfield, ed. 2010, pp. 20-21).

Furthermore, as a result of the defeat of the Baathist regime, political debate generally changed in Iraq, and this facilitated an easing of relations between the two

main Kurdish parties and an end to their conflict. Subsequently steps were taken to unify the two Kurdish administrations (Erbil and Silêmanî), for the purpose of forming a joint government, which gained the confidence of the Kurdish Parliament on May 7 2006. In addition, other steps were taken, such as the creation of the Presidency of the region (Amêdî, 2011, p. 67).

Indeed, the formation of the second session of the Parliament of Kurdistan on October 30 2005 had a key role in ending the separation of the Kurdish administrative powers. As Sozan Ibrahim Amêdî (ibid) indicates, at the beginning the parliament faced many difficulties in resolving the administrative split between the two major parties, and then forming the fifth cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government. The parliament worked with the NGOs and the Kurdish media in order to end the division. However, the two administrations were not completely unified at first, and the Ministries of the Interior, Finance, Peshmerga and Justice remained under separate control by the two parties, the KDP and PUK, until 2007.

Another socio-political change since 2003, with ensuing economic repercussions, has been the new investment policy in the region. Examining this economic factor in Iraqi Kurdistan, it should be borne in mind that the main source of wealth in the whole Iraq and Kurdistan region is the export of oil, which has a direct influence on the life of Kurdish people, including the intelligentsia. The oil sector makes up about 92% of the total commodity sector, and this indicates that the Iraqi economy is still a yield-economy i.e. the income sources in the country rely on external demand and are mainly dependent on oil revenues (Se'dun and Ni'mah, 2008, p. 140).

According to Mahmood Mahmood Ali (2009, p. 59), Iraq is among the countries of the world with the largest reserves of oil and natural gas, and a notable proportion of these reserves is located in the provinces of the Kurdistan region. It is estimated that the crude oil in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, including the disputed areas, makes up almost half of Iraqi's reserves, as follows:

	Kurdistan Regional Government	Kurdistan Regional Government, including the Disputed Areas	Iraq
Reserves of Crude Oil (Billion Barrels)	25	55	110.5

Reserves of Natural Gas (Billion cubic feet)	100	–	2802
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Source: M. M. Ali (2009, p. 59)

Despite the significant contribution of the region to the Iraqi economy, according to the political, legal and constitutional decisions of the federal government, the region's share of Iraqi revenues is only 17% (ibid). Nevertheless, it could be said that compared with the previous historical phases, by 2003 oil revenue had permitted considered development in the economic infrastructure and political institutions in the Iraqi Kurdistan region (see Anderson in Lowe and Stansfield, ed. 2010, p. 147).

As a consequence of this economic development, the region has posed an attractive area for both foreign and domestic investment; and should continue to do so, as long as these investment opportunities are supported by security and political stability in the region (al-Shikākī, 2008, p. 134). As Idrīs Ramadan Hecî al-Şikakî (ibid) points out, the issuance of the Investment Law No. 4 of 2006 has had a significant role in promoting and attracting foreign investment and engaging investment opportunities. He maintains that the region's economic policy is based on a free market-economic approach, and endeavours to remove all obstacles to investment, including facilitating administrative procedures, providing tax and customs exemptions, and legal guarantees.

The investment sector in the region, therefore, has contributed to an improvement in the economic situation. In a statistical study Şivan Nezîr Muhammad Sa'îd (2013, p. 104) affirms that the rate of unemployment has been reduced post-2003 compared with the previous historical phase. This change is probably a result of the role of investment and reconstruction in the region, both of which have increased the need for a labour force. Sa'îd (ibid) refers to the role of small and medium-sized industries, such as the electrical, textile, non-metal and metal smelting industries, in the absorption of part of the unemployment between 2003 and 2011.

However, the Iraqi Kurdish intelligentsia criticized the investment policy in the region. These critical views of the writers concerned corresponded with those of a large number of people, and they all agreed that the reasons for the weakness shown by investment projects in developing infrastructure were government policy and administrative corruption in the region. From a questionnaire conducted as part of an

academic survey, Barzan Kemal Hessen (2008, p. 147) concluded that 72.25% of 400 participants from different educational backgrounds accepted that there was corruption in the region, and this corruption contributed to public disappointment with the government's performance; it was also one of the reasons for the political violence in the region. In the same questionnaire 73.25% of the participants agreed that there was a lack of legal and social justice (ibid, p. 134).

This public anger, coming as it did from a large group of people, the social group of Iraqi Kurdish intellectuals, led to the appearance of the opposition (*Bizotnewey Gorran*, The Movement for Change) in the region in the general elections of 2009. A large protest was then held on 17–19 February 2011, in the second largest city of Iraqi Kurdistan, in Silêmanî province:

Most of the demonstrators were protesting against corruption, nepotism and the lack of effective services such as jobs and electricity... Among all of them there was a deep anger against the Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party and Talabani's PUK family domination over society and government. (Gunter, 2013, p. 445)

One can argue that the ruling political parties did not treat people equally, and this discrimination was one of the key reasons behind the different kinds of corruption in the region between 2003 and 2011. In addition they could not supply people with basic services due to disunity between the political parties themselves. In Chapter Five of the present thesis we will see how Iraqi Kurdish writers took a stand against this situation through their written works.

Part Two:**History of the Kurdish Novel***The Dominance of Kurdish Poetry over the Novel*

As has been discussed, Goldmann relates the development of the European novel to the developments which occurred in Western society in terms of its economic system. However, in the Kurdish case, it is the political conditions which are the mainspring in the development of the society and its literary works. Another significant feature in Kurdish literature is that poetry is more widespread than the novel; something which is also the case in most other postcolonial countries (see Timothy Brennan, in Bhabha, 1990, p. 56). This genre might be more convenient for the colonized countries because it does not need a long time to read, and in addition the issue of subjection does not hinder writing because of the ability to use figurative language and metaphors more than in the novel. Furthermore, poetry is easier than the novel to publish, it can be read for an audience on different occasions, and it is easier to memorize.

In Kurdish literature, poetry has in most parts of Kurdistan been the dominant and most visible literary genre, since its emergence in the 10th century until the present day.⁴⁴ However, in Iraqi Kurdistan its authority has been reduced since early in the current century. Otherwise, as Ahmadzadeh (2003, p. 139) argues, up until the early part of the 20th century, when additional literary forms, such as the short story, the novel and the play made their appearance, the 'history of Kurdish literature' actually only means the history of its poetry.

Poetry in fact played a significant role in the Kurdish national movement in all parts of Kurdistan, being used as a form of weapon against the colonial government (Muhammad, 1990, p. 9). During the 'Opposition' of 26 May 1976 in Iraqi Kurdistan, for example, Şivan Perwer's songs, whose lyrics were mostly from Cigerxwîn's

⁴⁴ Poetry emerged in the tenth century with the appearance of the Kurdish classical poet Baba Tahîr Hemedanî (937-1010 AD, in Iranian Kurdistan) who was the first classical poet to appear in Kurdish literature. (see Xeznedar, 2001, P. 182)

poetry,⁴⁵ were forbidden in Iraq, Syria and Turkey, and this continued until 1991, even leading to the hanging of a considerable number of people in Iraq.⁴⁶ In this way, the political conditions influenced the social, economic and cultural conditions. Even poetry had to be used with caution and such conditions did nothing to encourage the emergence of the novel form in Kurdistan.

Social Structure of Iraqi Kurdish society and its Reflections in Literature

Iraqi Kurdish society is a tribal society, mostly comprising large, hierarchically organized families gathered together through common descent and kinship. The tribal culture controls the whole society, and even those who do not come from a tribe, or who live in a city, follow tribal norms⁴⁷ (McDowall, 2007, p. 14, Chaliand, 2010, p. 54).

Iraqi Kurdish society is "greatly influenced by the traditional mode of production" (Stansfield, 2003, p. 40). Structurally it consists of four main classes; the upper middle class, the middle class, the lower middle class and the lower class. This classification of Kurdish society does not convey the same social structure as that of Western social class analysis; in Iraqi Kurdish society the upper middle class includes officials of the government and political parties, agha and land owners, and also important traders who have strong relations with the officials. The Middle class consists of the people who work in a particular profession, such as senior teachers,

⁴⁵ Şivan Perwer (born on September 23 1955 in Turkish Kurdistan as İsmail Aygün) is the most famous Kurdish musician and singer. Perwer has been a protest singer since 1975. Concerning the purpose of his songs, he says "I want my songs to bring a message about my people, about their reality, their situation, their suffering, social misery, about occupation. I must give Kurdish Music a face, a personality. I want to serve my people with my music." (see his official website: <http://www.sivan-perwer.com/sp.html>)

⁴⁶ Cegerxwîn (1903- 1984) (his real name was Sheikhmous Hassan), was a 'renowned Kurdish polymath, and nationalist'. He was born in Turkish Kurdistan and in 1914 his family fled to Syrian Kurdistan. Because of his political activities in later life he had to flee to Sweden, and remained there till his death. Cegerxwîn published several collections of poetry in Sweden. He was a poet of modernity and most of his poetry had the theme of political realism. His poetry has influenced Kurdish people and culture throughout the Kurdistan region in the Middle East (see Kurdo, 1983, P. 140)

⁴⁷ Non-tribal Kurds usually did not have their own land, but rather were agricultural workers ('share-croppers'), merely 'serfs' in Kurdish society. (van Bruinessen, 1992, pp. 105-106).

engineers, doctors and small businessmen. The lower middle class are mostly people who have lower income compared to the middle class, for example labours in small business, and the basic grades of Peshmerga. The lower class are mainly peasants and unemployed people.

Traditionally the Agha is chief of the tribe, exercising a monopoly of power and economy, and is an “arbitrator of disputes and allocator of resources, benefits and duties” (McDowall, 2007, p. 15). The landowner (known as the ‘Beg’) may also possess agricultural lands in cities i.e. perhaps he has no tribal roots, and landless peasants rent his lands for agricultural purposes (Chaliand, 2010, 58). McDowall (2007, p. 17) points out that landowners often control “the essentials of life: land, water, livestock and equipment, seed, and labour itself”.

The peasantry is by far the largest class. Throughout history, in all parts of Kurdistan the peasants were the most numerous, and the most active, class, and they had a direct influence on the economy of Kurdistan. Those who were not peasants, for example craftspeople, were a minority; mostly they did not come from a tribe and in fact were not Kurdish in origin, often being Christians or Jews. The latter group, however, disappeared during the First World War (van Bruinessen, 1992, pp. 18-19). Because of the predominance of the peasantry, the working class has only a short history in Kurdish society, and it has had a minor influence on the economy of Iraqi Kurdistan. There was a lack of industrial projects in Iraqi Kurdistan until the late 1970s, when a small number of Kurds worked in public projects, for example on the railways, oil fields and in cigarette factories (Resol, 1966, p. 123). Other industries, such as mineral extraction, did not develop at a fast rate, and the same was also true of cottage industries, except for the carpet industry and a few simple consumer industries (Al-Mula, 1985, p. 20).

However, the structure of Iraqi Kurdish society changed from the 1950s onwards, when major political changes occurred in the Middle East. Both the peasant uprising and the agricultural reforms proposed by the central government had a negative influence on rural production and this, together with the unrest due to wars in the rural areas, caused an increase in the urban population (Hassanpour, 1994, p. 4) and a decrease in the number of rural dwellers. Villages, which were the main source of agricultural production, were destroyed by successive Iraqi governments.

Abdullah Ghafur (2006, p. 63) concludes that the percentage of rural dwellers in 1927 was 91,7%, whereas by 1987 this had decreased to only 29, 1 %, and “newly freed peasants moved into Kurdish cities” (Hassanpour, 1994, p. 4). War and political factors such as revolution, Anfal and genocides thus had an influence on the structure of Iraqi Kurdish society, particularly on the peasant class.

Although the increasing urban population led to a rise in unemployment after the 1950s, as a result of the lack of industrial enterprises in Iraqi Kurdistan, it also brought more opportunities for Kurdish peasants to access schools and education. Consequently a new class of intellectuals and specialists, such as doctors, engineers and nurses appeared (Hassanpour, 1994, pp. 4-5). Moreover, the production of literary works improved compared to the previous years. However, as writers were originally from the peasant strata, they had problems with the Agha and landowners on the one hand, and on the other hand with the Iraqi government, government employees, government departments, traders and those who had prestigious positions in the cities (Muhammad, 1990, p. 194). Thus the situation of the Kurdish peasant was preeminent in Kurdish prose (Resol, 1966, p. 118). According to Ibrahim Qadir Muhammad (1990, p. 194) the peasant class and their problems had been the main theme of the Iraqi Kurdish short story from its emergence in the 1920s, and continued to be so. Furthermore, Muhammad (ibid) argues that the theme of peasants’ suffering, and their problems with the Agha class and landowners, passed through to Kurdish novels such as *Meseley Wijdan* (The Question of Conscience) 1927-28, *Aştîy Kurdistan* (Kurdistan’s Peace) 1970 and *Kordere* (Kordere) 1989.

By contrast, as the working class was not significant in Kurdish society, Iraqi Kurdish literature paid less attention to portraying working class life. Indeed, most of those who made up the working class had originally been peasants who had headed towards the city in search of work, or were simply students from universities working temporarily during their vacations (Muhammad, 1990, p. 189). According to Rauf Hessen (1982, p. 12) the working class first appeared in the Kurdish short story after the July 14 1958 Revolution. As for their role in the Iraqi Kurdish novel, Muhammad, (1990, p. 190) suggests that there were two kinds of workers in evidence here. Firstly, students who worked in the cities in a service role, such as waiters, and who did not impact on the economy. Examples of these are the characters of, Qareman,

Said and Ekber in *Şar* (The City) 1986, *Tiwanewe* (Thaw) 1988, *Bohjîn* (Assimilation) 1989 and *Kordere* 1989 respectively, all of whom did such jobs. Secondly, industrial workers in oil companies and small factories; examples here include Qale Herzanî and his son Toffîq in *Hel'kişan Berew Lotke* (Progress towards the Summit) 1989 and Dara in *Kangey Bel'a* (The Source of Tragedies) 1988.

Thus we can see that until the 1950s, there were two main social classes in Iraqi Kurdistan, the agha/landowners and the peasants. These two classes were in constant conflict with each other, and later with successive Iraqi governments. However, as a result of this latter conflict, by the late 1980s most of the Iraqi Kurdish villages had been destroyed by the Iraqi central governments, thus changing the whole structure of Kurdish society. These new socio-political conditions led to the disappearance of the peasant class and turned them into workers, but because of the lack of industries in the cities they were not active as a class. These socio-political occurrences became the main theme of the Iraqi Kurdish novel in the historical phase between 1970 and 1991, and this will be explored further in Chapter Three of the present study.

The Kurdish Novel and the Fragmented Kurdish Culture, Society and Literature

In the history of Kurdistan, periods of colonisation exceed those of freedom, and dependence and oppression clearly show through in all aspects of life, language, culture, economy, society, politics, administration and psychology. In Kurdish cities, towns and villages, and in the Kurds' feelings and ways of thinking, subjection dominates structures of being (Aziz, 2013). Kurdish people can also easily be differentiated from one another according to the part of Kurdistan in which they live; by language, social and administrative traditions, and political and cultural life. Regarding the fragmented nature of Kurdish culture, nation and literature because of political conditions, Ahmadzadeh (2003, pp. 128-129) argues that:

The specific historical and political conditions of the Kurds, and their lack of a political and geographical unity make it almost impossible to consider them as a united nation in the juridico-political sense. [...] having

been subject to the different political, cultural and to some degree even different social formations, the Kurds have inevitably been unable to unite themselves through constructing a unified culture and identity. (ibid, pp. 128- 129)

Moreover, Mehmed Uzun (2003, p. 26) has drawn attention to the fact that when one speaks of the difficulties experienced by Kurdish literature, it is essential to bear in mind the obstacles which hamper the Kurdish language. It is clear from the above that the segmentation of Kurdistan, because of the linguistic division and the political conditions, caused the segmentation of the Kurdish language and cut off communication between Kurdish writers, i.e. the writers were not yet aware of each other's work. Likewise, the Kurdish alphabet was fragmented.⁴⁸ The authoritarian state imposed its alphabet, language and culture on the part of Kurdistan which it had under its control. As a consequence, not only do the Kurds write in three different dialects - Kurmancî, Soranî and Zazakî- and three sorts of alphabets -

⁴⁸ According to Tewfîq (2008, p. 11) the Kurds had their own alphabet before Islam, and the Kurdish scholar Bleç Şêrko also pointed to this fact in his book; *Al-Qaḍīyah Al-Kurdīyah Māḍī Al-Kurd wa Ḥāḍirihim* (The Kurdish Question - Kurds Past and Present). The method of writing of Kurdish script before Islam was from left to right; it was similar to the Assyrian and Armenian alphabets. But after the Kurds adopted Islam they abandoned their alphabet and used the Arabic alphabet because it was the alphabet of the holy Quran (ibid).

Celîl (1986, pp. 131-132) claims that the founder of the Kurdish alphabet in the Arabic script, which is now used in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan, was Hussein Hoznî Mokriyanî, because he was working in the field of Kurdish printing. However, Kurdish studies have proved that the real founder of the Kurdish alphabet in the Arabic script is Xelîl Xiyalî Motkî (1876-1926), who wrote the first book about the Kurdish alphabet in Kurdish history in 1909 in Istanbul (Tewfîq, 2008, p. 21).

Concerning the Roman alphabet, which is now used in Turkish and Syrian Kurdistan, Zinar Silopî (quoted in Tewfîq, 2008, p. 55) points out that Fayz Beg was the first person who thought of writing the Kurdish language in Roman script in 1913; he was a member of a Kurdish association 'Hîvî' in Istanbul. Then, Abdullah Cewdet demanded of the Kurds that they should use the Roman script for their writing, in an article under the title *Xîṭab* (Speech) in the first number of the Journal *Rojî Kurd* (The Day of the Kurds). However, credit for using Roman script in the Kurdish Language goes to the prince Celadet Bedirxan who is known as the founder of the Roman script in the Kurdish language, and who published the Kurdish magazine, *Hawar* (The cry) in Syria in 1932 in Roman script for the first time (ibid).

The Kurds in the former Soviet Union use the Cyrillic alphabet. As Xelîl (2011) makes clear, after Stalin's death, in the mid-1950s the government of the Soviet Union asked the Kurdish writer Heciyê Cindî to establish an alphabet for the Kurdish people using the Cyrillic script. However, there had been several such attempts before this. According to Allison (in Allison, Christine and Kreyenbroeked, Philip G. ed. 2013, pp. 193-194) "The first writing system for Kurdish used an Armenian alphabet and was pioneered in 1921 by Hakop Gazarian, known as 'Lazo'. The Roman alphabet, introduced in 1929, was developed by Isaak Marogulov and by Erebe Şemo (Shamilov)".

Arabic, Roman and Cyrillic scripts - but Kurdish literature is also fragmented, and writers and readers have been separated.

As a consequence, when talking about Kurdish literature, one must also decide, which Kurdish literature, in which dialect and in which alphabet. For instance, in southern Kurdistan literature is written in two different dialects (Sorani and Behdîni-Kurmanci). Although both dialects are written in the Arabic script, except for a well-educated elite, Kurdish readers in the Sorani-speaking area cannot perfectly understand novels from the Behdînan region, because of its different dialect, and vice versa. Hence, each novel's readership and even most researchers are restricted in their area. These circumstances exactly correspond to the situation in northern Kurdistan and to some degree eastern Kurdistan. In addition, despite the Kurdish writers in the former Soviet Union (in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan) writing their literary works in Kurmanci, Kurmanci readers in all four parts of Kurdistan cannot read their works due to the Cyrillic script.

Having said all this, one can agree with Ramadân Haji Qadir (2006, pp. 14-18) when he refers to several reasons for the weakness of the novel compared to poetry in Kurdish literature, such as the lack of media in all parts of Kurdistan, the deficiency of printing presses, the fragmentation of Kurdish culture between different countries, and the absence of any cultural centre to unite their activities.

In such difficult circumstances it is unreasonable to criticize Kurdish writers for not paying attention to the novel.⁴⁹ Thus, one cannot agree with the Kurdish writer Helîm Yûsiv (2011, pp. 48-49) who said that subjection, the fragmentation of the Kurdish land and the prohibition of their language could not hamper the writing of a modern Kurdish novel at the same level as that of the novels of other languages or nations. Fuad Rashîd (2011, p. 98) rightly argues that the reason for the late rise of the Kurdish novel is not the novelists themselves, who have been accused by some Kurdish critics of being busy with poetry and not paying attention to the novel form. Reşîd asserts that political conditions caused difficulty in the publishing and printing

⁴⁹ As for the relationships between the rise of novel and social conditions, Ian Watt (1957) argues that individualism, literacy and the intellectual and social milieu have an active role in the emergence of the novel. Moreover, Watt (ibid, p. 2) asserts that the change in historical, social and economic conditions in the eighteenth century caused the emergence of Defoe, Richardson and Fielding's works. Hence, it can be seen in the colonized countries that after their freedom, the novel developed to a greater extent than before.

process, and that there were delays in printing written texts, and sometimes some of these texts remained unknown due to not being printed. Reşîd (ibid) refers to an article in the Journal *Nûserî Kurd* (The Kurdish Writer), No. (3), in 1971, which gives details of a competition to write a novel, in which six writers took part. However, their works were lost.⁵⁰ He argues that if these novels had not disappeared, the situation of the Kurdish novel in this part of Kurdistan (Iraqi Kurdistan) could have been considerably different.

History of the Rise of the Kurdish Novel

The Kurds did not write or even recognize the genre of the novel until the third decade of the twentieth century. However, the question of who initiated the first step in establishing this genre in Kurdish literature has become a 'complicated' topic. Some Kurdish scholars such as Ibrahim Qadir Muhammad (1990), Adil Germiyanî (1996) and Rashîd (2007) accept *Meseley Wîjdan* (The Question of Conscience) which was written in 1927 or 1928, by Ehmed Muxtar Caf, as the first Kurdish novel in terms of the date of its writing. On the other hand, some other Kurdish scholars such as 'Izeddîn Mustafa Resol' (1966, p. 206) and Omar Me'rof Berzencî (1978, p. 16) do not accept *Meseley Wîjdan* as a novel, because of its generic features. They argue that one cannot consider this book as a novel because there is still uncertainty about whether the author recognized the novel as a different genre from the short story, and whether he actually intended to write it as a novel or a short story. Likewise, Ahmadzadeh (2003, p. 172) does not accept *Meseley Wîjdan* as the first Kurdish novel, even if it can be considered a novel, because, although written in 1927 or 1928, it was not published until 1970, and the time of actual publication is the significant point.⁵¹

⁵⁰ The six writers in the competition were: 1. Sa'îd Nakam, *Agirî bin Ka* (The Fire under the Hay). 2. Muhammad Mewlûd, *Karwanî Genim* (The Journey of Wheat). 3. Jamal Norî, *Dayke Qaremaneke* (The Heroine Mother). 4. Muhammad Shukur Khalifa, *Pirsiyarêk* (A Question). 5. Abo Bakir Hewrî, *Bênaw* (Without Name) 6. Anwar Jâf, *Cwanemerg* (Immortal).

⁵¹ *Meseley Wîjdan* was printed in Baghdad in 1970, by Dr. Ihsân Fuad; i.e. 42 or 43 years after its writing.

Whatever the debates about the first Kurdish novel, there is a broad consensus among Kurdish scholars that *Şivanê Kurmanca* (The Kurdish Shepherd) in 1935, by Erebe Şemo, is the first Kurdish novel in the history of Kurdish literature. The second attempt to write a novel in Kurdish literature, as some Kurdish scholars argue, is Muhammad Ali Kurdî's work *Nazdar ya Kiçî Kurd le Ladê* (Nazdar or the Kurdish Girl in the Village) which its author published in three instalments in a Kurdish magazine, *Rûnakî* (The Light) (Nos. 7, 9 and 11) in 1936 in Iraqî Kurdistan. Due to the collapse of the journal, the remaining instalments were never published (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, p. 172). The author, in the introduction to the first published part, says 'this work is a fictional novel but I have taken it from reality' (ibid; Germiyanî, 1996, p. 27). However, this work cannot be considered a Kurdish novel, as Muhammad (1990, p. 7) and Ahmadzadeh (2003, p. 172) make clear, as the complete text has never been published, and its complete version is not available even in Kurdish. As the complete manuscript is only available in Arabic, the three published parts in Kurdish in *Rûnakî* could be a translation from Arabic by its author.

As a consequence of the fragmented nature of Kurdish literature, the Kurdish novel emerged in fragmented dialects and alphabets, all within the framework of the nation states under whose sovereignty the writers lived. In the former Soviet Union, the Kurdish novel emerged earlier than in other parts of Kurdistan. As Christine Allison (in Allison and Kreyenbroek ed., 2013, p. 193) observes, 'the political structure of the Soviet Union' is the distinguishing feature of this literature, which is produced with the cooperation of the state and under its censorship.

Eskerê Boyik (in Yûsiv, 2011, pp. 60-62) divides the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel in the former Soviet Union into three stages. According to him the first stage in the development of the Kurdish novel should be located between 1920 and 1937. The first actual Kurdish novel, written by Erebe Şemo, appeared in 1935. Other significant occurrences at this stage were the opening of schools for Kurdish children, the publication of books in Kurdish, and the commencement of publication of the newspaper *Riya Taze* (The New Road).⁵² Boyik (ibid) asserts that in the next

⁵² *Riya Taze* is almost the oldest Kurdish newspapers. It was published in Yerevan in Roman script from April 1, 1930 until 1937, when Stalin came to power in the former Soviet Union. All kinds of Kurdish publications were banned by Stalin's government, until in 1955 *Riya Taze* began publishing again, but in Cyrillic script. It had a significant role for the Kurdish writers and the emergence of the Kurdish novel (See Kevirbirî, 2013).

stage, 1937-1955, the most important developments were the beginning of the use of the Cyrillic script in Kurdish writing by Hacıyê Cindî, and the establishment of some centres for Kurdish activities. However, during this period (the years of the Great Patriotic War in Russia) as Allison (in Allison and Kreyenbroek ed., 2013, p. 194) argues, Erebe Şemo was exiled in 1937 and no Kurdish literature, including novels, was then published for about ten years, from 1938 until 1947. In the last stage, 1955-1990, the Kurdish writers attempted to develop the Kurdish novel, and more than ten novels were published (Boyik, in Yûsiv, 2011, pp. 60-62).⁵³

As has been mentioned above, the basic pillar of the Kurdish literature in the former Soviet Union is Erebe Şemo, who was the pioneer of Kurdish modern prose and novels. He spent the whole of his life in a cultural struggle, and he always tried to disseminate education among the Kurds and in addition to encourage Kurdish writers (Uzun, 2003, p. 49). Likewise Eliyê Evdilrehman had an active role in the field of the development of the novel in this region; he published *Xatê Xanim* (Mrs Xatê) in 1959, *Dê* (The Mother) in 1965, and *Gundê Mêrxasa* (The Village of the Braves) in 1968. Then, Heciye Cindî published his novel *Hewarî* (The Cry) in 1967, and following this a number of Kurdish novelists appeared, such as Seîdê Îbo and Egîdê Xudo (ibid).

Turning to Turkish Kurdistan, because of the harsh political conditions the emergence of the novel was delayed in this part of Kurdistan. Clemence Scalbert-Yucel (2012, p. 359) has drawn attention to the fact that the Turkish state, from its establishment in 1923 until the 1990s, denied the existence of the Kurdish people as a different nation, and depreciated Kurdish culture, identity and language. Mehmed Uzun (2003, p. 55) argues that the persecutions which were carried out by Turkey

⁵³ Here is the list of the Kurdish novels in the Former Soviet according to their authors (Boyik quoted in Yûsiv 2011, pp 61-62): *Şivanê Kurmanja/Kurd* (The Kurdish Shepherd) in 1935, *Kurdê Elegezê* (The Kurds of Elegezê) in 1936, *Berbang* (Dawn) in 1958, *Jiyana Bextewar* (Happy Life) in 1959, and *Dimdim* (Dimdim) in 1966 all by Erebe Şemo; *Hewarî* (The Cry) in 1967 by Heciye Cindî ; *Xatê [Xanim]* (Mrs Xatê) in 1959, *Gundê Mêrxasa* (The Village of the Braves) in 1968, and *Şerr Çiyada* (The Wars on the Mountains) in 1989 all by Eliyê Evdilrehman; *Kurdê Rêwî* (The Kurdish Traveler) in 1979 by Sihidê Îbo; *Dê û Dêmarî* (The Mother and the Stepmother) in 1986 by Egîdê Xudo; *Brîn, Beku* (The Wound, Beku) in 1996 by Ahmedê Hepo; *Xezeba Xwedê* (God's Wrath) the first volume in 2004, and *Xezeb* (Wrath) the second volume in 2008 by Eskerê Boyik; *Mestûre, Serê wê hêjayî tancê bû* (Mestûre, Her Head was Worth a Crown) in 2010 by Tosinê Reşid; *Fincana Ferfûrî* (A Farfoor's Cup) in 1990, and *Bingeh* (Base) in 1996 by Ezîzê Gerdenzerî; finally, *Pamp, Sîpan* (Pump, Sîpan) in 1986 by Wezirê Eşo.

against the Kurdistan region were innumerable. From 1925 until 1960, the Kurdish people could not write a sentence or even a word in their own language, because of the aggressive Turkish policy against the Kurds. Concerning the Turkish pressures on the Kurdish language, Uzun (ibid, pp. 58-59) refers to the Kurdish journalist and writer Musa Anter's book entitled *Kimil* (Wheat Bug) in 1962. The book was a collection of the author's articles which were published in the journal *Îleri Yurt* (Advanced Country) in 1959 in Diyarbakir. Although Anter's book *Kimil* was in the Turkish language, he wrote just a few lines of a Kurdish song in the Kurdish language. These few Kurdish lines in his book galvanised the whole Turkish state into action. The most famous Turkish newspapers angrily discussed these Kurdish lines, every Turkish journalist and politician stood against Anter, and claimed that it was not possible to write or read in the Kurdish language within the framework of the Turkish state. Thus, a set of formal complaints were filed to the court against Anter, the editor-in-chief of the *Îleri Yurt* newspaper, and the paper's lawyer, and subsequently Anter was imprisoned in Istanbul (ibid, p. 59).⁵⁴

The first novels which emerged and became the basis for the Kurdish novel in this region were all written in diaspora, particularly in Sweden and Europe (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, p. 175). The diaspora, therefore, has had a significant impact on Kurdish literature. Selecting the first novel in this part of Kurdistan, as in most other parts of Kurdistan, is a debatable matter; there are different ideas among the Kurdish scholars in this regard. For Uzun (2003, p. 60) *Hêlîn* (Nest) in 1984 by Mahmud Baksî is the first novel in Northern Kurdistan; whereas Ahmadzadeh (2003, p.170) and Medenî Ferho (2011, p. 29) accept *Soro* (Soro) in 1983 by Brîndar as the first novel which emerged in this region. However, according to both Yûsiv (2011, p. 15) and Ibrahim Seydo Aydogan (2011) the novel *Xanê* (Xanê) in 1982 by Brîndar is the first Kurdish novel in this part of Kurdistan. On the other hand, Abdul Rahman Paşa (2001, p. 75) and Rashîd (2007, p. 31) state that Prince Kamurân Bedirxân published in the 1930s two short novels, *Elhoyê Kurdistan* (The Eagle of Kurdistan), and *Qiralê Kurdistan* (The King of Kurdistan), the latter of which was translated into French and German as well.

⁵⁴ In the same way, the prominent Kurdish writer Mehmet Emin Bozarslan (b. 1934) was arrested and jailed, and then fled to Sweden, mainly because of his publications in the Kurdish language (van Bruinessen, 2013).

However, the question of whether Kamurān Bedirxhān had written novels in Kurdish is disputable. In this regard, Martin Strohmeier (2003, p. 157) maintains that Kamurān Bedirxhān co-authored the former novel in German with Herbert Oertel, ‘a bookshop owner in Potsdam’, in 1937.⁵⁵ As for the latter, he (ibid, p. 159) observes that in 1938:

[A] book was published in French: *Le Roi du Kurdistan*, subtitled *roman épique kurde* (not available to the author). Emir Kamuran Aali (sic) Bedir-Khan and Adolphe de Falgairolle are listed as translators, which leads me to believe that *Le Roi du Kurdistan* is a translation of the German.

On the other hand, Ferhad Pirbal (2008) describes Kamurān Bedirxhān as a Kurdish story writer of genius, and adds that he had only written in the Kurdish language and never written stories in French. Pirbal (ibid) states that Kamurān Bedirxhān wrote a novel in Kurdish entitled *Qiralê Kurdistan* (The King of Kurdistan) and that it was then “translated into French in the mid-1930s by Adolphe De Falgairolle and published in Paris”.⁵⁶ Because I have not found its Kurdish edition, and no Kurdish critic is sure whether the Kurdish version has been published yet or not, one can hardly consider it as the first published Kurdish novel in northern Kurdistan.

The Kurdish writer and novelist Lokman Polat (2007) erroneously states that the beginning of the emergence of the Kurdish novel in northern Kurdistan was in Europe in 1990. In fact, as Scalbert-Yucel (2012, p. 359) makes clear, Kurdish publications, including novels, had begun to be published in the state of Turkey in Istanbul in 1991, when “publication in Kurdish was authorized”. As has been discussed above, the early 1980s marks the beginning of the Kurdish novel in this part of Kurdistan, and approximately ten novels were published during the 1980s, all of them published in diaspora.⁵⁷ In this stage one should refer to Mehmed Uzun, who

⁵⁵ For more information concerning the novels which have been written in other languages by Kurdish writers, and the question as to whether they could be considered as Kurdish novels or not, see Ahmadzadeh, (2003, pp. 135-139).

⁵⁶ The work of Tejel (2009, p. 27) indicates that novels were among the literary and journalistic works which were encouraged by the Badirkhan brothers in their journal *Hawar* in Syrian Kurdistan, but without a clear reference to these novels.

⁵⁷ The novels which were published in the 1980s, as have been listed by Aydogan (2011) and Yûsiv (2011, pp.15-37) are as follows: 1. *Xanê* (Xanê) in 1982, and 2. *Soro* (Soro) in 1983 by Brîndar. 3. *Hêlîn* (The Nest) in 1984 and 4. *Gundikê Dono* (The Small Village of Dono) in 1988 by Mahmud Baksî, 5. *Tu* (You) in 1984, 6. *Rojek ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* (A Day of Evdalê Zeynikê’s Life) in 1987

published three novels, and both Brîndar and Mahmud Baksî, who each published two novels during this period and were pioneers of the Kurdish novel in this part of Kurdistan. However, according to Aydogan (2011) between 1991 and 1999 i.e. during the time of political reform in Turkey, thirteen new novelists appeared. Among the most active novelists during this period of time one can name Medenî Ferho, who published four novels.⁵⁸

As for Kurdish novels in Zazakî (Kirmanckî) in Turkish Kurdistan, there is little writing available at all in this Kurdish dialect.⁵⁹ The political conditions have impacted greatly on this dialect; as the Kurdish Zazakî writer Roşan Lezgîn (quoted in Yûsiv, 2011, p. 69) makes clear, the reason for this impact goes back to the fact that all Kurdish Zazakî live only within the framework of Turkish Kurdistan, under the Turkish occupation.⁶⁰ Consequently the policy of prohibiting the Kurdish language in this part of Kurdistan has affected this dialect more than Kurmancî. Kurmancî has been used in the former Soviet Union, Cairo, Damascus, Beirut and other places, and therefore we can see that this policy has impacted on Kurmancî less than Zazakî. In a published article in the journal *Pirs* (The Question) number 39, in 2007, Lezgîn says that the oldest text written in Zazakî is a book by Peter Ivanovich Lerchi, which consists of some oral texts which the writer collected from some Kurdish Zazakî prisoners and published in 1857 in St Petersburg. Lezgîn (ibid) states that the first text which was written in Zazakî by a Kurd is Mela Ehmedê Xasî's *Mewlodname* (the biography of the Prophet Muhammad's birth) in 1899, written in the Arabic script.⁶¹

and 7. *Mirna Kalekê Rind* (The Death of a Nice Old Man) in 1989, all by Mehmed Uzun, 8. *Dê û Dêmarî* (The Mother and the Stepmother) in 1986 by Egîdê Xudo, 9. *Wendabûn* (Vanishing) in 1987 by Şahîne Soreklî, and 10. *Zeviyên Soro* (Soro's Fields) in 1988 by Nûrî Şemdîn (Nacî Kutlay).

⁵⁸ Medenî Ferho's novels which were published between 1991 and 1999 are: *Berxwedan Jiyane* (Struggle is Life) in 1994, *Mîrza Mihemed* (Mîrza Mihemed) in 1995, *Xaltîka Zeyno* (The Aunt Zeyno) in 1998 and *Marê di Tûr de* (The Snake in the Bag) in 1999 (see Aydogan, 2011).

⁵⁹ This Kurdish dialect has four names; Kirdkî, Kirmanckî, Dimilkî and Zazakî. As a consequence of standardization Kirmanckî is used in the field of writing (Lezgîn, 2007. Pp. 3-8).

⁶⁰ Zazakî people live in 13 cities of northern Kurdistan; 1. Batman, 2. Bedlis, 3. Çewlig, 4. Dersim, 5. Diyarbakir, 6. Erzincan, 7. Erzurum, 8. Meleti, 9. Muş, 10. Semsur, 11. Sivas, 12. Xarpet, and 13. Riha. In terms of religion, half of the Zazakî people are Sunni Muslim, and the others follow the Elwy ('Alawi) doctrine. The Sunni Kurds introduce themselves as Kurds and their language (dialect) as Kirdkî (Lezgîn, ibid).

⁶¹ According to Xeznedar (2001, p. 179) a large number of literary works have been written in Kurdish literature, in both poetry and prose, but mostly in Masnavi poems (a type of poem written in rhyming couplets), about the biography and adventures of the prophet Muhammad. This form of literature is known as *Mewlodname* (the biography of the Prophet Muhammad's birth).

According to Lezgîn (quoted in Yûsiv, 2011, p. 69) both writing and the literary movement in this dialect had been brought to a stop until the 1970s, when some improvements occurred in Turkish politics. Lezgîn (ibid) asserts that the Kurdish Zazakî modern literature began with the publication of the magazine *Tîrêj* (Ray).⁶² This magazine was the first magazine completely published in Kurdish in Izmir in 1979. *Tîrêj* was published in both Kurmancî and Kirmanckî (Zazakî), and for the first time Zazakî prose was published in this magazine. However, this magazine was closed by the Turkish government after the publication of only three issues (ibid). For the second time Kirmanckî writing was used in the journal *Rojname* (The Newspaper) in 1991 in Istanbul. Then in 1995 some Kirmanckî literary texts were published in the magazine *Çira* (Torch) in Stockholm. This development of writing prose in the Kurdish Kirmanckî (Zazakî) dialect led to the issuance of the magazine *Vateyî* in 1996; the key work of this magazine is the standardization of the Kirmanckî dialect (Lezgîn, 2007).

The development of writing prose in Zazakî also gave inspiration to begin writing novels, and the first novel in this Kurdish dialect, *Kilama Pepûgî* (The Cuckoo Words) was published in 2000 by Deniz Gunduzî in Ankara. Ten years later, i.e. 2010, he published his second novel entitled *Soro* (Red) in Istanbul. In 2007 two other novels were published in Kirmanckî, *Gula Çemê Pêrre* (The Rose of Pêrre Stream) and *Kilama Şilane* (About Şilan) by Munzur Çem and Îlhamî Sertkaya respectively. Jêhatî Zengelan also published his first novel *Zifqêra Berî* (The Doorstep) in 2009 in Istanbul (Lezgîn, quoted in Yûsiv, 2011, pp. 71-72).⁶³

The flourishing of the novel in Syrian Kurdistan has been discussed by almost all Kurdish critics together with novels in Turkish Kurdistan, because all Kurds in Syrian (western) Kurdistan speak in the Kurmancî dialect and write in the Roman script. Furthermore, because their literary activities were prohibited in western Kurdistan by the Syrian regime, the field of their literary activities was also in diaspora, so there is a remarkable mixing between Kurdish writers and culture in both parts of Kurdistan.

⁶² The most famous Kurdish scholar working to revive this dialect is M. Malmîsanij, who from 1996 has been trying to standardize Zazakî in Stockholm and is writing the first Kurdish Zazakî dictionary. In general there are two sub-dialects in Zazakî; Dersim's sub-dialect which is used by the Kurdish Elwy, and Çewlik's sub-dialect, which is used by the Sunni (Lezgîn quoted in Yûsiv, 2011, pp. 71-72).

⁶³ It is worth mentioning that only five novels had been published in this Kurdish dialect until 2011 (Lezgîn, quoted in Yûsiv, 2011, p. 72).

That is why when talking about Kurdish literature in northern Kurdistan, we should also discuss the literature in western Kurdistan at the same time. Of course, these relationships have historical dimensions. Uzun (2003, p. 55) points out that a number of Kurdish writers migrated from northern Kurdistan to Syria in order to save themselves from mass murder in the 1930s; they were dissidents against the Kamalist government, the most prominent of whom was Celadet Bedirxan (1893-1951). These writers published the journal *Hawar* (The Cry) (1932-1951) then *Ronahî* (Illumination) (1942-1944), and a number of Kurdish intellectuals gathered around them and established an effective literary movement. Badirkhan (quoted in Tejel, 2009, p. 22) argues that *Hawar* supported the Kurdish language by: publication of a grammar in Kurdish; comparative studies between Kurdish dialects; a publication of the Kurdish classics and folklore; and also by its interest in music, the attention it paid to ethnographic studies of Kurdish customs, and its study of the history and geography of Kurdistan. Furthermore, the Badirkhan brothers had an active role in promoting the Kurdish language and in standardizing the language, by choosing the *Botani* sub-dialect and using the Roman alphabet for the first time as the Kurdish writing system. In addition, they taught Kurdish young people the Kurdish language in private schools (Tejel, 2009, passim). Jordi Tejel (ibid, p. 22) adds that radio broadcasts in Kurdish “began on March 5 1941 and consisted of 30-minute broadcasts twice a week” by Radio Levant from Beirut under the supervision of Kamuran Badirkhan. The Badirkhan brothers played a key role in the movement towards both cultural and national renaissances.

According to Qadir (2006) and Polat (2007) the first novel which emerged in western Kurdistan was *Reşoyê Darê* (Reşoyê Darê), which was written in 1956 by Cegerxwîn. The second novelist in Syrian Kurdistan was Bavê Nazê, who published two novels in the 1980s. As Nacî Kutlay (quoted in Ahmadzadeh 2003, p. 176) states, Bavê Nazê’s novel *Çiyayên bi Xwîné Avdayî* (The Mountains which are Watered with Blood) was “first translated into Arabic and from Arabic into Russian. Its Russian translation was published in Moscow in 1981”. Ahmadzadeh (ibid) comments that the Kurdish version appeared in 1989 in Stockholm. The second novel of Bavê Nazê is *Stokholmê te çi Dîtiye Bêje* (Say What Have You Seen in Stockholm?) in 1987. However, as has been discussed above, the date of printing of a book is important for readers, therefore Xemgînê Temo, who published his novel

Pala Bêşop (Traceless Farmer) in 1983, precedes *Bavê Nazê* in this part of Kurdistan.

Among other novelists in Syrian Kurdistan one can name Azad Bavê Şahîn who published his first novel *Yên Perîşan* (The Poor) in 1991 in Beirut and *Berxikê Kesk* (Green Lamb) in 2008, and Helîm Yûsiv whose novel *Sobarto* (Subartu) was published in 1999, *Tirsa Bêdiran* (The Toothless Fright) in 2006 and *Gava ku Masî Tî Dibin* (When Fish Feel Thirsty) in 2008 (Yûsiv, 2011, pp. 34-36; Ahmadzadeh, 2003, p. 176).

In Iranian Kurdistan the Democratic Republic of Kurdistan was established in 1946; however, it collapsed 11 months after its establishment. Consequently, most Kurdish politicians and intellectuals migrated abroad, and they lost their political, literary and cultural opportunities. Subsequently, after the collapse, the Kurdish language was prohibited by the Iranian regime, and the Kurds lived in extremely harsh political and social conditions, as indeed they did in other parts of Kurdistan (Ahmadzadeh, 2003, P. 174).

These severe socio-political conditions hampered the development of Iranian Kurdish literature. By all accounts the first Kurdish novel which emerged in eastern Kurdistan was *Pêşmerge* (Peshmerga) in 1961 by Rahîm Qazî in Baghdad. This novel is not only the first novel which emerged in Iranian Kurdistan, but also the first novel published in the Soranî dialect. As Uzun (2003, pp. 44-45) argues, *Pêşmerge* was written in exile by Rahîm Qazî, who is a close relative of the president of the Democratic Republic of Kurdistan Qazî Muhammad, and was both a politician and a writer. Uzun (ibid) says that after the collapse of the Republic Qazî emigrated to the former Soviet Union. There, his observation of the development of Russian language and literature encouraged him to write his novel *Pêşmerge*, the theme of which centres on events surrounding the Democratic Republic of Kurdistan. However, Ahmadzadeh (2003, p. 175) points out that before the Republic's collapse the Kurdish government had sent some Kurdish young people abroad for the purpose of studying, and that Qazî had in fact been among them. Whatever Qazî's story in exile, because he belongs to eastern Kurdistan and published his novel *Pêşmerge* in Iraq, his novel was important for both Iranian and Iraqi (Soranî speaking) Kurds at that time, as it was the first novel published in Soranî.

According to Ahmadzadeh (2006) the Kurdish novel in Iranian Kurdistan developed in the 1990s. The most famous novelist in this period is 'Atā Nehayî, whose first novel *Guîî Şorran* (The Flower of Shorran) was published in 1998. Rashîd (2007, p. 124) states that in terms of technique and style Nehayî's novel *Bajîndekanî Dem Ba* (Birds with the Wind) which was published in 2002, is considered as the first metafictional Kurdish novel in Iranian Kurdistan.

Concerning the Kurdish Kurmancî novel in Iranian Kurdistan, Yûsiv (2011, p. 68) states that the Kurdish Kurmancî novelist Perwêz Cihanî in an answer to his question about the Kurmancî novel in eastern Kurdistan, says that writing in Kurmancî in general started after the end of the authority of the Shah in Iran, in some publications and magazines such as *Sirwe* (The Breeze). Cihanî (cited in Yûsiv, 2011, p. 68) adds that there is only one published novel in Kurmancî, which is *Bilîcan* (Bilîcan) which was written by himself in eastern Kurdistan and published in 2002 in Istanbul.

In Iraqi Kurdistan the question of the first novel in Soranî has been discussed above, and it has been suggested that the difficulty is the debate as to whether *Meseley Wijdan* in 1927 or 1928, is the first written novel, or whether one can consider the uncompleted novel *Nazdar ya Kiçî Kurd le Ladê* in 1936 as a Kurdish novel, or indeed whether Ibrahim Ahmad's novel *Janî Gel* (The People's Suffering) which was written in 1956 and published in 1972, is the first novel, at least in terms of the time of its writing. It has also been suggested that none of these can be considered as the first published Kurdish/ Soranî novel in southern Kurdistan, rather than the first novel should be *Aştî Kurdistan* (Kurdistan's Peace) in 1970 by Muhammad Saliḥ Sa'id, because of the time of its publication (in the current study the actual date of publication is the most significant point for books).

The development of the Iraqi Kurdish novel in the Soranî dialect began in the second half of the 1980s during the Kurdish 26 May Opposition, as has been discussed in the previous part of the present chapter. The second stage of the development of the Kurdish novel in this dialect came after 1991. Jalal Anwar Sa'id (2010, pp. 297-301) has arranged a bibliography of the Iraqi Kurdish novel in Soranî; according to his bibliography there were 70 novels published between 1991 and 2003. However, the situation in the Behdînan area is different.

The Kurdish novel in the Behdînan area, is on the one hand part of the Kurdish literature of Iraqi Kurdistan, but on the other hand it also belongs to the body of works written in the Kurmancî dialect. However, the Arabic alphabet and the political situation have caused it to separate from the Kurmancî of other parts of Kurdistan. The Kurdish novels written in the Behdînan area of Iraqi Kurdistan are hardly read in the Soranî-speaking areas, as mentioned above, but in addition they are also rarely read in the Kurmancî-speaking areas of Turkish and Syrian Kurdistan, because of the difference in alphabet. Thus, when Kurdish scholars talk about the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel they ignore novels from this area, perhaps because they do not have enough information about the development of these novels. Due to the few studies in Kurdish literary criticism which are concerned with this dialect, I will consider it further here.

In fact publication in general in the Behdînî dialect has not developed in the same way that it has in the Soranî dialect. A Kurdish scholar Amir Hassanpour (2012) makes clear that when the British colonized Iraq and established the new Iraqi state, they dealt with the Kurdish language as Soranî, not because Soranî is 'richer' or 'nicer' than Kurmancî, but because the British base was in the Soranî areas at that time, and it is the majority dialect in Iraqi Kurdistan. Also the Iraqi government after the period of the Monarchy (i.e. the Republic of Iraq) dealt with the Kurdish language in the same way.⁶⁴ Thus printing presses and schools used the Soranî dialect until the Kurdish uprising in 1991. This situation, besides the political and geographical reasons (the Behdînan area belonged to Mosul until 1969, when the Governorate of Duhok was established) has led to the dominance of the Arabic language in the Behdînan area. Subsequently, the emergence of the novel in the region was delayed; however, poetry was in a better situation, and a number of Kurdish poets appeared in that period, such as Xelîl Duhokî, Abd al-Raḥman Mizûrî and Mueyed Teyîb, the main theme of whose poetry was resistance and revolution.

The first Kurdish novel which emerged in the Behdînan area was *Deravê Teng* (The Narrow Way) by Kerîm Biyanî in 1988.⁶⁵ As the novel was published during the Iraqi

⁶⁴ For more information concerning the policy of Iraq from 1918 until 1985 against the Kurdish language, see Hassanpour, (1992, Pp. 103-124).

⁶⁵ Muhammad (1990) does not accept *Deravê Teng* as a novel because of its size and theme. One cannot agree with him for many reasons; firstly, it was published by its author as a novel. Secondly, the reason for its choice of theme is the literary censorship due to the above-mentioned harsh political

occupation of Kurdistan, the novel's hero is ambivalent, without a clear position about the Kurdish movement. The second novel which emerged in Behdînan is *Buhijîn* (Assimilation); the first volume was published in 1989, by Nafi' Akrayî.⁶⁶

From 1991 until 2003 only six novels were published in the Behdînan dialect. However, after the liberation of Iraq in 2003, the genre of the novel in Iraqi Kurdistan began to progress; subsequently, the situation of the Kurdish novel in Behdînan has improved, at least in terms of quantity.⁶⁷ A conference under the title of *Dîdara Romana Kurdî li Devera Behdînan* (A Symposium Concerning the Kurdish Novel in the Behdînan Area) was held in Duhok on November 8 2012, organized by the Directorate of Literary Activities in Duhok. During the conference eight papers were presented and at the end of the conference a catalogue of all the novels and novelists in the Behdînan area was published. The conference's results were then announced in the *Evro* (Today) daily newspaper. According to its results 51 novels have been published by Behdînan novelists, four of them written in Arabic and one of them written in English.⁶⁸ Additionally the conference declared that the number of novelists in the Behdînan area has reached twenty-five (Evro, 2011).

conditions, and since its publication in 1988, this book has been read in the Behdînan area as a short novel, and has led to various reflections among the Kurdish critics. Finally, the first book to be written about the Kurdish novel, *Al-Riwāyah al-Kurdiyāh* (The Kurdish Novel) in 1993, by Abd al-Raḥman Pasha, and other works on the Kurdish novel such as Qadir (2006), Hîto (2011) and Yûsiv (2011), have accepted the *Deravê Teng* as a Kurdish novel in Behdînan, because it is the first book in the Behdînan area which has *roman* (novel) written on its cover.

⁶⁶ The second volume of *Buhijîn* was prepared for publishing by Muhammad Salîm Siwarî in 2000.

⁶⁷ In an answer concerning the question of the rise of the Behdînan novel, the novelist Tahseen Navişkî (cited in Yûsiv, 2011, pp. 63-64) divided the rise of the Behdînan novel into four stages. 1. Before the Kurdish uprising in 1991, 2. After the Kurdish uprising, 3. Before the fall of the statue of the Iraqi dictator, 4. After the defeat of the dictator of Baghdad. However, one cannot agree with his division of stages, because the second and the third stages of his division cannot be separated from one another as there was no significant political or literary event to act as a boundary between them.

⁶⁸ In the catalogue the book *Palê Pişî* (Traceless Worker) by Jaro Duhokî in 2001 was listed as a novel; however, one cannot accept this book as a novel because of its generic features. Even its author did not write *roman* (novel) on the book, and at the time of its publication never described it as a novel, although subsequently he has sometimes referred to it as a *roman*. The Kurdish Behdînan writer Ehmed Balayî published a book entitled *Pêlek ji Bayê Reva Reş* (A Wave from the Black Flight's Wind) in 1991 and then again in 1999. This book is the writer's experience during the Kurds' mass migration in 1991. In the introduction to his book the author says 'like thousands of Kurds I was among the people on this flight, and during this migration we saw many terrible pictures and many in dire plight. As far as I can I have written a little thing in an art form (bi şêwek hunerî)'. That means the author could not even say in a literary form (bi şêwek edebî) at that time. However, he re-published his book in 2012 in Duhok (i.e. twenty-one years later) as a novel. Therefore, one cannot accept this book as a novel for the second stage (1991-2003) of the rise of the Kurdish novel.

Chapter Three

The Kurdish Novel from 1970-1991, Tragic Vision

Introduction

As has been argued in the Introductory Chapter, modern Iraqi Kurdish society has passed through three historical stages. The changes in the political situation have had their impact on Kurdish society in terms of economy and culture, including literature. The novel as the most recent genre of Kurdish literature has also been influenced by the political changes in Iraqi Kurdistan. In the current analytical chapters, making use of Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralist approach, I will attempt to explore to what extent these political conditions have impacted on the Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Iraqi Kurdish novel emerged in this first historical phase (1970-1991) as a new genre. In addition, the style and technique of the novel in this stage are close to the traditional form of the novel seen in Europe in the 18th century. During the analysis of the samples of the study we will see that the focus is on one 'problematic hero', who is described in every aspect during his conflicts with his society. The time span of the events is recounted chronologically in a particular enclosed place. Moreover, the conflict is mostly between two social classes, and the hero always comes from the lower class and suffers from a range of different problems and crises. The dominant vision of the novel is the tragic view, because despite his bravery, the hero is destined to fail.

However, it could be argued that traditionally characters of a lower social status are not important enough to engender tragedy in a literary work. This notion of tragedy makes it difficult to determine the tragic vision of the novel genre, because the novel consists of many characters and most of the time the main character is from the lower social class. That is why Irene Webb (1981, p. 16) concludes that if a novel holds at least some criteria of tragedy, it should be described as tragic.

Although Goldmann's criteria for tragedy in *The Hidden God* - his first book of genetic structuralist methodology - are to a large degree similar to Aristotle's observations on classical Greek tragedy, he has specified that his own conditions for

a work to be described as tragic are essential conditions.⁶⁹ There are a number of criteria for tragedy in Goldmann's sense;⁷⁰ firstly, there must be a sense of fatalism or inevitability present in the work. In this regard, he (1976, p. 81) states that:

In the perspective of tragedy, clarity means first and foremost awareness of the unchangeable nature of the limits placed on man, and of the inevitability of death ... Tragic greatness transforms the suffering which man is forced to endure because it is imposed upon him by a meaningless world...

Another criterion for tragedy in Goldmann's view is that an absolute morality (value) should have priority over worldly values. He (ibid, p. 58) maintains that:

For what the tragic mind accepts as its first absolute value is that of truth, and this demand is inevitably accompanied by the realisation that all the possibilities offered by this world are limited and inadequate.

Moreover, according to Goldmann, there must be an insoluble, rather than just an unresolved, conflict in the work; he (in Knight, 1969, p. 104) maintains that "What distinguishes a tragedy is the fact that its conflicts are essentially insoluble - and not merely non-resolved."

Goldmann (1976) also believes that in the case of socio-economic and political decline affecting members of a social class, there will be an ideological response; this response is the tragic vision of that social class. According to him, this can be found in the ideological structure of the Jansenists' religious movement. He argues that this could be seen, for example, among the 'noblesse de robe' in France during the seventeenth century.

⁶⁹ According to Aristotle (1927, p. XI) the existence of a tragic main character (hero) is a crucially important characteristic of tragedy. At the same time the main character should be in a high position and of 'good fortune' compared to ordinary people. Goldmann's utilization of an 'absolute morality' conveys the same notion as "the main character should be in a high position". Furthermore, he (1976, p. 371) uses Aristotelian concepts of *peripeteia* (reversal of fortune) and *anagnorisis* (recognition), and also the tragic hero, in his analysis of Racine's plays.

⁷⁰ By making use of the Lukacsian model of the relationship between the gods and man Goldmann formulates his analytical principles in *The Hidden God* (see Lukacs, 1971, p. 152). In this regard, Goldmann sets out three elements of the tragic vision: God, man and the world. According to him, this type of vision underlies the works of both Pascal and Racine, who held views similar to Jansenism in its extreme form.

Taking into consideration Goldmann's criteria for tragedy, in the case of the Kurdish tragic novel in the current historical phase, the reasons why the novel appeared in its particular form are various, but the most prominent one might be a political reason. In this analysis of their novels we will see from the novelists' biographies how the harsh political situation at this stage influenced Iraqi Kurdish writers.

For this reason I will begin with some biographical information about the writers, in order to show how the difficult social conditions they themselves experienced - mostly because of the harsh political situation at that time - made their lives tragic in nature. Then in the last section I will use this information as a mediating factor in order to help in understanding the world view of their works.

This chapter examines works by two writers, Muhammad Mokrî (1945-2012), *Segwerr* (Barking), 1982,⁷¹ and Nafi' Akreyî (1944-1992), *Bohjîn* (Assimilation), 1989.⁷²

Muhammad Mokrî

Muhammad Ali Muhammad Abdullah Mokrî was born in 1945. In an interview he (2012, p. 31) states that he is uncertain of his date of birth; his parents were originally from Iran and they did not have any fixed citizenship.⁷³ Mokrî is not sure why his parents lived in Kirkuk in Iraq; he assumes the reason was poverty. He (ibid)

⁷¹ *Segwerr* is the first novel of the prominent Kurdish writer Muhammad Mokrî; it was first published in 1982, and it immediately gained a reputation among Kurdish people, both rebels and intellectuals, because of its criticism of the Kurdish movement in a sensitive political situation. Consequently *Segwerr* became a threat for Mokrî's life at that time (we will look at this in more detail in the last section of this chapter). It has been published five times and translated into the Arabic language. Jalal Talabani, the president of the PUK and former president of the Republic of Iraq, wrote the introduction to its fourth edition. Probably *Segwerr* was the most famous novel in this historical phase in Iraqi Kurdistan.

⁷² *Bohjîn* is the first volume of the first novel by the famous Kurdish writer Nafi' Akreyî, written in the late 1980s, at which time Akreyî was the president of the Kurdish Writers' Union. His first published novel *Bohjîn* was the second novel written in the Behdîni (Kurmanji) dialect, and Kurdish critics such as Ibrahim Qadir Muhammad (1990), 'Adil Germiyanî (1996) and 'Arif 'Îtîto (2011) accept it as the most successful novel in this dialect in this historical stage. It soon gained a reputation throughout Iraqi Kurdistan, perhaps firstly because of the writer's position, and then because of the topic of the text.

⁷³ The only detailed source for introducing Muhammad Mokrî and his biography is this interview, which was published three times; once in the magazine *Gelawêjî Nuwê* (New Gelawêj), number (31), October 2003, and for the second and third times published in the journal *Kurdistanî Nuwê* (New Kurdistan) as an addendum/appendix, numbers (5444, 5771), 4/4/2011; and 7/5/2012 respectively. In my present research I will repeatedly make reference to this source.

states that he gained Iraqi citizenship for two dinars, as a bribe to a team of the Department of Citizenship in Kirkuk (Soranî area). This team accepted his date of birth as the first of July (as for most Iraqi people), 1945, and he was then able to go to school.⁷⁴

In the same interview Mokrî says that he never knew his father; when he was born his father had already died and his mother had married another poor man. He recounts that his stepfather treated him as a real father. Mokrî states that he never forgot his stepfather's advice: the believer must not fear, he must ask for no more than his daily bread and this bread must be obtained from the fruit of his effort. Mokrî (ibid) points out that he remembers that during his stepfather's life they were never able to save money, and as tenants they moved twenty-seven times to different properties in Kirkuk.

Mokrî faced a number of difficulties in his early studying. When he started primary school he lived in a poor street in Kirkuk's citadel, which was mostly a Turkmen street. The curriculum of his school was in Arabic, whereas the teachers taught in the Turkmen language; therefore, he understood the interpretation rather than the language of the curriculum. He had only one Kurdish classmate ('Adil Mulla Waysî) and they were both the cleverest pupils in the class; however, both teachers and pupils hit them because of this (ibid). Mokrî (ibid, pp. 31-32) recounts that he was in year two when a teacher named Ahmed Ali Ghalib called him to come into the year four class; when Mokrî arrived there he saw that a pupil named Sabaḥ Mohammad Afindî was standing in front of a chalkboard, unable to solve a maths problem. The teacher asked Mokrî to do it, which he did. Then the teacher asked the pupils to clap at his cleverness; however, the pupils did not clap with any warmth, except four of them who were Kurdish. Then the teacher asked Mokrî three times to spit on Afindî's face; which he refused to do, fearing the Turkmen pupils' angry revenge; after that the teacher hit his hands with a baton until he broke one of his fingers and then kicked and slapped him; then he started kicking and slapping the four other Kurdish pupils.

⁷⁴ Because of the lack of regular registration in Iraq at that time the birthday of most Iraqi people is the first of July or the first of January (Mokrî, 2012, p. 31).

After Mokrî finished primary school (year six) he worked as a waiter in a kebab restaurant for three months (ibid, p. 32). According to him (ibid, p. 33) the first book that he read was *How to Write Contemporary Letters* in Arabic, when he was a teenager, but he did not fully understand this because of the language. His aim in reading that book was to help him write a letter to his girlfriend; then he stopped reading books for several years.

As for Mokrî's own works, he (ibid, p. 35) states that his literary works were the cause of the confiscation of his home in Kirkuk and his exile. He states that because of his works the Baathist government arrested him in order to execute him. In the same way, when he was among the Kurdish movement in the mountains some of the peshmerga cadres treated him more like a dog than a human being. As Rashîd (2012, p. 10) argues, two of Mokrî's works became a threat to his life; the first was *Amêrekan* (The Machines), a short story which was published in *Beyan* (The Declaration) magazine issue 72 in 1981. This short story led to the confiscation of all copies of that issue of the magazine, and Mokrî was arrested by the Iraqi government. The story is concerned with the coming together of two people in a public place; each one of them is watching the other and each fears the other. Each one thinks that the other is a spy and a security man. Indeed, both of them are victims of the political system which instilled fear in them. Thus, the fear turns humans into machines. The second work was *Segwerr*, which was published in 1982, in the mountains among the Kurdish movement; and which led to Mokrî being threatened by some Peshmerga cadres; however he was pardoned by Jalal Talabani, the president of the PUK (Talabani in Mokrî, 1998, p. 6).

In early 1982 Mokrî became a member of the Peshmerga and worked with the Kurdish Writers Union in the mountains. He and a group of friends published several magazines and other literary works, including three novels.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ The following is the list of his works in the mountains; magazines: *Nuserî Kurdistan* (The Writer of Kurdistan), *Gizing* (Nettle) and *Keltur* (Culture). These were his works written in mountains; *Segwerr* (Barking) a novel in 1982, *Sê Dadga* (Three Courts) a play in 1983, *Heres* (Heres) (two volumes) novels in 1985, *To'le* (The Revenge) a novel in 1985, *Nêçîr* (Hunting) a short story collection in 1986 and *Ismail Bêşikçî û Kurd* (Ismail Bêşikçî and the Kurds). In addition, in the late 1980s he translated these works from both Arabic and Persian into Kurdish: Nikolai Gogol's *Taras Bulba*; John Steinbeck's *Viva Zapata*; *Xesrewî Gul'sorxî* (Xesrewî Gul'sorxî); and *Yadaştekanî Qawām al-Sulţan* (Memories of the Strength of Power) (Mokrî, 2012, p. 35).

Although Mokrî was not a Marxist,⁷⁶ as an intellectual member of the Iraqi Kurdish Liberation Movement he supported the working class and their revolutionary struggle in two of his novels, *Segwerr* (in 1982) and *Heres* (two volumes both written in 1985). This attitude towards the working class may have developed from his marginal position in society; thus, it is an important mediating factor in revealing his world view.

Mokrî's bitter experience in life during his childhood, and then his participation in the Kurdish movement caused him suffering from different quarters. The most prominent source of his hardships was the political situation. These harsh political conditions were one of the major reasons for his tragic view.

Nafi' Akreyî

Nafi' Akreyî was from the same society and generation and also had a tragic view. He suffered from an almost identical situation, but in his own particular way. Nafi' Eyob Feyzullah Akreyî was born in 1944 in Akrê, a small town in Duhok province (Behdînan area).⁷⁷ Akreyî grew up in a poor family in a poor town, as did most of his friends. His father was a wage earner and tenant in an uncomfortable property; and

After the Kurdish uprising in 1991 Mokrî worked for the newspaper *Kurdistanî Nwê* (New Kurdistan); then he became the editor in chief of the magazine *Peyvîn* (Speak) until his death. He wrote his last novel *Ejdîha* (Monster) in 1998. He was rewarded by the Kurdistan Regional Government for his novels (Kerîm, 2012, p. 6).

⁷⁶ As for his religious belief, he was religious but in his own way i.e. he did not follow any specific religion. In an interview Mokrî (2012, p. 32) said that he believed in God with a stronger belief now than in his childhood. Faith in God is important for him, but the great God who he believes in is not that God of whom most religions speak. Mokrî states that he reads sacred books of every religion e.g. the Old Testament, Bible and the Quran; however for some issues he is mostly attracted to Taoism.

⁷⁷ Kurdish critics such as Ibrahim Qadir Muhammad (1990) and 'Arif 'Hîto (2011) argue that the novel *Bohjîn* is close to the writer's autobiography, because there are some similarities between his and his hero's life. Akreyî published these works: 1. *Şêxê Sen'an* (Sheikh Sen'an), a play in 1977; 2. *Çend Bîrhatinên Pizîşkekî* (Some Memories of a Doctor), a short story collection in 1980; 3. *Ew Şeva Qet Jibîrnekem* (The Night which I Never Forget), a short story collection in 1988; 4. *Min Shi'er al-Muqaweme al-Irani* (Some Iranian Poetry of Struggle), translated poetry in 1989; 4. *Bohjîn* (Assimilation), the first volume of a novel in 1989; 5. The second volume of *Bohjîn*, prepared for publication by the Kurdish novelist Muhammad Salîm Siwarî in 2000 (Germiyanî, 1996, p. 201; Yasîn, 2014).

had a large family (Yasîn, 2014).⁷⁸ He studied at primary and high school in Akrê and at the College of Medicine at the University of Mosul from 1962-1968; he also graduated from the College of Law at the University of Damascus by distance study in 1967. As an active writer he published a number of articles in Kurdish magazines and newspapers in both Kurdish and Arabic languages. Following this he became an editor in chief of *Nûserî Kurd* (The Kurdish Writer) magazine and then *Tendirustî û Cîvak* (Health and Society) magazine. Then he became president of the Writers Union of Kurds in Iraq (Germiyanî, 1996, p. 201).

Akreyî had strong relations with the Kurdish September Revolution (1961-1975). When he was a doctor at the Student Health Centre in Duhok, he used to secretly send drugs to the rural areas and Peshmerga forces (Yasîn, 2014). Hîkmet Mela Yasîn (ibid) states that Nafî Akreyî had a medical clinic in Erbil (Hewlêr); his clinic was free for the families of survivors of the genocide and poor Kurdish people. In other words, Akreyî's work was charitable more than for commercial purposes or profit. He had a very simple house in Erbil, and he did not have a car. Although he experienced upward social mobility - from a poor student and wage earner to the status of a professional person - he never attained the upper middle class, because of the difficult situation facing Kurdish people at that time. According to Yasîn (ibid) he did not believe in a specific religion; he did not even believe in Marxist ideology, except some of its particular aspects such as supporting the working class. Akreyî was killed, in an incident which has never been solved, between Mosul and Erbil in August 13 1992 (Germiyanî, 1996, p. 201).⁷⁹

As a result of the policy of marginalization of Kurdish towns and cities by the Iraqi government, when Akreyî finished primary school there were no secondary and high schools in his town, and he encouraged his classmates and their parents to ask for the establishment of a secondary school in Akrê. They made several requests for that purpose to Dāirat al-Ma'ārf (Mosul County Council) but to no avail (Yasîn, 2014). According to Yasîn (ibid) the King of Iraq, King Faisal, traveled to the Akrê area in the spring of 1952. Nafî Akreyî gathered his colleagues with their parents to

⁷⁸ Very little has been written about Nafî Akreyî's biography, therefore for the purpose of obtaining personal information on his biography I conducted an interview with his best friend Hîkmet Mela Yasîn in his house in Akrê on May 3 2014.

⁷⁹ In effect, Akreyî was assassinated by an unknown group; see Chapter Two of the current study, p. 63.

go to see the King and made the same request. Consequently they succeeded in their plan and the secondary school was established in the same year by order of the King.

What can be observed from the two novelists' lives, although they are from different areas and dialects (Sorani and Behdini), is that both of them suffered from poverty and were from a marginal social class. The widespread illiteracy in their society had its influence on their lives and beliefs and then on their literary creations. The common factor of their suffering was the Iraqi government's aggressive attitude towards their people, which led to a lack of freedom of expression and was the root of their tragic vision.

Moreover, as support for communism was widespread among the Kurdish rebels and intellectuals, both writers supported some aspects of it, such as upholding the rights of the working class. It may be important to bear in mind that there were two types of communist among the Kurdish movement at that period. Lezgîn Çalî (2014, p. 6) argues that a group of Iraqi-Kurdish people were present among the Kurdish revolutionaries who did not comprehend the meaning and purposes of communism, while nevertheless claiming to be communists and criticizing the Kurdish tribes and religions, and at the same time becoming in some cases officials in their parties.⁸⁰ The second kind was an intellectual class who understood the concept of communism - it could be argued that Mokrî was significantly influenced by this group. They criticized the Kurdish revolution and the first group of communists; Azad Cindiyanî (2012, p. 2), was one of the communist cadres among the Peshmerga forces at that time, and states that in this aspect *Segwerr* became the most famous book among the Iraqi Kurdish intellectuals and rebels at that time.

⁸⁰ It is worth mentioning that in the early 1950s, more precisely in 1953, the Kurdish Liberation Movement under the Kurdistan Democratic Party decided to join the left, and began to establish secret organizations for the purpose of supporting the rights of peasants, and the socialist encampment against imperialism (Ghareeb, 1981, p. 36). Although after a few years the Movement decided to leave the left, most of the Iraqi Kurdish intelligentsia remained with the left until 1991. Jalal Talabani (quoted in Ghareeb, *ibid*, p. 35) argues that from the 1940s the "Kurdish intelligentsia became attracted to Marxist-Leninist ideas and began to rely on Soviet aid."

The Themes of the Novels

1. In *Segwerr*

The subject of *Segwerr* concerns the memories of an arrested member of the Peshmerga, who had been in the Kurdish national movement for fifteen years.

The theme of the novel is the despair and pessimism of the tragic hero towards the Kurdish revolution, which was to be responsible for the future of Iraqi Kurdistan. After the collapse of the September revolution in 1975, the revolution began once again in 1976 (see Chapter Two of the current study). Mokrî's hero is an intellectual Peshmerga in both revolutions, and feels their weaknesses. His hero, as a member of the Iraqi-Kurdish intelligentsia, stands against the officials of the new Kurdish liberation movement, who are tribal leaders or 'Agha', and are ineffectual politicians. In addition, he is against the disagreement between the Iraqi Kurdish parties, which resulted eventually in civil war. These factors lead the hero to play the role of making his colleagues (Peshmerga) aware that they were participating in a civil war (pp. 52-53). However, this consciousness of the hero's makes the officials of the PUK uneasy about his attempts to provoke the Peshmerga to stop their involvement in the war. Subsequently the hero is arrested by the Iraqi regime, who then decide on his execution:

ئەم رەفتارەت بەدلى چ كەسنىكى (مەسئول) نەبوو، دەیان داویان بۆ تەنیت و ھەزاران راپۆرتیان لەسەر نوویست.. ئەنجام.. ئەو ھەوایە وا خۆت دەبینی كە ئیستا لە كوێدایت. (موكرى، 1998، ل 64)

No-one among the officials agreed with your actions. They raised dozens of complaints against you. As a result you can see yourself where you are now. (Mokrî, 1998, p. 64)

As the hero supports communist principles, his ambitions and hopes are the independence of his country coming from victory through the revolution, and the ensuring of a decent life for the working class. However, the reality of the revolution was in a complete contrast to his hopes.

On the other hand, Mokrî conveys the idea of the discordant relationships between the different Iraqi governing systems and the Kurds. His hero's father was arrested in the period of the monarchic system, accused of mixing with the Communists. During

the Iraqi republican rule his father was arrested again and hanged by the regime, on charges of both his and his son's (the hero's) relations with the Iraqi Kurdish national movement. Then the hero's sister was raped by the Iraqi security men; subsequently she commits suicide herself. In addition, Mokri mentions the arrest and killing of Kurdish children during the Baathist regime, such as the execution of the child Kameran (pp.42-43). So the novel shows how both regimes were oppressive.

Mokri claims that despite the above-mentioned sufferings the world has kept silent. His hero is disappointed as a result of the lack of enthusiasm for the revolution, and because he is a member of a globally isolated people:

...جا بۆ پیت سەیره؟ لەم سەدەیدا، لە هەندێ شوێنی ئەم زەمینە بریندارەدا، نەک ناپالم،
 بەلکو بەهێزترین چەک دەتەقیننەو نەک تەنها زۆری زۆری مەرقەکانی ئەم سەدەیه
 گۆتیان لە نالەو گریه‌ی کوژراوان و بریندارانی نییه که لەبەر چاوو گۆتیان دان، بەلکو
 دەنگی تەقینەوه‌ی ئەو چەکانەش نایستن... بۆ پیت سەیره. (ل 41)

...so why are you surprised? In this era, somewhere in this wounded world there are explosions of bombs and heavy weapons. Most of the people not only don't hear the screams of the injured, but they don't even hear the sound of weapons exploding... why are you surprised? (p. 41).

Mokri's jailed hero makes the triangle of disappointment, i.e. Iraq, the Kurdish revolution and the world, a justification for the pessimistic idea that death is better than life for his people. Therefore, the hero does not fear death, and he yearns for twelve noon to arrive in order to be hanged.

2. In *Bohjîn*

The main subject of *Bohjîn* concerns the life of a poor student in a small Kurdish town in Iraqi Kurdistan. It begins from the first day of primary school until his graduation from the College of Medicine.

The theme of *Bohjîn* demonstrates how even poor people can use their mind, get high marks and study at respected colleges, such as the College of Medicine. The author would like to convey an aspect of Kurdish society - which was dominant until the end of the nineteen sixties - which was that its members believed that education

and high rank in administrative jobs were for the middle class only. In fact, there was a kind of conflict between the poor and the middle classes, as some members of the middle class were trying to monopolize education for their own members.

On the other hand, according to Akreyî, such reactionary tribal ideas, together with underdevelopment and poverty, had spread through Kurdish society as a result of its being occupied. Thus, the main theme in *Bohjîn* is the hero's conflict with two powers- the middle class in his own society, who stood against his ambitions and his family's hopes, and the Iraqi regime, because of its aggressive stance towards Kurds. His conflict with the latter also had roots in the fact that when he was a child in primary school, he had been arrested and punished by the regime's police, on charges of participating in political activities (pp. 239-242). To succeed in his conflict with these powers, the hero must first achieve good results in his study and achieve a medical degree:

وی نه‌دڤیا ببیته سه‌یدای مه‌کتبه‌یی یان کاتب و فرمانبهر ل دانیره‌کی به‌لکول به‌ر
وئ هندئ کو دا ئاشکرا بکه‌ت کو ده‌ست کورت و به‌ریک دریای و به‌له‌نگاز
ژی دشیت ئه‌و تشتیت ده‌سه‌لاتدار و ده‌وله‌مه‌ند و چینییت بلند ئه‌نجام دده‌ن
ب چاکئ بینه ئه‌نجام چاکتر و سه‌ر بلندتر ب سه‌ر که‌فنه‌ر هه‌ر ئه‌ف مه‌سه‌له‌و
گه‌له‌ک مه‌سه‌لنیت دیکه بوونه ئه‌گه‌ر و هویئ وئ هندئ و توندتر خو بده‌ته
خویندنی. (ناکره‌یی، 1989، ل ل 90-91)

Sa'îd did not want just to be a teacher or a common government employee, in order to demonstrate that poor people can achieve the same results as the middle and upper classes. This issue and other issues (such as national consciousness) made him study hard. (Akreyî, 1989, pp. 90-91)

Finally Sa'îd succeeded in the first stage of his conflict, by obtaining a medical degree. However, his life was full of tragedy, mainly because of poverty and being in a dependent position. We can deduce from this theme that the writer believes that victory is linked to work and continuing resistance, whatever the conditions.

The Formal Structure of the Novels

Hero

Both novels feature a range of characters; however, each of them also serves as a foil, to help define and characterize the main hero of the book. This feature may be traced to the fact that the novels stem from personal memories. That is why, here, the focus will be on the main hero in each novel. In *Segwerr*, the main hero is referred to by the second person singular pronoun 'you' i.e. the hero has no name. Through the words of the omniscient narrator, the reader hears everything about the main and the secondary characters. As Loqman Mahmud (2012) argues, in *Segwerr*, as in most of Mokri's novels e.g. *To'le* (The Revenge) and *Ejdîha* (The Monster), and dramas such as *Haron ElReşîd* (Harun al-Rashid) the hero is an intellectual; he revolts, despairs and criticizes. The hero in *Bohjîn* is Sa'id, who is from a poor and illiterate family. However, he has a strong self-motivation to resist and struggle against different challenges, particularly against the hardships of life. To be more precise his conflict is mostly against poverty and the middle class, and then against the political authority in Iraq. As a problematic hero, Sa'id faces many hardships and much suffering in his search for authentic values. However, he is a firm character—that is to say, he is a 'melodramatic' hero:

فرمیسکیټ وی د گران بهادار بوون .. چهند جاران یی توشی نهخوشی
و ژان و نازارا بی، ل بهر هزر و بیریت نیشتمانی یی توشی دهردهسریی بی ..
هیچ دهمهکی روڼدکهکا وی نههاتی یه خاری و نه گوتی یه نای گیانو .. بهلی ل
قی دهمی دوماهیی دا قی ژیانای وی بیوو درامایهک .. ل وان دراما بیټ نهگهر
کهسهک فهخوینبیت دی چاقیت وی تهژی روڼدک بن لهر وی حالتهی قارهمانی
چیروکئی تیدا .. حالتهی میلودراما، نهو قههرهمانی وهسا دهیته بهر چاف کو یی
بهلنگازه و ههژی وی هندئ یه بو بگرین .. "سهعید" ل فان جوریت دراما و چیروکیت
میلودرامایی یی دویر نهبوو .. بهلکو ل دهمی دهست ب فهخویندنا چیروکا کری جارا نیکی
بو تراجدیا "مهم و زینا" خانای کره گری ههروهسا "بی نهواییت" فیکتور هیگوی کو د
برسادا نان د دزی و د بی یه تاوانبار. (ههمان ژیدهر، ل ۱۴۹)

His tears were heavy and valuable; he suffered many hardships,
difficulties and distress, and because of his nationalist attitude
he also suffered injustice. His eyes never brought forth tears complaining of
his suffering. Lately his life had become such a drama, if one read it, one

might cry because of the protagonist's harsh conditions in the story. Like a melodrama, where the hero is worthy to have us cry for him because of his weakness. Actually Sa'îd was not far from this kind of drama and melodramatic story, even in his reading. When for the first time he began to read stories, he started with the tragedy of *Mem û Zîn* by Xanî and he cried for the heroes.⁸¹ He also read *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo, whose hero used to steal bread out of hunger, and who was accused as a thief. (ibid, p. 149)

As the events of *Bohjîn*'s story take place in a period when the most famous Iraqi Kurdish revolution occurred, its hero is a nationalist hero. Although Sa'îd is weak because of the harsh economic situation, he constantly struggles against poverty and his national opponent. Even his reading and choice of books are carried out with this in mind. In other words, Sa'îd experiences a rupture with his society.

In both novels the hero is a problematic tragic hero, who searches for 'authentic values in a degraded world' (see Goldmann, 1975, pp 1-3). For Mokrî's hero the authentic values are the victory in revolution and the end of dependence. The world which his hero is searching for is a world in which there is union and cooperation among his people; and where a social democratic society is established. Akreyî's hero believes that such values link with freedom, and the eradication of illiteracy and poverty.

Although neither of the writers ever became a communist, their heroes explicitly speak on behalf of the working class. In *Segwerr*, as the hero supports communist principles, he is in a constant conflict with the occupying force, and he prefers involvement in this struggle to living a safe and comfortable life within his own family. Consequently he regrets falling in love with his girlfriend, and he rejects getting married. In a letter he tells his girlfriend that he is struggling to liberate the homeland, in order to ensure a bright future for the working class and peasants (pp. 58-59). Similarly in *Bohjîn*, the hero supports the working class; he prefers the working class to the middle class. Akreyî's hero is in conflict with all of his strength, from his childhood until his graduation from university, in order to grant victory to his class.

⁸¹ *Mem û Zîn* is one of the most famous Kurdish classic masterpieces. It was written in 1692, by the Kurdish poet Ehmêd Xanî (1651-1707). *Mem û Zîn* is a tragic love story, and it is considered as the épôpée of Kurdish literature.

Muhammad Mokrî believes that the working and peasant class owe their loyalty to the conflict with the opponent class. Consequently they become sacrifices by being arrested and hanged. In contrast, the middle class, which consists of Aghas and the tribal leaders, is not loyal to its principles and its struggle (p. 65). At the same time, they are the ones leading the new Iraqi Kurdish movement after the collapse of the previous national movement in 1975. That is why the hero despairs of the future:

... زۆریه‌ی زۆری (سکرا به سیاسیه‌کان) هه‌ر به‌که و حیزبیه‌کی دامه‌زراند
 هه‌موویش هه‌ر ده‌یووت " حوکمی زاتی حه‌قیقی! و له‌سه‌ر رییازی مارکسی"...
 پیشه‌ی پیشوو، کورد فرۆشی و کوردایه‌تی له‌بره‌دا بوون و هاوسه‌نگ! (موکری، 1998، ل 55)
 ...when you saw that most of the useless politicians each established
 a political party of their own, and they always demanded 'autonomy
 in accordance with Marxist doctrine'... their profession was
 national treason in the name of Kurdishness. (Mokrî, 1998, p. 55)

As a result of his attempts to spread these ideas among the members of the Peshmerga, the officials of the Peshmerga stand against his claims. Subsequently the hero is arrested by the Baathist regime (p.64). He feels the brutality of the regime at first hand after being arrested. The regime used to torture him in the prison in different ways, such as physical and psychological torment. This situation in the jail turns him into someone who is confused psychologically. Now even he cannot understand himself, whether he is in fact a coward or a brave rebel:

تا (ئێستا) خۆت – که نزیکترین که‌سیکی له‌خودی خۆته‌وه به‌دروستی
 نه‌توانیوه ده‌ستنیسانی خۆت به‌که‌یت.
 ده‌زانی، گه‌لێ جار ئازا و به‌جه‌رگ بوویت، گه‌لێ جاریش ترسنۆک و
 بی‌فه‌ر، جار جاریش گه‌وجی و زیره‌کی له‌یه‌ک کات و شوین دا به‌سه‌ریان کردوی...
 (ئێستا) شه‌رم له‌خۆت ده‌که‌ی گه‌ر بێی ی نازام، دلێشت به‌خۆت ده‌سوتی گه‌ر
 بێی ترسنۆکم! (ل 10)

You are the one closest to yourself, but even you cannot describe yourself.

You obviously know that many times you were a brave fighter, and at other times you were a coward and useless; and sometimes you used to alternate between courage and fear.

Now you feel shame to say "I am a brave man" and yet you feel sad saying "I am a coward!" (p. 10)

Both being imprisoned and despairing of the victory of the revolution have an impact on his psychology and make him into a tragic hero. Thus, his pessimism towards the Iraqi Kurdish movement makes him do some strange things, and to begin to write the word 'segwerr' (barking) on the walls of his small, dark room. This word is a symbol of the meaningless Kurdish struggle in the mountains against the Iraqi regime:

(ئێستا) هه‌موو شتێکی ئه‌و سه‌رده‌مه‌ت و هه‌بیر دێته‌وه، به زنجیره‌که‌ی ده‌ستت هه‌ندێ له دیواره‌که‌ی ژووره‌که‌ت هه‌ڵکۆڵیوه .. به وشه‌ی (سه‌گه‌ر) نه‌خشانده‌وته. ئه‌م وشه‌یه په‌یوه‌ندیه‌کی به‌ئینی له‌گه‌ڵ باوه‌ر و روحتدا په‌یدا کردوه، (ل 14)

Now you can remember everything about that time, so you began to engrave the word 'barking' on the walls of your room, a decorative writing. This word has created a strong relationship between your soul and your beliefs. (p. 14)

This despair and pessimism can be seen as a consequence of the collapse of the Kurdish September Revolution in 1975, and the civil war between the two major Iraqi Kurdish parties - the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan - in the early 1980s.⁸² However, the latter consequence is more serious for the hero. This leads him to make a decision to withdraw from the national struggle:

(برایه‌.. من به‌ش به‌ حاڵی خۆم رێ له‌ که‌س ناگرم! هه‌ر یه‌که‌ و که‌یفی خۆیه‌تی و سه‌ر پشه‌که‌ له‌ ده‌ستنی‌شان کردنی سه‌نگه‌ری خۆی له‌م دوو به‌ره‌کی یه‌ پیسه‌دا جێ ی خۆی دیاری بکات! به‌لام وه‌ک ده‌زانن سه‌نگه‌ری راسته‌قینه‌ی ئامانجی ئێمه‌ (یه‌کیه‌تیه‌) من خۆم به‌ هه‌یج به‌ره‌یک نابه‌سته‌مه‌وه، هه‌ر دوو به‌ره‌که‌ ناراست و راستن - بۆیه‌ من بڕیارم داوه‌، پاش ئه‌وه‌ی بۆم روونه‌ دانیشتن ناچه‌ خزمه‌ته‌، ئه‌م تفه‌نگه‌م داده‌نیم و هه‌رگیز له‌ رووی بۆی خۆمدا ناخه‌مه‌ کار .. ئیوه‌ش هه‌ڵبژێرن و که‌یفی خۆتانه‌! (ل ل 52-53)

Brothers.. you are free to determine your attitude towards this obscene conflict. So I'm not going to prevent anyone from making his decision! But as you know our aim was unity. I myself don't belong to any party now; both parties are so wrong. For this reason, I've decided to withdraw from the struggle; and I have also decided not to use my gun against

⁸² The civil war started between the Iraqi Kurdish political parties in 1981. On the one hand the two major parties, the KDP and the PUK, stood against the smaller Kurdish parties, and on the other hand the main and open conflict started between the KDP and the PUK (Gunter, 1992, p. 73). This civil war impacted on the Kurdish national movement in Iraqi Kurdistan. Consequently the Iraqi Kurdish intelligentsia lost confidence in the revolution.

my brothers. So you are free to make your own decision! (pp. 52-53)

Here, the hero's announcement of rejecting membership of either of the two Kurdish parties expresses Mokri's own attitude towards the civil war. Mokri's tragic hero does not even find resolution by joining a third, different political party. However, he finds it through resignation from the armed struggle. Then the hero steps back from his decision, and reaches the summit of despair by choosing death as an appropriate solution, because he knows that due to the political situation of the Iraqi Kurdish people, they cannot live in their land without resistance and conflict:

کەمێ ئێم مللەتە بێ تەفەنگ لە راستی دەگەن... راستی بێ تەفەنگ وەک
 وشە بێ بێت وایە.. گەلی پێکەنینت بە خۆت دیتەوه... کە پاش ئێم هەموو
 تاقی کردنەویە تازە ئێم حەقیقەتەت بو دەرکەوتوو... ئوسا تاقە شتی رێی لە
 هاوڕێ کانتگریبوو ئێوه بوو (کە تەفەنگ دانین چی بکەن). (ل 53)

When will this people be able to recognize the truth without a gun? The truth without a gun is similar to a word without the letters.. then you laughed at yourself.. after so many experiences you had reached that realisation. The only obstacle to your friends giving up armed struggle was 'if we give up arms, then what can we do?' (p. 53)

As a result of the imposed revolutionary situation and the struggle to survive, the only solution in such circumstances was to rebel.

In *Segwerr* death is a complex philosophy, resulting from the existence of the harsh political situation and Mokri's awareness of the consequences of that condition. The hero demands death, as a result of a lack of confidence in his hopeless struggle. However, some Kurdish critics, such as Loqman Mahmud (2012), claim that death in *Segwerr* holds mystical meanings. They believe that the hero demands death in order to join the absolute reality. In both explanations of death in Mokri's perspective, somehow it resembles Pascal's view of death as expressed in his *Pensées*. According to Pascal (see Goldman, 1976, p. 174) when someone is unable to achieve his goals, for instance when he is unable to find God, there is only one way out left to him, namely death. Goldman (ibid) describes such a character as a tragic man; that is to say, in Goldman's sense of tragedy, demanding one's own death constitutes a tragic view.

However, death for Mokrî is not merely mysticism, but a meaningful allegory. In an interview Mokrî said that “I die and am born again ten times a day”, and he expressed surprise at the analysis of those who interpreted his texts as mysticism and *Salafism* (Mokrî, 2012). His hero’s experience as a problematic rebel hero makes him believe that whenever people’s struggle in life fails to obtain any victory, life becomes useless and they will demand death:

چيژي ژيان ئهوهنده بهتەمەن نيبه – چيژي راستەقينه تير بوون
 له مردن دايه! جوړي ژيان و ههولدان بو چاکتر، تهنه مههست
 ههلبژاردني جوړي مردنه... واته ژيان مهشقه بو فيربوون و ريز له
 مهرگ گرتن.. کهسايهتي چ کهسێ تهواو نيبه نابي تا له ژياندا بي..
 بهلکو جوړي مهرگ، کهسايهتي کهسهکه دهردهخات! (ل ل 59-60)

The pleasure of life is short-lived; the real and long-lasting pleasure is death! ... This means that life is a kind of exercise to learn about and respect death. There is no fully integrated personality in this life, but the kind of death could determine the personality of the man. (Mokrî, 1998, pp 59-60)

For Mokrî life is an experiment in order to either choose independence and a decent life through a continuous struggle to expel the occupiers, liberate the land and eliminate human exploitation, or else to die a good death.

For Nafi’ Akreyî death gives power to life. His attitude towards death appears when his hero’s lover dies. When Sa’id went to Mosul he met Heyfa at the university and he soon fell in love with her. Heyfa died in a car accident while Sa’id was waiting to meet her. Heyfa’s death encouraged him to work harder, based on the advice she had given to him: “Heyfa’s death became a boost for Sa’id, until he gained the medical degree” (p. 250).

Nafi’ Akreyî’s hero is an active and a passive character at the same time. Sa’id is an active main character, because he constantly resists every kind of difficulty. However, Sa’id does not try to change his society, or even his social class. What he is doing is to demonstrate both to his social class and the opponent class, through his own long-term personal experience, his ability to achieve his goal even in such harsh economic conditions. Consequently one can observe a kind of selfishness through his acts; therefore he could also be considered as a passive character.

Sa' id expends his maximum effort in order to eliminate the myth which is widespread in his society, among both the working and middle classes, that only rich people can go to the university, particularly the College of Medicine. That is why when Said gains the highest marks at his high school in Mosul, his parents and relatives stand against his desire to go to study at the College of Medicine. They argue that it costs too much, only rich people can do this. When Sa' id defends his decision they belittle and laugh at him. He says:

بۆ ب من دكهنه كهنى..؟ دئ بينن كا دئ چ كه م .. نكهمر سهر نهكهتم
 پاشى ب بئژن درووزنه نهگه هيشته ئاستى هيفييت خو .. بهلى دئ بۆ
 هنگو ناشكر اكه م كو بهس كوريت دموله مندانا نينه بشين ببنه نوژدار و
 كوليجا ب دوماهى بينن.
 بابى سه عىدى گوتى : كورئ من تو ب خو يئ دببى ئى نىز پينگافيت قهدەر
 بهر كا خو د هاقيزم .. پال قيره تو بۆ يئ وهسانى..!
 سه عىد پى كهنى و گوتى:
 باب .. نىز بهنى نىز ل ديف بهر كا خو پينگافيت خو د هاقيزم نىزى
 همژارم ل دراف و پارا بهلى ل خويندن و نمرىت تاقي كرنى نىز گهلهكى
 دموله تمه ند م و ل ديف وئ دموله مندبى دئ پينگافا خو هاقيزم. (ئاكرمى، 1989، ل ل 168-169)

- Why are you laughing at me? You'll see what I'm going to do. If I fail, then you can say 'he's a liar who couldn't achieve his ambitions'. But I'll show you that not only the sons of the rich can become doctors and graduate from universities.
- "You always used to say; I'm doing as much as my circumstances allow me. Why aren't you doing this now?" said his father.
- "My dear father, I'm doing just that, doing as much as my circumstances allow. It's true I'm poor in terms of money, but I'm very rich in studying and in getting high marks, so actually I'm doing as much as my riches allow," said Sa' id and laughed. (Akreyî, 1989, pp. 168-169)

Although Akreyî was aware that, mainly because of the political situation, it was hard for Iraqi Kurdish people to study at university and get higher education during the 1950s and 1960s, he criticizes his society, and he sees that Kurdish society is a part of the problem because of its tribal and agricultural background. Thus, it is clear that in this regard Akreyî was in a position of self-criticism towards his social group first, and then towards his society in general. His hero is, therefore, in a constant conflict

with the middle class through his hard study and bearing of different kinds of difficulties. Akreyî's hero eventually achieves his first goal and greatest hope, through his acceptance by the College of Medicine:

به‌ری نهو ل دهمی شول دکر پاره د کر نه دەستی بابی خو .. لی پا نهو پاره بو وینه و بو
 پیگه‌هاندنا شولا وی بخونه. بو وی هندی نه کو "سه‌عید" بیته نوژدار و نه‌ساخت
 میلیتی خو .. وولاتی خو .. نه‌خیر نه‌خوشیت به‌هنگازا ل ههمی جیهانی دا چارمه‌سەر بکه‌ت.
 ئەو کەسە ژان و تالی نەدیته‌ن و نەکی‌شا بن نزانیت خەلکی زەحمەت‌کیش چەوا دژین دقێ دونیا
 تەژی ژان و نیش و نازاردا. (ل 185)

In the past when Sa'îd got his wages from work, he used to give them to his father. But now earning money was for himself and his study. For the purpose of becoming a doctor in order to treat not only the patients among his people and his country, but also the patients among the working class throughout the world. Whoever had not faced suffering and trouble, did not know how to live among the toiling class in this world, which is full of suffering, trouble and pain. (p. 185)

Akreyî's hero clearly declares his aim of being a doctor; his aim to achieve this qualification is to be able to help his family, his nation, and members of the working class everywhere.

Akreyî also was against the patriarchal system which had dominated Kurdish society for centuries. The father's authority in the family corresponded to God's authority in the world. However, in most cases he was controlled by evil in his reign, and in contrast, rewards and compassion were weak. Everyone in the family had to obey their father, who had absolute authority over the members of his family, down to making decisions about every aspect of their lives on their behalf (Hîto, 2011, p. 102). The first victim of such a system were the women and children, who had no organization in their society which would protect their rights. The male-dominated structure and social customs in Kurdish society were enforced through violence and the threat of violence, not only against women, but also against every member of the family:

به‌لی دهمی بابی وی دهاته مال ... ئەو دگهل خوشک و براییت خو قەرسم ل دهقی وان
 دهات ... دهنگ ل بهر وان نه دهات. (ل 23)

When their father returned back home, he and his brothers and

sisters immediately became mute, and their mouths froze, so that they could not speak. (Akreyî, 1988, p. 23)

بابی وی ئەو دوو روژ بوو ل بەر گ دایک بینا مەلیکی ژ زیندانئ
 رزگار ببوو هاتبوو قە .. پارە کرنه د دەستئ وی دا و گۆتئ:
 -ئەقە بەختئ تەبە ئەقرو من شولەکا چاک و پارەکئ باشئ کری ..!
 هەرچەندە نە گۆتئ عافەرین .. بەلئ دیار بوو کو پئ رازی بوو ..
 عافەرین پۆ چ بوو .. ئەقە ئەرکە ل سەر ملئت وی و دەبیا هاری کاری یا بابئ
 خو بکەت. (ل 238)

Two days before his father was released from prison; he was released because of the King's birthday. Sa'îd gave money to his father and said;
 - You're lucky - today I did a good job and I earned a good wage.
 Although his father did not say "well done" to him, it was obvious that he was happy with this. What was "well done" for? It was his duty to help his father. So what was "well done" for? (p. 238)

Akreyî also attacks the way that the patriarchal system in Kurdish society produces child labour. Akreyî has repeated this complaint in his novel *Bohjîn*. It is clear from its repetition and the way in which he describes this phenomenon that he disagrees with this unfair act against children. Sa'îd's brothers Xidir and Ali are children when their father obliges them to work:

خدر ل جەم بەزەمکی دانا کو تشتا بو بدريت .. خدر فئیری خەباتی ببوو ...
 بەلئ هئشتا زارۆک بوو ب چاکئ دونیا نە دنیا سی ل سەر ماکینا خەباتی یئ نە
 دروینشت تقیا بابئ وی ل سەر سەری راوەستابا تا شول کربا. (ل 28-29)

He sent Xidir to work with a fabric seller as a tailor. Xidir became a tailor when he was a child...however, because he was a child, he could not discern between Good and Evil, he did not stay at the sewing machine, his father had to remain with him in order to make him work. (pp.28- 29)

This conveys the idea that children subjected to the abuse of childhood labour may become confused and incapable of moral discrimination. We can see an example of this in Sa'îd's personality, where there is a contradiction between his principles and his emotions. On the one hand, he is in a serious conflict with the middle class; on the other hand, he falls in love with girls from the middle class several times. His first experience of love is with his neighbour Perî. She is from a social class superior to

his. She deals with him as a poor neighbour, and someone to help her in her study. That is why his relationship with Perî is no more than unilateral love. Indeed, she is the daughter of one of his main opponents. Perî's father (Hacî) insults Sa'id, when he knows that Sa'id would like to be a doctor, and tells him that a poor man can never be a doctor, so he should think of working in the fields or as a worker in order to live, and would be better to forget such dreams (pp. 41-42). That attitude of Hacî influences Sa'id's mental state, and he has no arms to defend himself, except writing poetry:

نەدشیا ئەو بێر و هزریت دلی خۆ بۆ کەسێ ب بیژیت دەر دئی دلی
 خۆ ب ریژیت .. دەست هاقیتە هۆزان نفیسین .. هۆزانا ئیکێ گەلەک
 کەم و کوری تێدا بوون هەتا نەو ژێ وەکی خۆ یا مای .. گەلەک سۆز و راستی
 و دروستاهی یێ د تێدا .. نافێ هۆزانی "بەلەنگاز و دەولەمەند" بوو. گەلەک رەوشتیت وی
 هاتنە گوگۆرین .. زوی تویره دبوو دگەل هەفالیت خۆ شەر دکرن. (ل 43)

He could tell nobody his thoughts and sorrows. He started to write poetry.

His first poetry had many shortcomings, and so it remained.

It consisted of emotions and many truths. It was titled *Belingaz û Dewlemend* 'Poor and Rich'. Much of his behaviour changed, he became irritable and used to fight with his colleagues. (p. 43)

Akreyî's hero expresses his suffering through poetry not fiction; it can be argued that this corresponds to the nature of the Kurdish people, who preferred poetry to prose over a long period of history. The failure of the hero's love, owing to the marriage of his lover, is an additional sadness in his life, so he looks for a suitable way to unload some of his sufferings.

Perî's marriage, to another man from her own social class, affects Sa'id's life. He becomes subject to a psychological complex with women. He always says that there is no such thing as love, no woman is loyal. Also this episode affects his level at school. Then suddenly he finds himself falling in love with Viyan, Perî's sister, and he feels that only her love can rescue him from his sorrows. However, his love for her is also a unilateral love. Unfortunately she gets married, like her sister Perî, to a rich man from her social class. Sa'id's final love is for Heyfa when he is a student at the university. Heyfa is also from a rich family in Mosul, but this time their love is mutual. However, it is ended by Heyfa's death in a car accident.

From what has been discussed above, we can see that the hero in both novels is a problematic hero, constantly searching for the establishment of better social values in his society i.e. there is a conflict between the 'superior morality' represented by the main characters and the 'conventional morality' represented by their society – Goldmann's very criteria for the necessary constituents of tragedy. Furthermore, the harsh political and economic conditions imposed on them lead them into serious conflict with both the Agha class and the central government. In both novels, the hero believes that the harsh political situation and the social backwardness of their society are the main reason for the tragedies in their own lives. However, in *Segwerr*, the hero despairs, and so pessimistic is he in his conflict that he calls for his own death. In contrast, the hero in *Bohjîn* prefers to continue in his conflict, and go on resisting until he achieves victory. In addition, another feature which is apparent in the novels of this historical phase is that both women and children are in a depressed state, as a result of the patriarchal system in Kurdish society, and of the government's aggressive attitude toward the Kurds.

Time

Both *Segwerr* and *Bohjîn* represent two types of time. First, the time of narrative, which is restricted to a closed place where the hero recounts his memories from the previous years; in *Bohjîn* from the days of his childhood until the present moment, whereas in *Segwerr* mainly from the days when the hero joined the peshmerga forces, with a brief reference back to his childhood (pp. 10-12). This is true of both works, so both begin in the present with narrators telling of their life through memory. This time is the simple present moment when the hero starts to look back on his memories.

Memory is important to Kurdish writers. As Christine Allison (2013) has usefully argued, the socio-political conditions, such as exile, Kurdishness and communal identity, are among the reasons which make Kurdish writers, such as Mehmet Uzun

and Heciyê Cindî, form their novels by evoking memories.⁸³ Indeed, the first novel in Kurdish by Erebe Şemo in 1935, adopts this technique. This has continued until the present time, with the exception of some novelists, particularly in Iraqi Kurdistan, who dispensed with this form, such as Abdullah Serrac, Bakhtiyar Ali, KakeMem Botanî, Eîmedî Mela and Ferhad Pîrbal (Reşîd, 2007, p. 19).

Oliver North (quoted in Susan Rasmussen, 2002, p. 114) observes that “memory is not merely the content or sum total of parts of the past, but rather it is selective.” The moment when the narrator is recounting memories in *Segwerr* is controlled through the device of an omniscient narrator. The period of memories recounted starts in 1975 after the collapse of the Kurdish September Revolution. The hero of the novel was arrested by the Iraqi regime at that time. To be more precise, the period recounted in the novel is a single day, during which the Iraqi regime’s court sentenced him to be hung at twelve noon the next day. However, the author does not refer to the moment when he was arrested. The only thing which he indicates in the text is when he states that for the second and final time the hero joined the revolution in 1974, and was then arrested by the regime (pp. 54-64).

Similarly in *Bohjîn*, the author does not refer to the moment when the main character sits in his room and starts recounting his memories. In *Bohjîn*, the time of narrative, the simple present moment, consists of several hours. It starts from the day when the hero (Sa’id) gains his degree from the College of Medicine, and returns home (to his room, which he usually used for studying while he was at university) in the afternoon, after the graduation ceremony (p. 5). The time ends with his falling asleep late at night.

Although Akreyî does not explicitly mention the date of the beginning or ending of the events in the novel, he refers to several historical events that clearly indicate the years he has in mind. Sa’id’s graduation party was evidently in 1966. When Sa’id went to the university on his first day, he describes the College of Medicine:

ل پێش دوو سێ سالهكا ناڤێ نهخۆشخانێ نهخۆشخانا مهلهكى بوو..
 نهغه دوو ساله بى په نهخۆشخانا كۆمارى. (ل 202)

two or three years ago the name of the hospital was the Royal Hospital..

⁸³ In the last sub-section of the current chapter, there will be more discussion concerning the link between the novel, socio-political and cultural conditions and memory.

but two years ago its name was changed to the Republican Hospital. (p. 202)

That means two years after the change of Iraq's governing system from a Monarchy to a Republic in 1958. The duration of study at a College of Medicine in Iraqi universities is six years, which means that in *Bohjîn*, the author follows a chronological narrative.

The second type of time is the time of the events themselves, which make up the hero's autobiographical memories. In both novels the episode starts from the Monarchic period of the Iraqi regime. However, the focus is on the Republican period, in which several governments in Iraq changed in the space of a few years. In *Segwerr*, the memories start from the monarchic period of the Iraqi regime, when the hero was a child in an underdeveloped Kurdish village. Then the narrator immediately recounts the hero's activities in the Kurdish September Revolution (1961-1975) i.e. there is a historical gap in the narration. The time of these events dates back to fifteen years before his arrest:

شەوێ - پاش هەوآلهکە - یاد، مێشکتی تەنی بوو، بەرمو دوور، دوور تر،
پەلکێشی دەکردی.. بۆ پانزە سأل لەمەوبەر، بوو چاو ساغت. (موکری، 1998، ل 13)

In the night - after the news of his hanging - his mind was filled with memories of the past; these memories took him back fifteen years.

(Mokrî, 1998, p. 13)

This means that if the hero was arrested in the early eighties, these events began in the 1960s i.e. during the Kurdish September Revolution. All these events concern a main hero, who joined the Kurdish nationalist movement as a Peshmerga (*Pêşmerge*), and fought against the Iraqi regime.

The time of events in *Bohjîn*, starts from the first day of Sa'id's life in primary school until his graduation. Sa'id's life is narrated, in twelve chapters, using different narrative techniques, such as flashback, dialogue, monologue and memory. This covers 18 year; 17 years as a student, and one year when he finished primary school and interrupted his education, because of the lack of a secondary school in his town. If we take 18 years from the time when Sa'id graduated in 1966, it will be clear that his first year in primary school was in 1948. That means Nafi' Akreyî deals with two historical stages which were experienced by the Kurdish people in southern Kurdistan; the Monarchy and Republican periods of Iraq's system of government.

Although the governing system had been changed from a monarchy to a republic in Iraq, there were no changes in Sa'íd's town in terms of economy and society. Poverty, illiteracy and the authority of the richer class were still widespread among the people in Sa'íd's small Kurdish town. Furthermore, Akreyî shows how this change in governing system, accompanied by ideological and political changes, brought no significant change to the nature of relations between the Iraqi Government and the Kurdish people. In other words, the book shows how, given the development at that time, there had been no apparent move towards progress. Kurds had hoped that after overthrowing the monarchy by a coup d'état on July 14 1958, their political, social and economic conditions would improve; however, it remained an unfulfilled hope (see Chapter Two of the current study). Akreyî states, "نەفە شەش هەفتە هەمیشە شۆرەش دەست پێ کردی.. خەلکەکی زۆری هاتی یە گرتن و دوێر ئێخستن . (ل 123)" (It was six or seven months ago that the revolution started; many people had been arrested and exiled.) (Akreyî, 1989, p. 123).

Akreyî demonstrates that his hero's struggle was not only with poverty, from his childhood until his graduation, but also the political struggle affected him during this period. Sa'íd was a pupil in year six when he started to work with his other colleagues in his small town (p. 237). He was arrested by policemen:

گۆتی:

-هەمی صەگباب .. تو وەسالی هاتی کو کاغەزا بنقیسی .. جفین و خەبەرا
تێدا بەدیە مەلیکی و دەولەتی و د باژیری ژێ دا ئەفرۆ بە لاف کەمەفە؟

"Son of a dog..have you got to the point where you write papers..cursing against the King and the state and distribute them in the town?!" said the policeman. (p. 240).

After calling the little Sa'íd to attend the court for hearing:

پنج سەعاتێ زیاتر ل بەر دەرگەهی حاکمی راونستان پاشی گازی
کرێ و ل بەر چاقبیت حاکمی هەندەک تەشت نقیسین و گۆتی هەرە ..!
بۆ حاکمی و پشکینەری دیار بوو کو نقیسینەکە ب دەستی "سەعیدی"
نەهاتبوونە نقیسین... (ل 242)

Sa'íd stayed five hours in front of the gate of the court, and then (they) called him to write some things for the judge, and then let him go! It became clear to the judge and the inspector that the distributed papers were not written by Sa'íd. (p. 242)

The strict way the police dealt with Sa'íd as a child, along with his having to compete with other pupils in the classroom and struggle against poverty, led him to undertake political activities against the Iraqi monarchic government:

بەلێ "سەعیدی" ھەز دکر کو ئەو یا خەلکی کری وی کربا وی ریکێ
بگرت و گرت و یی ب رێڤه د چیت.. د خوینیت و شول دکەت بۆ خو و
بۆ مللەتی خو ب ھەمی ریکافه .. بەلێ وەسا خو ناشکرا ناکەت کو بەکەفیتە
بەر تیریت ژەھراوی و بی سۆزیت پۆلیسا. (ل 242)

Sa'íd wished that he had himself done what had been done by the others, and so he followed in their footsteps, studying and working in every way he could; but secretly, so as not to fall victim to the deadly poisoned spears of the police. (p. 242)

In both novels the present and past events are related to the socio-political conditions which were experienced by the two novelists. Thus, these events are part of their memory.

Concerning the date of publication of the two texts, *Segwerr* was written and published in 1982.⁸⁴ This was after the collapse of the Iraqi Kurdish Revolution in 1975. Although the Kurdish liberation movement appeared again in 1976, this time the morale of both the people and the Peshmerga was not at the same high level as during the September Revolution 1961-1975, owing to this revolution's collapse. In addition, a civil war had started between the Kurdish parties (Lazarev, 2006, p. 339).⁸⁵ Consequently the intelligentsia who were among the new movement were pessimistic about the future of the Kurdish people; Mokrî himself was a member of the Peshmerga at that time. The intelligentsia's pessimistic view was reflected in their literary work; an example of this is *Segwerr*, which was probably the best-

⁸⁴ Beth Osborne Daponte, et al. (1997) point out that "[d]uring the 1980s, the Kurds became increasingly exposed to official state violence in the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Iran and the start of the Iran-Iraq war... the Iraqi regime witnessed rural Kurdish areas slipping from its control. The peshmergas, guerrillas belonging to the outlawed Kurdish political parties, took advantage of this power vacuum and reasserted claims to Kurdish self-government".

⁸⁵ Amir Hassanpour (1994) argues that on the one hand during the Iraq-Iran war in 1980, both regimes attempted to 'use the Kurds against each other', and on the other hand, the "[d]ifferences of ideology and political practice, as well as tactics, produced periods of heavy clashes between the PUK and the KDP. The two came together, at Tehran's urging, as the Kurdistan Front in July 1987, just prior to Baghdad's genocidal Anfal offensive".

known literary work at this stage, and which made strong criticism of the Kurdish movement:

به نا به دلپهوه، بهشداریت کرد و بووێته شاهیدی (ناشبهتأل)
 گهراپتهوه.. ههموو ئهو (جوامیز و عهگید و رۆستهمانهت) بینی ...
 نای که پیکهینیت به خۆت و به قۆر بهسهری میللهتهکهت دههاتهوه که
 دهتبینی، زۆربهی زۆری (سکرا به سیاسیهکان) ههس یهکهو حیزبیکه
 دامهزرانده.. ههمووش ههس دهیووت (حوکهمی زاتی حهقیقی! و لهسهس ریبازی
 مارکسی). (مۆکری، 1998، ل ل 54-55)

Your participation was not serious and you became a witness of *Aşbetal*.⁸⁶
 You began again and met all the gentlemen, heroes and *Rostems*⁸⁷ ... Ah
 you laughed at yourself and your people, when you saw that most of
 the useless politicians each established a political party of their own
 and always demanded 'autonomy within the Marxist approach!'
 (Mokrî, 1998, pp. 54-55)

Such a direct criticism of the Kurdish movement as this was rarely to be found in Kurdish literature at that time. Certainly no writer or journalist who was in the mountains among the Kurdish nationalist movement could at that time express such views and criticisms as Mokrî did in *Segwerr* (Mahmud, 2012). At that time the only thing which the Kurdish nationalist movement requested from the intelligentsia was enthusiastic poetry and the promotion of public enthusiasm in order to stir the Kurdish people to resistance and struggle (Cundiyanî, 2012, p. 2). In contrast, *Segwerr* is a novel and the dominant vision is a tragic view, mostly as a reflection of the civil war.

The date of publishing *Bohjîn* was after the Anfal campaigns in 1988. The Iraqi regime destroyed every Iraqi Kurdish hope and every part of their infrastructure in these campaigns. Thousands of Kurds fled to Turkish and Iranian camps, and others were killed by chemical weapons. In fact, before these campaigns Kurds had already

⁸⁶ The literal meaning of the word *Aşbetal* is a man who causes a mill to stop working. The opposing parties of the Kurdistan Democratic Party used to use this word against Mulla Mustafa Barzani, the president of the KDP, because of his decision to stop the struggle against the Iraqi regime in 1975.

⁸⁷ In Iranian mythology *Rostem* or *Rustem* is an epic hero who has superhuman power; he is mentioned in the Persian epic of *Shahnameh*. He is a symbol for an extraordinary person.

experienced, with the same regime, another collapse in 1975. In the later collapse the Kurdish Revolution was defeated, and a mass displacement of Kurds began from Kurdistan to various distant Arab areas in Iraq, where they were practically under permanent control of the local authorities. In addition, tens of thousands of Iraqi Kurdish families moved to Iranian Kurdistan for fear of persecution and because they were suffering from extreme deprivation and shortage of food and housing, unemployment and the absence of medical assistance (Mihoy, 2008, p. 382).

Both novels have narrators who remember moments in their lives that were shaped by historical events. These events apparently occur in the past, but the narrator recounts them in the simple present moment i.e. the trend of the time is from now to the past and vice versa. Thus, oscillations between the past and present events can be described as a clear feature of the Iraqi Kurdish novel in this period.

Place

The places which appear most frequently in the Iraqi Kurdish novel, particularly at this stage in its development, are prisons and villages; the prison mostly is accompanied by punishment and torture. Ali Manşory (2008, p. 106) argues that the subject of prisons, torture and lack of freedom has a presence in novels throughout the world, particularly in the Arabic novel. A number of novelists have referred to this topic, and they have made the description of the type of torture, humiliation and deprivation an enjoyable and troubling topic at the same time. This can also be seen in the European novel in the nineteenth century; in France Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, in Russia Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*, and in England Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* are clear examples of this kind of novel. Manşory (ibid, p. 129) points out that prison has been an important issue discussed by the Arabic novel since its emergence in 1913, particularly after the Second World War and the liberation from colonialism.⁸⁸ Thus there are some

⁸⁸ Ali Manşory (2008, p. 129) lists a number of novelists who are famous for writing novels whose main topic after 1967 is prison: Abd al-Raḥman Munif's *Sharq al-Awsaṭ* (The Middle East); Muins Al-Razaz's *Aḥyāi fī Baḥr al-Mayt* (Revival in the Dead Sea); Ghalb Halsā's *Al-Duḥk* (The Laugh); Jamal al-Ghayṭānī's *Al-Zaini Barakat* (Zaini Barakat); Yousif al-Qa'eed's *Al-Ḥarb fī Bar Miṣir* (The Egyptian war of Righteousness); Abd al-Raḥman Majeed al-Rabi'ee's *Al-Washm* (The Tattoo); Al-Ṭahr Waṭar's

authors who have majored in writing prison fiction.⁸⁹ Likewise, prison appears in a large number of Iraqi Kurdish novels as the setting for events, from the first novels e.g Muhammad Salih Sa'îd's *Aştî Kurdistan* (The Peace of Kurdistan) in 1970, and Ibrahim Ahmed's *Janî Gel* (The People's Suffering) in 1972, until the present day.

Here, I will discuss the setting in both *Segwerr* and *Bohjîn* separately in order to examine the nature of the place of setting in the Iraqi Kurdish novel in the first stage of its emergence. In *Segwerr*, the main place is one of the Iraqi regime's prisons in the 1970s. Although the author does not mention which prison it was, we can guess this from the description of the prison. For example, while the hero is waiting to meet his mother before his hanging, several hours have passed since the court's decision on his execution, and his mother still has not appeared. In an interior monologue the hero tells himself:

رێیهکه زۆر دوور نییه، له کەرکوکوه بو ههولێر ههس سهعات و
نیویک دهی... له ههولێریشوه بو نێره، نهوت و یهک کیلومهتر..
بۆنێن، ئهمهشیان سهعات و نیویکی دی.. ئهمه سێ سهعات. (ل 42)

It wasn't a long journey; from Kirkuk to Hewlêr (Erbil) is about one and a half hours.. and from Hewlêr to here is approximately ninety-one kilometres i.e. about one and a half hours, so it takes three hours. (p. 42)

As the actual distance between Hewlêr and Mosul is about eighty-two kilometres, it might be Mosul jail. When Mokrî talks about the prison, he brings evidence to make clear that what he has mentioned concerning the prison is nearer to reality than fiction. As we have learned through his biography, he had been jailed himself as a result of his literary activity.

In *Segwerr*; the writer pays attention to describing the prison as the main setting for events. He describes it in many aspects, such as the lack of human rights, and the physical and psychological torture:

بیست شهۆ لهمهو بهر بوو فهرمانی ئیعدامی شیرزاد و نازادت بیست..
دوو برای جمک بوو، ههندی خهمبار بوویت.. هاوڕێیهتیان خوش بوو،

Al-Lāzm (The Necessary); Şan'î Allah Ibrahim's *Tilka al-Raiha* (That Smell); and Najeeb Mahfouz's *Al-Liṣ wa al-Kilab* (The Thief and the Dogs).

⁸⁹ According to Ali Mansory (ibid, p. 130), "Şan'î Allah Ibrahim's *Tilka al-Raiha* (That Smell) in 1966 is the first Arabic novel dealing with 'prison' in an 'artistic' and committed way, and then following this, other novels discussed this issue".

this very small room, the hero is looking back on his memories of when he was among the Kurdish liberation movement:

(ئێستا) لەنێو ئەم ژوورە چکۆلە و پیس و تاریکەدا، دەست و پێت لە
 زنجیردایە و مەودای هەنگاومکانت سی چوار شەقاوێ و ناتوانی – لەبەر نزمی
 ژوورەکەت – بە تەواوی بە پێوە بوەستی. (ل 26)

Now you are inside this small, dark, dirty room, your feet and hands
 are bound with chains. The room was about two or three feet long, and
 because of the (low) height of the room you couldn't stand up normally. (p. 26)

As a consequence of this aggressive attitude of the Iraqi government towards the Kurdish people, the cities were dangerous places to settle in. Consequently, a large number of Kurds used to live in villages in order to protect themselves and avoid being jailed in such prisons.

It may be said that because of the harsh political situation the village is another place which frequently recurs in the Iraqi Kurdish novel. In addition, as most Kurds grew up in villages or had parents who did so, it was an obvious place in which to set fictional works about the family and Kurdish identity (see Chapter Two of the present study, pp. 45-48). Fat-Hullah (1998, p. 17) argues that most of the Iraqi Kurdish people lived in primitive (agrarian) communities hidden behind mountain ranges until the 1950s. They were neglected by successive Iraqi governments, except for using violent repression to collect taxes and conscript them into the military service. Thus, this aspect of the Kurdish community has left its mark on the Kurdish writers' memories, and consequently appears in the writers' works, particularly in their novels. In addition, the type of novel itself probably also has its role in choosing the villages as a main place in the novels, as most Iraqi Kurdish novels recount memories and experiences from the author's life. 'Arif Hîto (2011, p. 7) argues that village life and poverty are privileged features which occur frequently in the Iraqi Kurdish novel. Hîto stresses that even if the setting for events is in Europe and the theme is concerned with a city and civilization, the pastoral nature of the hero's actions can be seen. This is due to the writer recounting his personal biography when he was a child in a village or the events in his environment, which was itself full of suffering and distress. In addition, possibly the influence of Arabic novels is another reason for this phenomenon. According to Shoqy Badr Yusuf (in Abd al-

Azeem, 1998, p.86) from the first Arabic novel (i.e. *Zaynab* by Mohammed Hussein Haykal in 1913) until the most recent novels, the village constitutes a large area in the map of the art of story and drama, particularly with regard to the art of the novel.

As a consequence of all the aforementioned reasons, the villages and mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan are the other main places in *Segwerr*. Mokrî's hero was a member of the Peshmerga, so his activities and movements were between the Kurdish villages and mountains. However, his family lived in Kirkuk city. This exactly corresponds with Mokrî's own autobiography; he was from Kirkuk city and joined the PUK in 1982 as a Peshmerga (Sincarî, 2010).

The city, as a third place in *Segwerr*, is only shown as a dangerous place without further description. During the period of the Iraqi Kurdish national movement, the Kurdish cities were under the Iraqi government's rule; therefore the only information given about Kirkuk city was that it was insecure and dangerous. It is clear, from the dialogue between the hero's mother and the hero himself, that the hero's father and sister were killed because they were in the city. The mother visits him in the mountains after a long time of alienation (pp. 15-16). In a dialogue between them she says: "My son, I don't want to lose you as well... I don't want you to come back to the city because of me!" (p. 19)

Cities are dangerous places in most of the Iraqi Kurdish short stories and novels in this stage (before 1991). Likewise, the village is a symbol of poverty and illiteracy in Iraqi Kurdish literature. Often the writers see that the cause of poverty, illiteracy and fear goes back to the issue of colonialism and dependence:

دوا قسه‌ی دایکت زیاتر له هه‌واله‌ جه‌رگیره‌که‌ کاربگه‌تر بو و
زیاتر کولانتییوه‌ ئه‌و رۆژه‌ سه‌ختانه‌ی وه‌بیر ه‌ینایته‌وه‌ که‌ تو و
نهرین تا ئیواره‌ی دره‌نگ چاوه‌ریتان ده‌کرد، تا دایکت به‌ بارئ
ته‌پ و تو و ئارده‌وه‌ ده‌هاته‌ مائی، به‌ سه‌ قوئی له‌به‌ر رو‌شنایی چ‌را
که‌هه‌تان کسه‌کوڵه‌تان ده‌کرد ...

له‌ ئیو منالانیشدا نه‌تان ده‌توانی وه‌ک منالانی دئ گه‌مه‌ و یاری بکه‌ن. (ل 21)

Your mother's last words were more influential than the bitter news, and they reminded you of the worst days of your life, when you and Nesrîn (your sister) waited until late at night for your mum who usually came back home with contaminated clothing. Your mind went

back to those days when you used to play under the dim torchlight...you couldn't play with the other children in the village. (Mokrî, 1998, p. 21)

Mokrî, like other Kurdish writers, traces back the lack of human rights and the brutality of the prison, the insecurity in the cities and the poverty in Kurdish villages, to the nature of the relationship between the Kurdish people and the different regimes in Iraq, from its establishment until the Baathist regime. These places have a meaningful significance. That is to say "a man's house is an extension of himself. Describe it and you have described him" (Wellek and Warren, 1982, p. 221). According to the description of the novel's places, the Kurds are poor, in danger and in a continuous conflict in order to obtain their independence.

However, in *Bohjîn* the setting consists of two main places; the 'small town', which according to Akreyî's description of the town is Akrê town, and the 'big city' which is Mosul city.

The two places where the events happened in *Bohjîn* are opposites of each other in several aspects. The small town is a Kurdish town; which corresponds to the fact that the Kurds have a smaller population than the Arabs in Iraq. The town is underdeveloped in all aspects of its life, of which its poverty is the most apparent.

It is Akreyî's view that both poverty and the underdevelopment of Sa'id's society are linked to the issue of colonialism i.e. Akreyî accepts that the authority of different countries such as Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey over the territory of Kurdistan, is an extension of Western colonialism. Thus, he considers Iraq as a coloniser, and the struggle for independence is an additional conflict faced by his hero. After the child Sa'id is arrested and punished by the police, he understands the purpose of his father's secret meeting with his relatives and friends, and their confidential discussion about the issue of the coloniser and Kurdistan:

نەو زانی رامانا ئاڤختنا چ مانا و چەوا و چما و بەچوون هەنە و هزر ل
 هندهک ئاڤتتین وان دکر: زۆلم و زۆرداری .. حەبس و زیندان قوتان لێدان
 کتیب "منشور" دەولەمەند هەزار و کورد کوردایەتی (ایران) (تورک) (سوریا)
 (مەلیک) (ئیسٹیعمار) (ئنگلیز) (رۆس) پالە جوتیار خویندن زانست (مصر) جمال
 عبدالناصر کوریا جەزائیر شۆرەش و گەلەک پەیف و ئاڤتتیت دیکە. زانی گەلەک
 نشتیت د فان ئاڤختنادا. (ناکرەبی، 1989، ل 44)

Just now he can understand what was the aim of their talking and discussing,

he began to remember some of their keywords: injustice, jail, punishment, books 'publication', rich, poor, Kurds, Kurdishness, Iran, Turkey, Syrian, the King, colonialism, British colonialism, Russia, workers, peasants, study, science, Egypt, Jamal Abd al-Nassir, Korea, Algeria, revolution and many other words and conceptions. He understood that these words were meaningful. (Akreyî, 1989, p. 44)

Akreyî justifies his point of view regarding the Iraqi regime as a coloniser by portraying the police's and army's violence, the imposition of Arabic culture on the Kurds as an ideal culture, and the lack of freedom in terms of freedom of expression and political and national activities. Hence, his hero was involved with secret national activities when he was a student.

Another justification for Akreyî's acceptance of his country as a colonised country is the lack of public services. Sa'id left school for a year, because of the lack of a secondary school in his town. He went to the big city (Mosul) for high school and university. Thus it is not strange that in such a condition, when one of his father's friends brought a radio to his town, they thought it was miracle:

راديو ل دهمى همقالى بابى وى ئىناى.. گەلەك كەس ل دور خەرقەبون
 ھندەكا دگۆت ئەفە موعجیزە ھە عەریبە عەجیبە سىجرە ل بەغدا ب ناخفەن
 ئىرە مە گۆھ لى بىت، ل لەندەن لاقترا بىئىژن ئەم ل قىرە گۆھ راگرین. (ل 24)

When his father's friend brought a radio to the town, many people gathered around it. Some of them said, this is a miracle, strange, wondrous and magical, somebody is talking in Baghdad, and others are singing in London, and at the same time we can listen to it here! (p. 24)

Furthermore, the electricity did not reach to every house in Sa'id's town, therefore he used to do his homework under torchlight (p. 54). This was all in contrast to the big city, which was, to some degree, sophisticated at that time.

The big city belonged to the authority (coloniser); it was a model city in the colonised people's view. They saw everything - such as culture, places and commodities - which belonged to the big city as a model. These ideas were taught to Kurdish people by the Iraqi regime. In this regard, John McLeod (2012, p. 21) rightly describes how a colonised people are taught to assess their own culture:

A particular system is taught as the best, truest world-view. The cultural values of the colonised peoples are deemed as lacking in value, or even as being 'uncivilised', from which they must be rescued.

Not only was the big city (Mosul) a dream city for Kurds in terms of civilization and development in the 1960s, but this was also true for every other city belonging to the Arabs in Iraq. When Sa'îd visited his family in Akrê, his relatives in the town went to his home in order to see him and to ask about Mosul. Sa'îd described the big city in terms of civilization and development in several aspects:

"قسمی داخلی" خوارن و نشستن خوندن.. سەیدا، (کتیب)، دهفتەر، دهرس،
شارئ مهزن، سینهما، کۆلان، جادده، باغیت گشتی، رویبار و ئاف و پر و جسر و
ناقاهیت مهزن.. یهکی ژ وان ئهویید رونشتین گۆتی:
-کهکو دیاره تو یی کهتیەف زکی دهیکا خۆ. (ل 77)

Accommodation, restaurants, hotels, teachers, books, copybooks, lectures, cinema, streets, roads, green parks, river, bridges and large buildings... one of those present said;

- It seems that your situation has changed for the better, as if a man had returned to his mother's womb. (p. 77)

In contrast, when Sa'îd describes his home in his town throughout Chapter Two, it seems to be a house in a very underdeveloped village, far from every concept of civilization. Akreyî deals with furniture as something of social status for Kurds and as an expression of their economic situation. The evaluation of place in *Bohjîn*, depends on the basis of economic progress. But belonging to a place depends on the basis of ethnicity and nationalism. Therefore, although Sa'îd saw Mosul as a developed and civilized city, he always hung a picture of his own town on the wall of his room wherever he settled in Mosul (p. 10).

In *Bohjîn*, in both main places, namely Akrê and Mosul, there are three major issues. The most prominent one is the hero's conflict with poverty, i.e. the conflict between the rich and poor classes. The second issue is the hero's struggle with the illiteracy among his people. The third issue is Sa'îd's conflict with the occupiers; in the period of the monarchy he was arrested despite being a child, and in the republican period, even speaking in Kurdish in Mosul was a risk:

ئەگەر هۆین چوونه باژییری و ل مهکتەبی ب کوردی نه ناخۆن.

بۆ ما گوننههه ئاخفتنا كوردى..؟

نه كهكو مهنهفتت ئهقرۆ بزنان كو هوين كوردن.. نهوك دئ هنگو نيشين و

دئ ئالوزيا بۆ هنگو پيداكن. (ل 64)

- If you go to the city don't speak in Kurdish in the school.
- Why? Is it a sin to speak in Kurdish?
- No brother, we're not letting them know that you're Kurdish. If they know that they'll punish you and make problems for you. (p. 64)

Although the city is a developed place compared with the small town (Akrê) and villages, it is a dangerous place. This means that in this stage Iraqi Kurdish novelists deal with the city as an attractive place in terms of civilization, but a dangerous place and not safe for Kurds. However, the villages and small towns are the main place for Kurds, and they are poor and underdeveloped places.

It can be observed from what has been said that the Iraqi Kurdish novelists pay attention to the setting as a part of the conflict between the Kurds and the Iraqi regime in this historical stage. The main places for events are villages, mountains, prisons and cities. Moreover, the place has a clear psychological effect on the psychology of the hero i.e. the external impact of the place transfers itself to the internal being of the protagonists. The place has also been used to express the collective consciousness and it has historical and socio-political dimensions.

The Significant Structure of the Novels

In the previous sections, an examination of both theme and formal structure has assisted in clarifying the general conception of the novels. Now I will attempt to explore the type of relations between the different social groups in each text, which will lead on to an examination of the nature of the tragic vision of the two novels. Similarities between the two novels may point to common features in Iraqi Kurdish novels at this stage, and will be helpful in the further investigation of these novels.

The general explanation of the two novels will uncover the comprehensive vision of the texts. Consequently, it may provide a perception of both the authors' and their

social classes' world view. This kind of analysis corresponds to Goldmann's idea about the homology between the literary structure and the structure of the authors' social classes or groups. Following Goldmann's analysis of Racine's drama and Pascal's philosophical works, the world view of the writers and their social conditions - as mediating factors - will be revealed during the explanation of their works.

Both Mokrî and Akreyî wrote their novels *Segwerr* and *Bohjîn* before 1991 (i.e. in the first historical stage). Although Mokrî wrote his novel in the Soranî area of Iraqi Kurdistan and Akreyî in the Behdînanî area, there are some crucial similarities between the two texts; these similarities exist in most novels in this historical phase. There are also some differences in the circumstances of their composition. In terms of the political situation *Segwerr* was written in the mountains within the Kurdish Liberation Movement; however *Bohjîn* was written in a city/town under the Iraqi government's censorship. Mokrî wrote his novel after the collapse of the September Revolution which coincided with the Iran-Iraq war and the first civil war between the Iraqi Kurdish political parties, whereas Akreyî wrote his novel only one year after the campaigns of Anfal (genocide).

In both texts two Kurdish social groups are in constant conflict with each other, and the Iraqi regime, opposes the Kurdish people as a whole. Both Mokrî and Akreyî see the peasant class as a sincere revolutionary class. As represented in these novels, this class constitutes the majority of the people of Iraqi Kurdistan, particularly those who live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and raising animals. This is an illiterate class, but one which strongly believes in the revolution, which allows cadres of political parties to easily persuade them to join the revolution. Consequently they mostly become victims. Therefore they always see themselves as the opponent class to the *Derebeg* (the landowners, or *agha*, class) who only seek their own self-interest. In *Bohjîn*, for instance, Sa'îd's father used to meet his friends on Friday evenings. The omniscient narrator recounts the event in which Sa'îd first participated:

بۆ یەکەم جار حەز نەدکر "سەعید" دگەل وان روینیت .. بەلێ ل
دوماهیی روینشت و وان شەش هەفت کەسا خۆ لێ نەددا پاش
ل ئاخیشتا نەخاسما ل دەمی ئاخیشتن ل سەر حالێ پالە و جوتیار و ناغا و
کار بە دەست و دەوڵەتمەندا دکران و دگوت: ئەو ل چینهکی بلندن و دەبیا

ب خهباتا چین و تهختیت چو ددهست دا نه و همژار و بهلنگازا ئهو ماف و حهقی وان برین دهبیا ژئ بسطینن. (ناکرهیی، 1989، ل 145)

At the beginning they did not want Sa'id to meet with them.. but finally they allowed him to join their meeting. There were six or seven people, who talked openly about everything, particularly when the talk was about the conditions of peasants, workers, aghas, officials and the rich. They used to say that the marginal classes of peasants and the poor must struggle in order to take back their rights from the upper class. (Akreyî, 1989, p. 145)

Sa'id's participation in his father's meeting resulted in him learning about class divisions for the first time. As a member of a marginal class Sa'id's father, along with his social group, is in a conflict with the agha class.

The deaths of both Mokrî's hero's father and his sister came about because of their poverty, and the family's loyalty to the revolution. This in turn influenced the hero to become a member of the Peshmerga:

سویندت دمخوارد دهبی همیشه سهری دایکت بهرز کهیتهوه و شانازی پیوه بکات! بۆ ههموو ئیشیکی قورس خۆنت ههلمهژارد، وه پیش کهوتی رووتی و بیکهسی و برسپیهتی هاندهرت بوو، به گورتر سلت له ههچ شتی نهدهکردهوه له سهر دهستپیهوه بوویته سهر لق.. زیاتر له نیو هاوړئ کانتدا خوشهویست بووی، پاش ههموویان نانت دمخوارد و پیش ههموویان هیرشت دهبرد وهک کوریکی نازای شوړشگیری راستهقینه. (موکری، 1998، ل ل 34-35)

You swore to always make your mother proud of you! You used to select yourself for every hard mission. You succeeded; your poverty and your being all alone were your encouragement. You never shirked anything until you became the leader of the unit. You were a charismatic man among your friends; you used to eat after all of your friends and you were the first one to attack the enemy as a brave and faithful rebel. (Mokrî, 1998, pp. 34-35)

In both novels the peasant class not only struggle faithfully against their enemy (the Iraqi regime), but also they are in conflict with the aghas and upper middle classes. 'Arif Hîto (2011, p. 220) states that in *Bohjîn* the writer tries to mix the conflict between classes and the national conflict; consequently this mixture attracts the reader. He argues that if we divide the nations in the text into a number of classes

and then focus on the two major classes i.e. the first-class nation and the second-class nation, this conflict between the classes is analogous to the national conflict.

For both novelists the peasant class is one which is affected by religious influence. This class always makes decisions from a religious perspective. According to both writers this is the main reason for their retardation. In *Bohjîn*, when the tape recorder appears in a few teahouses in Sa'îd's small town, people say that "this is magic, wizardry and it's against our religion" (p. 34). Likewise in *Segwerr*, the major reason for the hero's depression during his childhood in his village is its religious belief. Mokrî believes that adherence to religion is an easy way for the Iraqi government to control the Kurds:

له نێو منالانیشدا نەتان دەتوانی وەک منالانی دێ گەمە و یاری بکەن..
 له رۆژێکدا دەیانجار پێیان دەوتی: (شیوعی کۆری شیوعی.. تۆیش وەک
 باوکە شیوعی یە سەگبابەکەت خایەنی و مەلیکت خۆش ناوی.) (ل 21)

You could not play games with the village children.. ten times a day
 they would say: 'communist, son of communist.. you are a traitor like
 your father, son of a dog, you don't like the King'. (p. 21)

The way that, in his village, Mokrî's hero suffers because of his beliefs, is evidence of religion's authority in his society. In other words, in Mokri's society, the touchstone of a man's loyalty to his country is seen as the degree to which he adheres to the religion.

Moreover, there is hatred within the peasant class itself; this antipathy is another reason for the dominance of the Iraqi government and agha's class over them. For Mokrî this hatred goes back to religious reasons. Although the hero's father is a brave national rebel his villagers do not like him because he has leftist beliefs. For Akreyî this hatred has its root in rivalries between them. That is why when Sa'îd succeeds in achieving the highest marks in high school, his relatives, who are from the same class, gather together to persuade his father not to let him apply for the College of Medicine. Finally Sa'îd goes to ask 'Ewnî Agha to be his guarantor for the College:

هەموو ئەو خەڵکی د دیوانخانێ دا د روینشتی ئەف رووداڤه
 پێ خۆش بوو دوعا و سوپاسی یا عەونی ئاڤای کر .. ئیک کەس نەبیت
 ئەو کەسێ خزمی "سەعیدی". (ناکرەیی، 1989، ل 175)

All those in attendance became happy when 'Ewnî Agha accepted to be Sa'id's guarantor, and thanked him, except one of them who was a relative of Sa'id's. (Akreyî, 1989, p.175)

The way in which Sa'id's relative's feel hatred towards him shows that in addition to the peasant class's conflict with the Agha class, there is a kind of rivalry between themselves, which adds to their weakness in the face of their opponents.

Both Mokrî and Akreyî see that the upper middle class, particularly the Agha class, is in opposition to the peasant class; it is a class which is not loyal to its Kurdish national identity. During the Kurdish September Revolution (1961-1975), the class of Aghas, or tribal chiefs, established groups of *jash/chete* and stood with the Iraqi government against the Kurdish national revolution (McDowall, 2007, p. 312).⁹⁰ The Agha class's aggressive attitude led the Kurdish people who were involved in the national revolution, particularly the intelligentsia, to stand against them. In *Bohjîn*, this can clearly be seen in a debate between Sa'id and his father concerning the lack of any rich man among his relatives who could become Sa'id's guarantor at university. Finally, when Sa'id decides to make his request to 'Ewnî Agha, his father says:

-کۆرئ من مهسهلا سویند خارنا مه ژى ل مالا وى تئشتهکى جهور و
 زولم و ستهم بوو.. ههمى خهلكى باژهرى خرڤهکرن. ئەو کهسیت د زانن
 مهیلا ولاتی و میلهتی خو یا هه ی و ب روینشتنا هندمک ناغا و دهرهههگ و
 دهسهلات داریت ههریمى ئەم سوند دابین و دهستی مه ل سهر قنرئانی دانا کو
 مه چو پهیهندی دگهل ولات و میلهتی خو نی به و ئەو کهسیت د وئ ریکى
 ژى دان مه ههچ پهیهندی د گهلدا نینه.. کس ههیه پهیهندی دگهل ناخ و
 ولات و میلهت و بیروباوهرى یا رزگاریا ناخا خو نهییت. (ل 171)

- My son, the oath we swore at 'Ewnî Agha's house shows his unscrupulous and despotic attitude.. He brought together all the people of the town, in the presence of a number of Aghas, tribal leaders and officials of the region, and forced the people, who he obviously knew supported the national movement, to swear by the Quran that they did not have any relations with the national

⁹⁰ *Jash* (which in its literal translation means 'little donkey'), is the name given to Kurdish people who worked with the Iraqi government against the Kurdish nationalist forces. Regarding the operational groups of *Jash/Chete*, Diane E. King (2005, p. 322) makes clear that "Chete brigades were led by Kurdish aghas loyal to the government, who were paid a stipend in return for their tribe serving as a militia against the Peshmerga"

movement and with the rebels... Is there anyone who does not have any relations with his soil, nation, people and the faith in the liberation of his home country? (p. 171)

Because of these treacherous attitudes among the Agha class, Mokri's hero becomes hopeless when he observes that the leaders of the new revolution (the Kurdish May Revolution 1976-1988) are from the upper middle class, particularly the Aghas (p. 63). For this reason Mokri's pessimistic hero has no hope for the future.

In this way, the subject of attacking the Agha class became a common theme in Iraqi Kurdish novels in this historical stage (i.e. from 1970-1991). Rashid (2007, p. 19) rightly argues that the Iraqi Kurdish novel in its first stage was a photographic picture of the reality of Kurdish society; therefore, the common theme of this novel was the conflict between the peasant class and the Agha class, between literacy and illiteracy, between the Kurdish people and the occupiers.

The socio-political conflicts and widespread poverty among Kurdish people in Iraqi Kurdistan, which I will explore in more detail later, might be the main reason for both Mokri's and Akreyi's tragic world vision. By examination of their autobiographies and investigation of the socio-political conditions of Iraqi Kurdish people in the period when the novels were written and published, I will attempt to explore the world view of tragic vision.

World Vision between the Texts, Reality and the Authors

The two novels have been analyzed in terms of formal structure, the significant structure of the novels and an exploration of the nature of the tragic vision in both works as self-contained texts. This is without moving from the inside to the outside of the texts, except where it has been necessary to move outside, as required in order to clarify some aspect of the texts. Now I will examine whether the tragic view which has been determined is structurally homologous to the ideology of a certain social class; following Goldmann's analysis of the philosophical writings of Pascal and the tragedies of Racine. To conduct this process, I will discuss the historical situations and social transformations which occurred in the Kurdish community in the 1970s

and 80s. It is worth remembering here that it is hard to trace Mokri's and Akreyi's worldview back to a certain social group and its ideology, in a way corresponding to Goldmann's work in his analysis of the works of Pascal and Racine, which had enabled him to isolate a particular religious group, the Jansenists, in seventeenth century France. However, it is possible to establish some relations between both Mokri's and Akreyi's novels and Kurdish society in Iraqi Kurdistan before 1991.

In *The Hidden God* Goldmann suggests that it is possible to establish homologous relationships between the world vision of a particular social class and the world vision in the literary works. He (1969, p. 500) also states:

All that is necessary is to take the surrounding structure as an object of study and then what was explanation becomes comprehension and the explanatory must be related to a new and even vaster structure.

I have already argued that both novelists write about their own personal experiences in life, as do most Iraqi Kurdish authors in this historical phase. These memories go back to the socio-political circumstances which the Kurds experienced in Iraqi Kurdistan. Susan Rasmussen (2002, p. 120) asserts that in studying memory, it is important to consider political and moral dimensions, particularly in postcolonial societies. In other words, recounting past experiences is not completely arbitrary, but it is intentionally and socially constructed (ibid, p. 115).

Regarding the sociocultural construction of memory, Joseph and Valsiner (quoted in Maria Cabillas, 2014, p. 309) argue that "as sociocultural practices, the stories casting our memories into narrative forms are the result of cultural and individual factors. Culture is an organising principle that affects all human beings, influencing the meanings stemming from our self-dialogues". Thus, in the Kurdish novel in general, and particularly in this historical stage, the author's autobiography constitutes a considerable part of the novel (Hîto, 2011, p. 7). The culture of writing their own autobiography and memories by the Kurdish novelists is not arbitrary, but meaningful. As I have already discussed, Christine Alison (2013) asserts that one of the reasons behind writing memories by the Kurdish writers is their harsh socio-political conditions. In other words, the way of seeing things has its role in people's remembering a story; it is fundamentally influenced by their culture (Bloch quoted in Rasmussen, p. 120). In this respect, Stoller (1997, pp. 57-59) proposes that the

“relation between individual and group is dynamic and interpenetrating. Thus the analytical separation of individual and social memory is meaningless. Rasmussen (2002, p. 125) concludes that “to remember something is not just to repeat it, but to reconstruct, even sometimes to create, to express oneself, and other parties to life and history as well”.

In the same way Goldmann (1976, p. 19) argues that the life and psychological factors of a particular writer, alongside the socio-historical factors, participate in the production of the work. That is why one can argue that the expressions and world vision of the literary work in the current phase, express at the same time both the world vision of the writer and that of his social class. As Goldmann (1975, p. 158) states, there “is a strong relation between the literary work and the social group”.

Now it is necessary to attempt to relate the world vision of both the writers to the world view of their social group, as Goldmann related the tragic vision of Racine to the world view of the Jansenists with whom Racine was associated. In the case of the Iraqi Kurdish novel before 1991, particularly the current study's samples, the tragic world view that these novels express can mostly be traced back to dependence and poverty. Therefore, it seems logical to briefly look first at the economic conditions in Iraqi Kurdistan at this period of time as mediating factors (the political situation and its consequences have already been discussed in Chapter Two). Thus, following Goldmann's methodology; the mediating factors between the two writers' world vision and their social group or class's conditions are important for explaining their works, once the formal structure of their works has been explored.

The use of the economic conditions as mediating factors and the attempt to link these circumstances with the political context will provide an impression of the world view of the writers' social class. Why do the tragic vision dominant in their novels, and their own world vision, offer no hope of progress for the Iraqi Kurdish community? And why are their tragic problematic characters unable to obtain authentic value in a degraded world? Through reviewing economic factors, which are extremely important in Goldmann's methodology, one can reach a degree of correspondence between the social structure and the structure of the novels which are under consideration. However, I do not mean to examine similarities between Goldmann's ideas about the development of European novels under the impact of

economic conditions and the reflection of the economic factors on the Iraqi Kurdish novel, as was explained previously.

Certain key features of Iraqi Kurdish culture and society were especially formative in the emergence and development of the novel form. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the overwhelming majority class until the 1950s was the peasant class. Thus, agriculture and farming made up the main branch of the economy in Kurdistan. Agriculture constituted 64% of national income, industry including petroleum 27%, and the rest of the branches of the economy constituted 10% of the national income (Al-Mula, 1985, p. 20). These ratios give us a clear idea of the limited existence of industry in Kurdistan and that Iraqi Kurdish people did not benefit from their own oil. This means the agricultural and farming sectors remained the main sources of their livelihood. Subsequently, their dependence on agriculture enabled them to establish a simple form of economic stability (Salih, 2009, p. 69).

However, with the aim of demolishing the existing economic stability in Kurdistan the Iraqi governments deported and forcibly displaced Kurdish people from their villages. According to Şakiro Xido Mihoy (2008, p.386) this forced deportation and displacement created extra economic hardships in Kurdistan. Agricultural production (including both agriculture and farming) suffered a profound crisis. The destruction of the base of these two important economic sectors by Iraqi regimes, which destroyed approximately 90% of the Kurdish villages, shifted the Iraqi Kurds from producers to consumers (Salih, 2009, p. 73). Suleiman A. Ismail (2000, p. 160) states that according to a census which was taken by the Iraqi government in 1957, Iraqi Kurdistan consisted of 6445 villages. Ceza T. Talib (quoted in Salih, 2009, p. 73) argues that the proportion of the rural dwellers according to the census was 71%; however this rate had rapidly decreased to 33% by 1987. This downward socio-economic mobility affected every aspect of social life, including literary creation. This is the reason why the world vision of the novel form which emerged under these socio-economic and political conditions in Iraqi Kurdistan was a tragic view. The damage done to Kurdish rural areas, and the expulsion of their inhabitants, had a deep influence on the thinking of the writers and their social groups.

Omar Hemze Salih in a study entitled *Ragiwastin* (Deportation) divided the stages of expulsion in the Iraqi Kurdistan region into three stages as follows:

The first stage was from 1963-1975; according to Muhammad R. Aziz (quoted in Salih, 2009, p. 70) in 1963 when the Baathists succeeded in their coup d'état their government carried out an attack on Kurdish villages. They started from Kirkuk and Xaneqîn and destroyed an enormous number of villages between June 11 and July 23 1963. After the collapse of the Kurdish September Revolution in 1975 the Baathist regime damaged 1266 villages and expelled the villagers to Southern Iraq (Ahmed, 2002, p. 20). The second stage took place in 1975-1979; the Iraqi government destroyed eight hundred and seventy-two villages and deported 30,814 families between 1976 and 1979. The area whose inhabitants were expelled extended to 13,100 square kilometers (Salih, 2009, p. 77).⁹¹ The final stage was from 1980-1989; in this phase the method of deportation was different. At the beginning the regime started to arrest the Faili Kurds and deport them from Baghdad, that is, from outside Iraqi Kurdistan.⁹² According to statistics from both the International Red Cross and the Red Crescent, the regime deported one million Faili Kurds from Baghdad between April 4 1980 and May 19 1990 (ibid, p. 81). As for action within Kurdistan, it began firstly in the mining areas. According to the MAG (Mines Advisory Group) organization in Iraqi Kurdistan, the regime mined approximately 183,739,482 square meters in Duhok, Kirkuk, Erbil and Silêmanî (Ibrahim, 2004, p. 227).⁹³ Then it began bombarding the Kurdish villages in 1986. As a result it damaged nine hundred villages and after the Anfal campaigns in 1988, nine hundred and thirty-three other villages were destroyed (Salih, 2009, p. 90).

The destruction of the economic infrastructure caused serious economic difficulties, such as unemployment and widespread poverty (Şiwani, 2002, p.12). Thus, it is no surprise that these severe socio-economic conditions became one of the main reasons for the common tragic vision in the novels of this period.

⁹¹ In this phase the Iraqi government built *Mujama'āt* (collective) resettlement camps for the deported families near to towns, cities and the general roads; in Silêmanî, (31 collectives for 517 villages), Erbil (19 collectives for 148 villages) and Duhok (15 collectives for 207 villages) (Salih, 2009, p. 79; McDowall, 2007, p.339).

⁹² The Faili Kurds had been "resident in Iraq since Ottoman days and yet were without Iraqi citizenship. The government argued they were Iranians, and now determined their fate by the simple expedient of expelling roughly 50, 000 of them" (McDowall, 2007, p.330).

⁹³ For more information about the role and activities of the MAG (Mines Advisory Group) organization in Iraqi Kurdistan, see their official website; <http://www.maginternational.org/>

Using Goldmann's criteria for tragic vision, in *Bohjîn* the tragic vision of the hero relates, as has already been indicated, to his poverty. The reason for this tragic view, on the one hand, is the lack of 'absolute values' in his society. The hero is weak and cannot himself establish such values; in Goldmann's sense, this weakness is the reason for him being a tragic hero. On the other hand, his being a tragic hero is also due to the actions of successive despotic Iraqi governments and their effect on his society. This is an 'insoluble conflict' - another major criterion for tragedy in Goldmann's view - between the main hero's group and the Iraqi regimes. Thus these two factors are the main reasons for the hero's tragic vision.

These harsh economic and socio-political conditions have a deep influence on Sa'id's life; for example in his primary school he is considered as a marginal pupil, because he is from the lowest social class. No one respects him, even his teachers. This attitude of his classmates and teachers towards him makes him despondent, and to feel that he has a miserable life:

بۆ سهيدا وهكو وان قهدرئ وى ناگريت..؟ و ب چاقهكئ شانازيئ
تهماشهئ وى ژئ ناكهت..؟
نهگه خرابئ بهكئ بكهت گهلهك د قوتن بهلئ زاروكيت دهولهمهندا
وهسا رهفتارئ دگهل ناكهن..؟ كهسئ پرسيارا بابئ وى لئ نهذكر...
نهگوتئ بابئ ته چاوانه...؟ چونكه چو سهيدا بابئ وى نهدناسئ..
خهلئ ژئ نهدهفيا بهلمنگازا بناسن.. چ فايده ل ناسينا همزارادا ههيه..؟ (ئاكرههئ، 1989، ل 44)

Why did teachers not respect Sa'id as they respected children from rich families in the school? And why did they look at him with contempt in their eyes? If Sa'id did anything wrong, the teachers used to punish him, while they did not deal with other children in the same way! .. No one asked him about his father, because the teachers did not know his father.. The people did not want to know poor men, because knowing them was useless. (Akreyî, 1989, p. 44)

This memory of primary school becomes a bitter memory in Sa'id's life and causes him to feel alienation, mainly because of being poor. As Ameen Abdulqader (2005, p.34) states, one of the main reasons for alienation is when someone, particularly a marginal child, feels he has no social value.

Another consequence of Sa'îd's poverty is that from primary school until his graduation from the university, he never wears smart, expensive clothes. His working and school clothes are the same. Consequently he feels an inferiority complex, and that his life is a tragedy. Akreyî repeats this situation frequently in different ways and episodes (pp. 195; 177-178; and 207-208).

This poverty not only impacts on his way of dressing and his psychology, but on every aspect of his life. Sa'îd's love, intermingled with the mocking, the poverty, and the death of his girlfriend, become the reason for his tragedy. Here there is a strong element of fatality, and a conventional morality opposed to the absolute morality represented by the tragic main hero, both essential criteria for tragedy in Goldmann's view.

In this historical phase the sole hope for Iraqi Kurdish people, to compensate for the economic and social damage they had suffered for such a long time, was their revolution. However, the nature of the revolution demanded cooperation between the marginal classes such as the peasants and semi-proletarians, the urban petit-bourgeoisie and the Kurdish landlords (*Agha*) (see Fat-Hullah, 1998, pp. 18-19).

Although Fat-Hullah, (ibid) believes that the KDP, which led the revolution at the beginning, succeeded in mixing these opponent classes, one can argue that this mixture became another source for the tragic vision, particularly when the Kurdish intelligentsia felt that the *Agha* class were benefiting from the revolution. This situation is the primary claim in *Segwerr*, and the main reason which made Mokrî hopeless about the future of the revolution and the possibility of achieving a decent life. In the same way, the *Agha* class who were in the cities became *mustashâr* (the leaders of *Jash*) and worked against both the Kurdish revolution and the marginal class. Thus, the world views of both Mokrî, who struggled with the revolution in the mountains, and Akreyî, who was in the town/city, have similarities and the two combine to form a world vision that rejects the authority of the *Agha*, who alongside the Iraqi government, have become another source of poverty and pessimism among their people.

In order to try to establish a relationship between Mokrî's and Akreyî's tragic vision and the corresponding ideological structures, we should take into account the writers' own personal experiences. As has already been argued, personal

experiences in society are visible in most of the Kurdish novels at this historical stage. Thus, we will first begin by making use of the biographical information previously considered in relation to both Mokrî's and Akreyî's lives. However, as Jean Paul Sartre (1963, p. 62) argues, almost all Marxist literary criticism only focuses on work and the social structure, i.e. Goldmann's method pays less attention to the effects of childhood experience. We will use biographical information such as their social status, political attitudes and religious beliefs as supplementary mediations, which might enable us to have a better understanding of their work, and may be useful in standing between the authors' world vision and their position as regards social class. Sartre (ibid) points out that a reasonable explanation must consist of 'the network of human relations'. This does not mean that the focus of the study will turn to individual factors, but rather it will remain the work itself. Irene Webb (1981, p. 264) maintains that "Sartre's method would lead us to a consideration of other mediations which he would claim are integral to any explanation of literary works". Thus, this biographical information serves to support the hypothesis that the writer's social group is significant in the process of creating literary work.

Bearing in mind Mokrî's biography, we can conclude that Mokrî was sincere, in *Segwerr*, in his expression of his social class, which was a marginal social group in Kirkuk; he was also a marginal Peshmerga in his party. Despite his journalistic and literary activities after the Kurdish uprising he could not reach the upper middle class. Mokrî's harsh situation, bitter experience in life and marginality were the reason for the tragic vision in his novels. Similarly, according to Goldmann's analysis of Racine's plays, this marginality became the reason for his expression of the tragic view.

The main reason for the marginality of Mokrî's social group was the declining political situation, which caused most Iraqi Kurds to suffer from deteriorating economic circumstances in this historical period (i.e. before 1991).

We can also observe from Nafi' Akreyî's biographical information that he suffered from the same decline in political and economic conditions. Yasîn (2014) argues that as a consequence of the lack of a secondary school in Akrê town, pupils were forced to go to Mosul to continue their study. However, because of the harsh economic

conditions most of the pupils could not continue their study in Mosul. This means that the marginality of Akreyî's social group was the same as that of Mokrî's - and was indeed the same as that experienced by most Kurdish people in Iraqi Kurdistan. The two novels fulfil Goldmann's criteria for tragedy; the conflicts in the two works are necessarily insoluble rather than unresolved, and there is a very marked element of fatalism or predestination.

This generation of writers, those who lived before the Kurdish uprising in 1991, were hopeless about the development of human values; and they had a common tragic view of the world. Their works form a view which is considered as a traditional literary view by Iraqi Kurdish literary critics. This traditional view is tragic as result of the harsh economic and political conditions. Therefore, this generation's marginality is an important mediating factor in exploring the relation between world vision and social class. It could be argued that although their view was totally realistic, it was a reactionary view.

One could argue that *Bohjîn* expresses a reality which was experienced by Akreyî's social group in terms of economic and socio-political decline. Therefore, the tragic vision dominates the theme of the novel. Taking into account the date of its writing and publication, in 1989, one year after the Anfal genocide, one may argue that the political factor is the major reason behind the tragic view in *Bohjîn*, and that it is also the main reason for such a view being present in the writing of this generation overall. Not only Mokrî's or Akreyî's social group is marginalized by the Iraqi regime, but this marginality is the common feature of the Kurds in every part of Kurdistan. Amir Hassanpour (1994) argues that economically Kurdish people experience the same conditions in all the "host" states (colonizer countries i.e. Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria) in many aspects. Thus, "the Kurdish regions of these countries are usually the poorest, least developed areas, systematically marginalized by the centers of economic power" (ibid). Consequently it is hard to find a novel that is free from political subjects in this historical period.

Both Mokrî and Akreyî were born and spent a number of years under the monarchic system of Iraqi government. For Mokrî, his own life as a poor orphaned child and then his activities within the Kurdish movement as a marginal Peshmerga, and for Akreyî, being a member of a poor family in a marginal town and the suffering he

experienced during his study at the University of Mosul because of his poverty, were factors contributing to their sense of pessimism as regards humanity's fate. These actual experiences of their social classes may be seen as the reason for the tragic vision in their novels.

One may argue that Muhammad Mokrî's increased critical awareness and objectivity were consequences of the harsh social conditions he experienced; thus, he supports the working class and communist ideology in *Segwerr*. This harsh social situation might be the reason for the appearance of the ideological structure of his social group as well, corresponding to the mental structure which constitutes Mokrî's world view. It may also have influenced the apparent duality in his ideas; he is a religious believer, and at other times a communist rebel in the Kurdish movement.

Consequently Mokrî's experiences and his marginality are important mediating factors to show the world vision of his social class and explain his ability to obtain the maximum 'possible consciousness' and express the ideology of his class. This case, according to Goldmann's analysis, nearly corresponds to the case of Pascal and Racine's world vision in their works, and their own marginal social group, the 'Jansenists',

Akreyî was a writer under the control of the Baathist regime, and his tragic vision of the world relates to the restrictions placed on Kurdish writers. Thus, these restrictions on his class (the nationalist authors) are significant mediating factors to display his class's world view and his achievement of the maximum 'possible consciousnesses' in expressing his class's ambitions and ideology. 'Arif Hîto (2011, pp. 228-229) argues that as a result of the harsh political conditions which were experienced by the Kurdish people at the time when *Bohjîn* was written, in order to protect himself, on the one hand the author used symbols rather than direct expressions of nationalism, and on the other hand he praised the regime's plans. However, national awareness and nationalism are the more prominent issues in the novel. It is therefore reasonable to ask how such a novel as this was allowed to be published at that time. Hîto (ibid, p. 229) indicates several points about *Bohjîn*, which were in the regime's interest, such as: Akreyî's position as President of the Writers Union of Kurds (which belonged to the Iraqi government); a brief reference to the existence of Kurdish support for the Palestinian issue; and the conflict between the

social classes. Here, it was important for the Iraqi government to demonstrate that there was no class more important than the President (Saddam Hussein) and his regime. These views in *Bohjîn* were the reason why the regime allowed him to publish it.

In *Bohjîn*, Akreyî indicates the existing censorship of Kurdish writers by referring to Said's situation with his own writing:

گهلهک جار ل بهر خویندنا وان کاغەز و نفیسینا ل جەم
 هەفائیت وی یێ توشی تەنگافی و ئاستەنگا بی.. چەند جار ا ژێ
 وی ب خۆ هیندەک ل وان کاغەز و نفیسینانە یێ د سوتین.. هەرچەندە
 ئەو سوتاندنە وەک سوتاندنا پارچەکا لەشی وی بوون، بەڵێ چو ریکتیت
 دی ل بهر خۆ نەد دیتن هەر ل بهر ئێ چەندی خۆ ژێ رزگار دکر. (ل 7)

Many times he suffered because of his papers and writings which were protected by his friends. Sometimes he burned some of those papers and writings. Despite the fact that this burning was similar to burning a part of his body, he did not have any other way to protect himself, so he was forced to do it. (p. 7)

There is no doubt that these papers were concerned with Kurdish nationalism and national consciousness, because subjects such as these were banned in the Kurdish areas. It means that he was writing on a subject which was of great interest to Kurdish people, but was a topic which was banned by the government.

To conclude, it may be said that the political factor was probably the key mediating factor which stands between the authors' world vision and the circumstances of their social class. It has a role in formulating the Kurdish novel in terms of both internal and external structures in this historical period, and in the other historical stages which will be discussed in the next two chapters. Not only was the novel impacted by the widespread poverty in Kurdish society, but it was also influenced by Kurdish people's cultural and social conditions. Consequently it may be one of the most important mediations which could contribute to a greater understanding of the Iraqi Kurdish novel, and may explain why the Kurdish writers expressed a particular world vision in a particular historical stage.

In the current phase, the displacement and deportation of Kurdish people, together with the destruction of their villages, which were the main source of their income, led

to both novelists and others of their social class becoming a marginal class in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. These harsh political and economic conditions, and the novelists' marginal position in their society, may be seen as major causes of the dominant tragic view in the Kurdish novel. Goldmann's three criteria for tragedy are thus fulfilled in both *Bohjîn* and *Segwerr*: the element of fatalism is very marked; the conflicts presented in the novels are necessarily insoluble; and there is a conventional morality opposed to the absolute morality represented by the tragic heroes. Thus, Goldmann's approach concerning the tragic world vision in literary work enables us to investigate the existence of such a vision in the Iraqi Kurdish novel in this historical phase. In addition, it gives the opportunity to relate such a context to the formation of the formal structures of the novel.

Chapter Four

The Iraqi-Kurdish Novel 1991-2003, Hopeless Vision

Introduction

As a result of the prevailing harsh economic and socio-political conditions, a tragic view was dominant in Iraqi Kurdish novels written in the period before the Kurdish Uprising. These novels were predominantly narratives concerned with the author's own tragic memories. However, the Post-Uprising stage (1991-2003) in Iraqi Kurdistan brought considerable changes, and the first half of this stage, from 1991 until 1997, was one of crisis for literature. The Kurds in Iraq faced social, political and economic crises, such as civil war and the economic blockade, and these crises had their effect on literary works, particularly on the novel. Consequently, the form of the novels written in the first half of this phase was almost an extension of that of the previous stage. They were peopled by problematic heroes, recounting the author's memories, and events occurred in chronological order. Such novels included: Rêbwar Rashîd's *Tarmayî Helepçe* (Ghostly Halabja) in 1991, 'Umer Heme Rehîm's *Ûeware* (Displaced) in 1991, Xusrew Caf's *Paşayan Kuşt* (The King was Killed) in 1993 and *Raz* (Secret) in 1994, Muhammad Rashîd Fatâh's *Dîwexane* (Palace) in 1995 and *Enfal* (Anfâl) in 1997, Sidqî Hirorî's *Kurê Zinarê Ser Bilind* (The Son of Proud Zinar) in 1996 and Hesen Silêvaney's *Gulistan û Şev* (Gulistan and Night) in 1996. These novels were concerned with the injustice and oppression meted out to the Kurdish people by successive Iraqi governments, including deportation, destruction of villages and genocide.

However, the situation in the region moved towards semi-stability during the second half of the present historical stage, between 1997 and 2003. Politically the civil war between the two major parties ended in 1997, and economically, Decision Number 986, the Oil-for-Food Program, was implemented by the UN in the same year (al-Doski, 2003, p. 89)⁹⁴. Consequently, one can observe changes which occurred in terms of both the form and content of the novel. The theme of the conflict between the peasant and agha classes is no longer present. In terms of form, unlike the

⁹⁴ See also the last sub-section of the current chapter.

previous stage, more than one main character participates in the events of the novel. In addition, an open, rather than a closed place is used as a setting, and a chronological order of events is no longer followed. These developments in the novel coincided with the changes in the economic and political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan. Rashīd (2007, p. 121), has drawn attention to the fact that in the Post-Uprising period, Iraqi Kurdish novelists made serious attempts towards innovation in the novel. He rightly argues that the impact on the Kurdish novel of novels written in other parts of the world is clear; the latter encouraged Kurdish writers to adapt in line with new styles and techniques, in particular magical realism and metafiction.

In the field of literature, the term magical realism “refers to the occurrence of supernatural, or anything that is contrary to our conventional view of reality” (Chanady, 1985, p. 16). The term was first used by a German art critic Franz Roh in 1925. He used magical realism to describe a type of painting which combined real forms in a way which did not accord with actual reality (Zamora, ed., 1995, p. 102). The term then began to be used primarily in connection with literary works, particularly with regard to the novel. Magical realism:

for many decades associated mainly with the Latin American literary manifesto, has crossed national and cultural borders and established itself as an international style and technique.

(Ahmadzadeh, 2011, p. 287)

In the Iraqi Kurdish novel magical realism has emerged since the second half of the Post-Uprising period; the works of Kakemem Botanî, Bakhtiyar Ali and Selah ‘Umer can be accepted as pioneers in this regard.⁹⁵

The adaptation of a metafictional style and technique is the second development in Kurdish novel writing to occur for the first time in the period between 1997 and 2003. According to Rashīd (2007, p. 124) ‘Abdullah Serrac’s novel *Kawlaş* (The Ruined) is the first Kurdish novel which adapted the metafictional technique, in 1997. Patricia Waugh, in defining the metafictional technique, states that:

the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to

⁹⁵ See Rashīd, 2007, pp. 2013-228; Ahmadzadeh, 2011, pp. 287-299, and Ali, 2012, passim.

create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction. The two processes are held together in a formal tension which breaks down the distinctions between 'creation' and 'criticism' and merges them into the concepts of 'interpretation' and 'deconstruction'.

(Waugh in Currie, ed., 1995, p. 43)

This means that the novelist not only creates the fictional text, but also participates in the process of criticism and explanation of the text. The first use of the term 'metafiction' is "attributed to William Gass in the late 1960s, who wanted to describe recent fictions that were somehow about fiction itself" (Currie, ed., 1995, p. 1).

Both magical realism and metafiction emerged in the Kurdish novel just after the Kurdish uprising in 1997. It may thus be argued that political factors had their impact on the development of the Kurdish novel in the region. In response to the question as to why Kurdish authors adopted these two techniques in their writing, one may say that some writers such as Kakemem Botanî and 'Abdullah Serrac, who had experience of writing narratives, were aware of global literary works through translations from Arabic. Once the region had gained semi-stability, this led to a desire for literary innovations. In addition, these two techniques – particularly magical realism – were suitable for them to express their ideas in figurative language. This was necessary due to the tensions between the political parties at that time, despite their having stopped actual fighting in 1997.

In our analysis of the Iraqi Kurdish novel at this historical stage, we will take economic and political factors into consideration. This analysis will be in the framework of Goldmann's methodologies concerning the relationships between text and the socio-political contexts. However, I may frequently use the term 'magical realism' during the present analysis, as one of the samples selected for study adopted this technique.

The samples for the present historical phase will be Kakemem Botanî's novel *Dirz* (Crack) in 1997 (in Soranî dialect),⁹⁶ and Enwer Muhammad-Tahir's *Geryan li Babê*

⁹⁶ After its publication in 1997, *Dirz* was discussed by the literary critics in different magazines, such as *Raman* in issues 17 and 21 (in 1997 and 1998), *Êsta* issue 17 in 1998 and *Karwan* in issue 115 in 1998. Furthermore, it has become a sample for a number of academic theses, such as: 1. 'Abdullah, M. E., 2000. *Şakes le Romanî Kurdî Kurdistanî 'Îraq da, 1990-1997* (Protagonists in the Iraqi Kurdish Novel: 1990-1997). Namey Master. Hewlêr: Zankoy Selaheddîn. 2. Muhammad, S. 'E., 2004. *Kesêti*

Berze (Search for the Missing Father) in 2001 (in Behdîni/Kurmancî dialect),⁹⁷ two well-known novels in this historical stage. Based on Goldman's notion of representative, I will first begin by providing some biographical information about the authors. This can be used as one of the mediating factors which relate the process of 'explanation' of the text to the world vision of a 'trans-individual', that is to say "a supra-individual reality which is composed of the individual consciousness of members of a social group, which may constitute two or two million people" (Webb, 1981, p. 43).

Kakemem Botanî (b. 1937)

Kakemem Botanî is among the pioneers of the new novel in the Kurdish literature, and his novel *Dirz* has attracted the attention of Kurdish critics. His real name is Kakemem Fexrî Samî. He was born on January 10 1937 in the town of Koye. He completed primary school in Hertel village, Koye and Silêmanî; secondary and high school in Kirkuk; then he graduated from the Advanced Institute of Agriculture at the University of Baghdad (Ali, 2012, p. 120). He worked as an agricultural engineer from 1968 until his retirement in 1988. Botanî became a consultant in the Ministry of Culture of the Kurdistan Regional Government from 1993-2000; he then went abroad and obtained the right of residence in Sweden in 2000 (ibid, p. 121).⁹⁸

Afret le Romanî Kurdî da (Female Characters in the Kurdish Novel). Namey Master. Silêmanî: Zankoy Silêmanî. 3. Ali, H. S., 2008. *Rengdanewey Riyalîzmî Sîhrî le Romanî Kakemem Botanî da* (The Reflection of Magic Realism in Kakemem Botanî's Novels). Namey Master. Hewlêr: Zankoy Selaheddîn.

⁹⁷ This novel by Enwer Muhammad-Tahir attracted the attention of readers and critics soon after its publication; and it became the subject of a number of different studies in Kurdish magazines and books in both Behdîni and Sorani dialects. Here I will list some of these studies: 1. Hessen, W., 2001. 'Romana *Geryan li Babê Berze*, Geryane li Nasnama Kurdî yan Geryane dinav Dîroka Kurdîda?' (Is the Novel *Geryan li Babê Berze* a Search for Kurdish Identity or a Search within Kurdish History?). Govarî *Herêm*. Jimare 35; 2. Bedel, I. M., 2002. 'Dem di Romana *Geryan li Babê Berzedê*' (Time in the Novel *Geryan li Babê Berze*). Govara *Peyv*. Jimare 20; 3. Qadir, R. H., 2005. *Cih di Romana Kurdîda* (Setting in the Kurdish Novel). Duhok: Weşanên Êketiya Nivîserên Kurd; 4. Sultan, 'E., 2006. 'Al-Itjâr al-Zamanee fee Riwayah al-Bahith 'an al-Ab al-Mafqod' (The Framework of Time in the Novel Search for the Missing Father) in 'Ubaid, Muhammad Sabir et al. *Maqâlât Naqdiyah fee Nîsoş Kurdiyah* (Critical Essays in Kurdish Texts). Duhok: Weşanên Êketiya Nivîserên Kurd; 5. Rashîd, S., 2007. *Romanî Kurdî Xwêndinewe û Pirsîyar* (The Kurdish Novel; Study and Questions). Hewlêr: Dezzgay Aras; and 6. Hîto, A., 2011. *Roman Xodîka Jiyanêye* (The Novel is the Mirror of Life). Bergê Êkê. Duhok: Rêveberiya Çap û Belavkirinê.

⁹⁸ According to Hussein Sabir Ali (2012, p. 121) Botanî published his first story *Beserhatî Kinêr* (Kinêr's Experience) in the magazine *Hetaw* (Sun) issue 87 on February 10 1957. The following is a

As for his social status, he grew up in a family which took a close interest in political issues. Botanî (2007, pp. 51-52) states that during the 1960s the Kurdish short story writer Yusuf al-Ḥaydarî, who writes in Arabic, asked him whether he was ready to publish his first short story collection. He replied that he did not have the financial ability to do this. Botanî (ibid, p. 101) also points out that he wanted to publish a second short story collection in 1970, but he could not do so owing to his difficult economic situation. However, his upward social mobility began in the late 1990s.

Kakemem Botanî (ibid, p. 41) states that he had supported the Kurdish national movement since his adolescence, but that he tendered his resignation from the Kurdistan Democratic Party soon after its first dispute in 1964. In addition, according to him he came to a point of intellectual alienation as a result of that dispute. Subsequently Botanî came to admire the philosophy of Roger Garaudy, a French philosopher who 'wrote more than 50 books - mainly on political philosophy and Marxism'.⁹⁹ However, he still accepted himself as a modern radical Kurdish rebel, and took advantage of a number of different contemporary philosophies (ibid).

We can recognize from his literary works, particularly his novel *Dirz*, that his world view is humanitarian, rather than embracing any specific political or religious belief. In the next sections of this chapter we will examine his focus on the roots of Kurdish origins, through his mention of the Şaneder cave and the ancient Zoroastrian religion, although his worldview is humanitarian. In addition, we will see how he

list of his literary and non-literary works which was prepared by Hussein Sabir Ali (ibid, pp. 121-122) in an interview with Kakemem Botanî in 2008: A. Short Story Collections: 1. *Bumelerze le Gomî Mendda* (An Earthquake in a Stagnant Basin) in 1969; 2. *Simkolî Ehrîmen* (), in 1973; 3. *Bazine* (The Circle) in 1979; 4. *Xerendî Merg* (The Canyon of Death) in 1992. B. Novels: 1. *Dirz* (Crack), in 1997; 2. *Kewşenî Peykertaşêkî tir* (The Arena of another Sculptor), in 2003; 3. *Mîrî Awayî Werzêr* (The Prices of the Peasant's Manor) in 2007; 4. *Waziyekanî Reşe Gom* (The Black Lake Games) in 2011. C. Poetry: 1. *Ho... Take bira* (Oh..The Only Brother) in 2003. D. Economy and Statistics: 1. *Dareben le Parêzgay Silêmanî* (Oak Trees in Silêmanî Province) in 1980; 2. *Berhemî Rojaney Kirêkaranî Nemangay Daristan* (Daily Production of Workers in the Arboretum) in 1981. E. Autobiography: 1. *Kakî Kakan* (Kakî Kakan) in 1997; 2. *Kake Bile Le Yad min* (Kake Bile in my Memory) in 2007. F. Memoirs: 1. *Kakememêkî tir* (Another Kakemem) in 2003; 2. *Janerêye Xoîemêşekan, Beserhatî Salanî 1964-1975* (Pains of the Grey Roads, Memoirs of 1964-1975) in 2007. G. History; 1. *Turkomanî Kurdistanî Başûr* (Turkmen of Southern Kurdistan) in 2002; 2. *Le Dûtoyî Yadaştî Şarda* (The Edge of the Memory of the City) in 2004.

⁹⁹ For more information about Garaudy see <http://www.english.rfi.fr/africa/20120615-french-resistance-holocaust-denial-roger-garaudy-dies-98>.

disagreed with intellectuals and professionals who he felt were not serving their community, or humanity as a whole, as he believed they should be.¹⁰⁰

We can learn from the second volume of his memoirs *Janerêye Xoîemêşiyekan, Beserhatî 1964-1975* (Pains of the Grey Roads, Memoirs of 1964-1975) that since the late 1960s he and his group of Soranî-Kurdish writer friends had been constantly thinking about the issue of the modern, and modernity in Kurdish literature, particularly in the Kurdish short story. He (2007, p. 55) argues that they wished to bring innovations to the Kurdish short story reflecting the impact of both capitalism and socialism, but that these innovations should be appropriate to the consciousness of a Kurdish audience.

Enwer Muhammad-Tahir (b. 1949)

Enwer Muhammad-Tahir was similarly influenced by the short story in world literature, translated into both Kurdish and Arabic, and by Arab short story writers themselves (Muhammad-Tahir, 2012). He was born on July 5 1949 in Êtîf village in Duhok province (Muhammad-Tahir, 1997, p. 63). He attended primary and secondary schools in Duhok and graduated from the Kurdish department of Baghdad University in 1974 (Muhammad-Tahir, 2012).

Muhammad-Tahir grew up in a religious family who had been engaged in religious education for around three centuries. His father and grandfather had a large personal library mostly of religious works, which encouraged him to start reading books while he was at primary school. However, rather than becoming a religious scholar, Muhammad-Tahir started as a short story writer in the Behdînan area in the late 1960s (ibid). On many occasions he emphasized in interviews that the writer has to be free and not associate himself to a specific political ideology (ibid). His education was in the Arabic language, and he states that if the March Manifesto supporting the Kurdish language had not been issued in 1970, he would have become a short story writer in Arabic instead of in Kurdish (Êesenî, 2004, p. 105).

¹⁰⁰ According to Botanî (1997, p. 141) as part of his principal of serving his society he tried to establish a literary organization in Baghdad in 1969, with the help of two of his friends. In addition, for the first time in Iraqi Kurdish history, the Union of Kurdish Writers was established in 1970 due to his efforts. Furthermore, he was one of the founders of *Şepolî Riwange* (Riwange Stream), a modern literary movement, in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1970.

Muhammad-Tahir started publishing his literary works, particularly short stories, in Kurdish in the early 1970s. In addition, he worked from 1977-1984 in Duhok as a secretary in the cultural department of the Union of the Kurdish Writers. He also worked as an administrative member of the UoKW from 1992-2000. In 1993, he was presenter of a literary programme on Duhok local TV for six months (ibid, p. 106). Muhammad-Tahir has published fourteen books on literary criticism, the short story and the novel, and a large number of articles in both Kurdish and Arabic, mainly on literature and political issues, in magazines and newspapers.¹⁰¹

We can understand from this biographical information of both authors that they share a number of common points. Both started as short story writers in the 1960s. However, they published their first novels after the Kurdish Uprising in 1991. Neither of them have strong ties to any political parties. Furthermore, they have both been influenced by world literature via translation, and were eager to introduce techniques such as magic realism. They lived in a very similar social situation before and after the Uprising; and based on their literary and cultural activities, one could accept each of them as a representative of their own social group/class in the sense of Goldmann's methodology. Subsequently, as we will discuss in the next sections of this chapter, they also developed a common world view resulting from their experience of common socio-political conditions. In addition, the semi-stability of the region in economic and political terms provided a situation in which Kakemem Botanî could innovate with the form of the Kurdish novel and create a magical realism novel.

¹⁰¹ The following is a list of the books which he published up until 2014: A. Short Story Collections: 1. *Ev Çîroke bi Dumahî nehat* (This Story does not Come to an End) in 1983; 2. *Pêkolek bo Danana Panoramayekê bo Cara Roj Xeyrî* (An Attempt to Make a Panorama When the Solar Eclipse Took Place) in 1996; 3. *Maqhā al-'Umiyān* (The Blind Cafe) in 2010 in Arabic; 4. *Berperekê Winda ji Jiyannama Selîmê Esmerê* (A Lost Page of Selîmê Esmerê's Autobiography) in 2004. B. Novels: 1. *Geryan li Babê Berze* (Search for the Missing Father) in 2001; 2. *Kurê Safa Re'nayê* (Safa Re'nayê's Son) in 2012 and in 2013 in the Roman alphabet. C. Literary Criticism: 1. *Çend Gotarekêd Rexneyî* (Some Essays of Criticism) in 1988; 2. *Şkandina Bazina* (Breaking the Circles) in 2002; 3. *Ji 'Eşqa Zimanê Şîrîn* (Because of the Sweet Language) in 2013. D. Translations from Persian and Arabic: 1. *Şêlim Firoş* (The Beetroot Seller) story from Persian in 2004. 2. *Masya Reşa Biçûk* (The Small Black Fish) Children's story from Persian in 2005. 3. *Qereç, Sê Şanogeryên Poşkîn* (The Gypsy, Three Dramas by Pushkin) Drama from Arabic in 2007; 4. *Pira Arta yan Bihayê Giran* (Arta Bridge or Expensive Value) Drama from Arabic in 2008; 5. *Generalê Mirnê Sê Şanogerî* (The General of Death) Three Dramas from Arabic in 2011. F. Others: 1. *Ferhenga Mamostaya- di gel êkê dî* (Teachers' Dictionary- co-authored) in 2000. 2. *Ferhenga Fermanbera- di gel êkê dî* (Employees' Dictionary- co-authored) in 2004. 3. *Ji Rojnamegeriya Kurdî* (About Kurdish Journalism) in 2006.

The Themes of the Novels

1. In *Dirz* (Crack)

Kakemem Botani's novel *Dirz* (1997) concerns a character named Pîrbaļ or Pîrbaļe Çiçe who has been isolated from his society as a result of two violent events. Firstly, when he was a child he used to play with his cousin (a girl). Once he had sex with her in the city's *tonî hêmam* (a kiln used for heating the public baths). The person whose job it was to light the kiln saw them, beat them, and then raped Pîrbaļ's cousin in front of his eyes. Pîrbaļ's isolation leads him to have a psychological complex. Secondly, he was invited to watch a tragic event take place, again in the kiln area of the public bath. This started with the killing of five madmen (Guļe şêt, Marif, Homar, Pîran and Pîrmem) who killed and cut each other in pieces in front of him. This was done in the manner of a Zoroastrian legend, dancing around the kiln as if it was an *Ateşga*, a fireplace in a Zoroastrian temple.

The theme of the novel is the effect of these events on Pîrbaļ. Events combine in the manner of a legend, involving a synthesis of the current deteriorating social reality with mythology in a setting of ancient belief, particularly relating to the ancient Zoroastrian religion. Majd Nori (1997, p. 149) points out that in *Dirz*, the settings and metaphors intersect with each other, and this intersection leads to the creation of a kind of mythological reality. Consequently Nori rightly argues that the text is converted from a historical episode to a series of anthropological events, in which monologue takes the place of dialogue.

In *Dirz*, one can observe a constant conflict between two opposing forces: Good and Evil:

...ئەهریمن بەسەر ئاهۆرامزده زال بوو. میلی زهوی خزا. تاقیکردنهو مکانی
 مرۆفایهتی لهناو برد. هیماکان بهباران شوورانوه. سهدهی سههۆلی نهیوون
 سهری ههڵدایهوه. (بۆتانی، 1997، ل 10)

... Ahriman (the Evil force) controlled Ahura Mazdā (the Good force).

The very pattern of the earth's rotation was altered. Humankind suffered.

The icons were washed by the rain. The Ice Age began once more.

(Botani, 1997, p. 10)

The narrator indicates that whenever Ahriman (Evil) controls Ahura Mazdā (Good) the whole world suffers. This conflict between Ahriman and Ahura Mazdā is one of the cornerstones of Zoroastrianism, which is important for the Kurds, who accept that this was their original religion. In *Dirz*, this conflict is sometimes set in a particular period of time, namely the end of the twentieth century. At other times, the conflict is traced back to the era of ancient caves, Zoroastrian religion and the *Ateşga* period. The allegory of Ahura Mazdā (the Good force) and Ahriman (the Evil force) is employed when the novel speaks of both contemporary and ancient eras and thus forms a link between both periods of Kurdish life.

The central character Pîrbaļ is a psychiatric patient, whose illness is concurrent with the domination of Evil (Ahriman) over Good (Ahura Mazdā). Pîrbaļ sees himself as a representative of Good, in contrast to his wife Xane, who is a figure of Evil because of her disloyalty to him. When seeking treatment for him, she contacts the doctor Pîrer (Pîrbaļ's childhood friend); however, she falls in love with the doctor and becomes pregnant by him. In this sense, for the protagonist, both Xane and Pîrer become vanguards of Evil.

Kakemem Botanî employs this illegal relationship between Xane and Pîrer to convey the idea of the misuse of jobs by the Kurds for personal interest, and their lack of attention to humanitarian values. Botanî takes the social strata of doctors as an example of how occupations are exploited in Kurdish society:

دەرۆلمه‌نده‌كان خه‌ریکی کارگه‌ دانان و سه‌له‌م‌کردن بوون. چهند که‌سه‌بیکیان،
له‌ ژیره‌وه، له‌گه‌ڵ ده‌ست‌رۆشته‌ووی شارمه‌که‌ ریکه‌وت بوون. بازرگانی
دهردی دهروونیان دهمکرد، تا گری دهروونیه‌کان بوونه‌ به‌نرخترین
به‌ره‌می بازرگانی دهره‌وه. (ل 32)

The rich doctors were busy with establishing factories and receipt of goods from abroad. A number of them agreed with the officials of the city to trade in psychological diseases. Consequently, these psychological complexes became the most expensive commercial imports from abroad. (p. 32)

The rich doctors trade with patients, whereas the common doctors such as Pîrer, who do not have the ability to become a trader, exploit the patients' families. Here Botanî is indicating that corruption is widespread in his society, reaching into every

part, including the health sector. That is why he is hopeless about people's future in his society.

In *Dirz*, different events, such as legends, religious and real events make up the text, and therefore the reader needs to be active in differentiating between them. These events are mostly allegories of the overcoming of Good by Evil. These allegories express a pessimistic view of the situation of Kurdish society, in terms of civil war, naivety of community and the economic crisis. In this regard, the Kurdish novelist and writer 'Abdullah Serrac, on the back cover of *Dirz*, writes that reality and fantasy have been nicely combined in *Dirz*, and that the theme of the text relates to the civil war.

In a magical journey Pîrbaļ and Bore (a dog) follow Pîrmem to a cave; there they find a statue which speaks to Pîrmem:

توو... لهبیرت نایئ... توو... پێش ئێمه.. مردی.. لهبرسا
 مردی (میترا) تورا... لئی پارینهوه دادی نه‌دا، تاریکستان به‌ریا بوو،...
 -دوای من، دوای میترا... چیتان به‌سه‌ر هات؟
 -پێکه‌وه مردین.. به‌کۆمه‌ڵ مردین. که‌س نه‌بوو به‌مانشارینه‌وه. (ل 87)

Do you not remember that you died before us? You died because of starvation. Mithra became angry; we prayed to him, but to no avail.

- The darkness spread...
- What happened to you after Mithra and Me?
- We all died together, there was nobody to bury us. (p. 87)

One can understand from this dialogue that the author is referring to the harsh economic conditions which are causing starvation in his society. He also mentions the civil wars in his community during the same period, but in figurative language.

As a consequence of the author's hopeless view towards his society the theme of death is dominant throughout the novel. At the end of the novel, as at its beginning, there is another mass killing of main characters, such as Pîrbaļ, Xane and Zarê Dom, and secondary characters such as the black snake and the dog Bore.¹⁰² This happens in a tragic and complex incident which takes place in a Zoroastrian atmosphere around a fireplace, and which has never been solved:

¹⁰² Dom means 'fortune-telling', and is also a term used to refer to gypsies at least in southern and northern Kurdistan.

هەر يهکه به جۆری لیکیده دایهوه... چهندهها تیئوریان چهسپاند. کارهکهیان
 دهربردوه بهر فلسهفهه کۆن و تازهکان... ههرخۆشیان پهشیمان دهبوونهوه... (ل 138)

Everyone analysed the episode in his own way.. They used different approaches to understand the way in which the event had happened. They applied ancient and modern philosophical approaches in order to understand; but then they soon changed their minds again. (p. 138)

Botanî expresses the complexity of the socio-political and economic situation of the Iraqi Kurdish people during the 1990s, by combining the fate of his characters with a mixture of legend, ancient religion, imagination and reality.

2. In *Geryan li Babê Berze* (Search for the Missing Father)

The subject of Enwer Muhammad-Tahir's novel is the adversity of Kurdish history at two different moments; the early twentieth century and the early 1990s, particularly during the Iraqi Kurdish mass migration in 1991. However, these two phases have been linked by employing a missing father as a metaphor for various issues common to both periods; for example, identity, leadership and union. Thus the act of searching for the missing father draws together the two periods.

The key theme of the fiction is the search for a missing father, who was lost during *Reva Milyonî* (the Kurdish mass migration) in 1991. This search gradually changes literary mode from realism to fantasy and dreams, while representing the ambitions of the Kurdish people. Enwer Muhammad-Tahir indicates that the missing father is a missing history; and sometimes Muhammad-Tahir refers to him as a missing leader for the Kurds, who has the ability to unify them within the framework of an independent state, in order to find their missing identity.

The act of searching for the missing father remains an open endeavour without achieving any concrete results. The closing chapter of the novel talks about receiving a letter from the father, which is evidence that he is alive, and will be found. However, the last sentence of the novel causes a doubt to come into the reader's mind:

دبیت بابی بهرزہ بیت و فی گولا مہند و راوستیای بہن و کہقزی گرتی،
 بشلقینیت و مک لمشنا بہہاری بسہردا بہنیت و رامالیت و مہ ژ گیزہفانک و
 سی ریانا قنرتال بکہتو بیختہ رییا راست، یان تا روژا قیامتہ دی ہس
 کاری مہ بیتہ گہریان ل بابی بہرزہ. (موحہمد-تاہر، 2001، ل 109)

It might be from the missing father, who might come like the spring flood
 and stir this swamp, which is covered by algae and emits a foul smell.

He might also rescue us from confusion and going the wrong way, and guide
 us onto the right path. Or, our job will be to remain searching for the missing
 father until doomsday. (Muhammad-Tahir, 2001, p. 109)

The last sentence reveals the author's hesitation concerning his people's
 independence - through the voice of the third person. This uncertainty about the
 Kurds' future arises from the socio-political conditions in which the novel was written
 and published, after the Kurdish uprising. Although the Kurdish people in Iraqi
 Kurdistan were protected by the UN from attack by the Iraqi regime, their fate was
 unclear; firstly because that protection was not guaranteed in the Iraqi constitution;
 secondly, because of the civil war which occurred in that period. This civil war
 caused Kurdish people, particularly the intelligentsia, to doubt their future.
 Consequently, Muhammad-Tahir is sometimes optimistic about finding the missing
 father; and at other times, because of the instability of the political circumstances
 and the conflict between the Kurdish political parties, he is pessimistic and hopeless.

The existence of disputes between Kurds may be considered to be the major theme
 of the novel. This can be seen in the reason for the loss of the father. In *Geryan li
 Babê Berze*, the main reason for the father's loss is the conflict between his sons
 during the period of the migration. This conflict makes the father angry. One night
 they all suffered because of heavy rain; when they wake up they see that their father
 is not there (pp. 7-9):

بہلے نہواژ ہمییا خرابتر و چوکیت مہ شکاندین ژ وئی روژی وەرہ
 کہتینہ گیزہفانکی دہمی ہمییا پسیرا بابی خو کری.
 -کا بابو...
 - کا بابی من
 -کیفہ چوو
 -ژ کہنگی وەرہ نہدیارہ

-جھهك نه ما لي نه گهريان بهلي بي سهر و شوين بوو. (ل 9)

However, the worst thing which disappointed us and caused our confusion was the moment when we asked each other where our father was:

- Where is dad?
- Where is my father?
- Where did he go?
- How long will he be away for?

We searched everywhere, but he had disappeared completely. (p. 9)

The father here is a metaphor for union, and his loss is a reference to the disunion which leads to the loss of the Kurds' ambitions and hopes i.e. independence and victory. Rashīd (2011, p. 166) argues that finding the missing father is the Kurds' ambition; therefore, if they fail to find him, they must search to find him until doomsday. He states, however, that whenever we see him (symbolizing union), he would rescue us from extinction.

Geryan li Babê Berze (Search for the Missing Father) also contains expressions of social conflict between the younger and older generations, *Salafism* and secularism, and modern ideas contrasted with ideas which do not fit in with contemporary society:

ژ بهر ئی گریدانی ب بابی فه ئهم نهشین چ پینگاڤا بهرهف پیش بچین،
 دئ مینین گریدای دهمی بوری...
 مەترسیا وئ دکەین کۆ کارتێکەرنا وی هەر بمینیت وەک سههمەک،
 ئەڤجا خەبات و بزاقی بکەین نه بهس پشت گوه هاقیتنا گهريانی ل بابی
 بهرزه بهلکو نههیلانا وی وینهی پیرۆز ل پیش چاقی ملهتی هاتیه دورست کرن. (ل 100)

Because of this adherence to the father we cannot move a step forward, and we will remain committed to the past tense... we fear his disappearance remaining as something frightening for us, consequently we may try to ignore the missing father and his sacred image. (p. 100)

These words are expressed by a minor character in the novel. Muhammad-Tahir stands against every old custom advanced by this minor character. Hîto (2011, p. 111) argues that Muhammad-Tahir makes the old social customs and traditions doubtful in order to make Kurdish readers reconsider their life and their culture, and evaluate them through the eyes of the present age.

The Formal Structure of the Novels

Hero

In both novels a number of main characters play key roles, instead of one main protagonist. In *Dirz*, the central hero is Pîrba! (or Pîrba!e Çiçe), who collaborates with other important characters, such as Xane (Pîrba!'s wife), Pîrer, Pîrmam, and Zarê Dom. The five major characters constitute the thoughts of Kakemem Botanî about the life of the common people, and about psychiatrists, during the end of the twentieth century in Iraqi Kurdistan. Similarly, there are a number of main protagonists in *Geryan li Babê Berze*; the father (the missing father), the narrator (the son of the missing father), the Kurds' pasha (king), Hosta Hûsên, 'Ezîzê Mela 'Elî (or Mîrza) and *Destnivîs* (Manuscript). Moreover, some of the main characters of both novels are well-educated such as doctor Pîrer, Pîrba! and even Xane in *Dirz*; Mîrza and the Kurds' Pasha in *Geryan li Babê Berze*. Other characters are uneducated, such as Pîrmam and Zarê Dom in *Dirz*; and Hosta Hûsên and the missing father in *Geryan li Babê Berze*. In addition, there are a few minor characters who appear at a certain time and place to play limited roles in the stories of both novels.

Here, I will analyze the protagonists in both novels separately in order to show how, as a result of civil war, harsh political conditions and lack of freedom, Iraqi Kurdish novelists made use of socially marginalized characters, and employed a combination of legend, fantasy and reality in order to express their attitude towards the current situation. This analysis will also serve to demonstrate how in both the present novels key roles are played by a number of different heroes; in contrast to novels written in the previous historical period, which were dominated by one main hero. This is one of the significant innovations which occurred in the formal structure of the novel in the present historical phase, as a result of the change in the socio-political background of society.

The central hero in *Dirz* is Pîrba! who is a composite character, that is to say in his beliefs and nature we can see hallmarks of two different people. On the one hand, Pîrba! is a member of the working class and a food shop owner; other shopkeepers have a jealous attitude towards him. In addition, Pîrba! is a good reader of ancient history and science fiction books; and he constantly watches movies (p. 23). On the

other hand, he is a psychiatric patient. However, when the psychiatrist Pîrer tries to treat him, he is impressed by him, and says that Pîrba! is a great man.

After becoming Pîrmem's friend Pîrba! develops a new personality, behaving abnormally and acting out legendary behaviour. They both go to caves, mountains and Zoroastrian archeological sites. Furthermore, in a ceremony Pîrba! throws himself into the fire (but he does not burn), on the advice of Pîrmem, in order to purify himself: "Whenever the fire ignites more, your soul will be purified more, and it will be farther from the material world" (p. 78). After this purifying event one night Pîrba!, Pîrmem and Bore (the dog) travel on foot to Sikond, Şaneder/ Shanidar Cave and then to Mount Ararat (p. 83).¹⁰³ That means they are acting out the role of legendary characters; such an act is a characteristic of magical realism.

Pîrmem, like Pîrba!, is another composite character. He has two different personalities at the same time. He behaves like a mad man in the city in normal life: "there were few people who did not know Pîrmem or did not call him Pîre Mirdox and did not laugh at his strange clothes" (p. 27). However, those who know him closely recognise him as a holy man. In the same way in which Pîrba! accepts him as a sheikh, a shoemaker, Hacî Sofî Brayîm, always describes him to others as a holy man: "whenever I went on pilgrimage, I saw Pîrmem there and he always went around the Kaaba before me" (p. 29). Even those who knew him closely would say "since the day Pîrmem disappeared, goodness has gone out of the city" (p. 29).

Not only the well-known or those who have social status have a major role in Botani's novel, but also the socially marginalized characters, such as the mad Pîrmem and Zarê Dom, play an important role in his fiction. Zarê or Zarê Dom is an old gypsy woman. Her job, in the city, is fortune-telling by looking at the lines in people's hands, and at remains in the cups of coffee. As a result of her continuous walking about the city she knows Pîrba!'s shop and Pîrer's private clinic. As a consequence of her going to Pîrer's clinic, she senses the relationship between the doctor and Xane, Pîrba!'s wife. Thereafter she frequently goes to Pîrba!'s shop to see him and to his house to see his wife. She then tries to reveal Pîrer's and Xane's secret to Pîrba!. By doing that Zarê, as a socially marginalized character, becomes

¹⁰³ Sikond is an area in Kirmaşan/ Kermānshāh city in Iranian Kurdistan. Şaneder/ Shanidar Cave, is an archaeological site in the Bradost mountains in Erbil, where the first adult Neanderthal skeletons were discovered. Mount Ararat is located near Agirî city in Northern Kurdistan.

an important character in Pîrer's, Xane's and Pîrba!l's life, so she plays a major role in the story-line of the novel.

Marginalized characters also play a major role in the other novels by Kakemem Botanî. Hemîne Sûr in *Kewşenî Peykertaşêkî tir* in 2003, and Gozîde in *Mîrî Awayî Werzêr* in 2007 are marginalized characters in their society. This feature in Iraqi Kurdish novels, of socially marginalized characters playing an important role, mostly appears after the Kurdish Uprising of 1991, particularly in 1997. This year saw the publication of *Dirz*, of Selah Omer's *Tarîkistanî Lîm* (The Darkness of Sand), and Bakhtiyar Ali's novels *Mergî Taqaney Dûhem* (The Death of the Second Only Child), followed by *Êwarey Perwane* (Perwane's Evening) in 1998.¹⁰⁴ These novels were published in the Soranî dialect. They have been widely read and attracted the attention of Kurdish literary critics. According to Ahmadzadah (2003, p.268) “[s]oon after the publication of *Êwarey Perwane*, it became a subject of discussion in various Kurdish journals and literary circles”. These works of Botanî and other mentioned writers portray the harsh political and economic conditions in Iraqi Kurdistan during the 1990s.

Another kind of character who plays an important role in *Dirz* is one who is in reality only a projection of another person's mind. When doctor Pîrer and Xane fall in love they begin to feel that Pîrba!l knows of their relationship, and imagine that he is there with them, preparing to do them harm. In the same way, after his death in a mythical event, the character Pîrmem becomes a projected presence in the minds of Pîrba!l and others in the city such as Hacî Sofî Brayîm.

In *Dirz* a place can also take on a projected reality in the same way that a human can become a projected presence. *Tûnî hêmam* (the kiln in the public baths) takes on a projected reality in the mind of Pîrba!l. Due to the horrific incidents he has witnessed there, it haunts his memory and constantly appears before him. These remembered events control his mind and to some extent become his nightmare.

¹⁰⁴ Bakhtiyar Ali was born in 1960 in Silêmanî. He is one of the most prominent Kurdish novelists throughout Kurdistan. His first published novel was *Mergî Taqaney Dûhem* (The Death of the Second Only Child) in 1997 in Sweden. Ali has published five other novels: 1. *Êwarey Perwane* (Perwane's Evening) in 1998; 2. *Duwahemîn Henarî Duniya* (The Last Pomegranate in the World) in 2002; 3. *Şarî Mosîqare Spiyekan* (The City of the White Musicians) in 2002; 4. *Ûezelnûs û Baxekanî Xeyal* (The Lyricist and the Garden of Fantasy) in 2005; 5. *Koşkî Balînde Xemgînekan* (The Mansion of the Blue Birds) in 2007. (for more information see Ahmadzadeh, 2011, p. 287).

All the protagonists in *Dirz* suffer a tragic fate, and all of them are in conflict with their surroundings and their inner life. However, none of them can win in his/her conflict. Farukh Nī'mat Pour (1998, p. 18) argues that 'Botanî tries to embody the essence of the disaster in the characters, and to create a reality in a fantastic space'. This means, to use the words of Goldmann, that his characters as problematic heroes/heroines are unable to obtain authentic values in their degraded world.

Similarly, Muhammad-Tahir's characters are problematic heroes. They lose their father, who stands as an allegory for deeper values in their life. However, even after a long, sustained, search they are unable to find him i.e. they fail in their search for authentic values in their crumbling world. Thereby, the missing father becomes the central character. Every incident in the novel relates by some means to the action of his being missing and the search to find him:

نئی باشه پیره میړه کی بی ناقصت و ناقص سال چوی لقی گیله شوکی
دوو شهف و دوو دوو روژ لناق فان نه هال و تراش و کهفرا دی چموا
بینن، گورگا خاریه!! دههبا خاریه!! بهس خودی دزانییت.
نئی پیره میړه کی بی هیز و ژ حهفتی سالیی بوری هوین برهکا کور و نهفی و
خزم و زه لاما. ئی ههوه چاوا هیلا؟ .. ئی بوجی؟ (موحهمد-تاہر، 2001، ل 5)

Oh, a weak old man in such a chaos between these valleys, bushes and rocks for two days and nights, how could we see him? Only God knows whether is he alive, or has become food for wolves!!

- Oh, how and why did you, a great number of sons and grandsons, leave an old man of more than seventy such as this? (Muhammad-Tahir, 2001, p. 5)

These descriptions of the missing father as a human being, after the starting sentence, are the first sentences of the novel. However, when the reader finishes the novel, it becomes clear for him that the missing father is not a weak old man who is made of flesh and bones:

لسهر سفرا خارنی دقیا مه همیا پیکفه خاربا ههکه ئیک ل ویری نهبا
دقیا نهم ل ژفانی وی مابینه، نه دیوو کس بدست خارنی بکمت وهک
ئیشارماتا ماسترویی ئوگسترا دابیژتی دی پیکفه بیژن: بسمللا...

.....

ئهو روژا سی یی بوو کاروانی مه بهرهف چارمنقیسی نه دیار و تاری
دجو، ژپینگا ئیک ب ریبیفانا مهلیونی ئاریش و ئیکگرتنا مه یا سست هژییا و

خۆ پەرسستی و بەرزەهوندییت کەسێ تال دەست پێکەر و تۆقی دۆبەرەکی کەت و
 شین بوو، ...
 دەه جارا ل سەر دەستی بابی خۆ دا پێکھێن و بەلێ دا شەر و قیری دەست پێ
 کەنەفە. (ل ل 6-8)

When meals were ready at home, we had to be all together;
 if someone was absent we had to wait for him. He (the missing father), was
 like a Maestro, giving a signal to the orchestra, and he used to say 'you must
 all be together' by saying: "*Bismilla* (in the name of Allah)"...

.....
 it was the third day that our caravan was continuing towards an unknown fate.
 Our problems, our weak union, selfishness and self-interest started from the
 first step of the mass migration... they used to pacify angry spectators by
 taking the role of their father; however, suddenly the conflict and shouting
 would begin again. (pp. 6-8)

In the writers' society the father plays an important role in the family and its unity.
 Here, the father is a metaphor for that authority, and the act of losing the father is a
 symbol for the missing union among the Kurds. As Hîto (2011, p. 109) makes clear,
 the father has a key role in Kurdish society as a tribal and collective society. In
Geryan li Babê Berze, when the family members lose their unity during the mass
 migration, at the same time they lose their father. In this way, we can see the
 significance of the father in their lives, and that the failure to find him is an allegory
 for the Kurdish nation being in a state of disunity and lacking in proper authority:

ئەف جیهانا بۆیە گوندەکی بچوێک چەوا بابی مە لێ بەرزەهەبوو، دقئیت مە
 دوو گۆتن هەین ئەم سۆبەه بێژینە زارووییت خۆ بەرەباییت لدویف مە دا دەین.
 کا چاوا ئەم هۆسا بەرمللا و خەم بووین، تئستەکی گرنگ د مێژووێا خۆدا
 مە هێلا و پشت گۆه مە هاقئیت. (ل 99)

How did our father become lost in this world which has become a small
 village? We had to have some words to tell our children and the next
 generations. How were we indifferent and reckless? We lost and ignored
 something significant in our history. (p. 99)

Here, the narrator blames himself and his brothers for their disunity. By saying "We
 lost and ignored something significant in our history" he means that the Kurdish

people have lost their sense of unity, which is a crucial factor in their drive for power and independence. This can be understood as a reflection of the writer's own reaction to the civil war in Iraqi Kurdistan during the 1990s. It means that the missing father in the novel represents the missing identity and statehood of the Kurdish people, as a consequence of their disunity. In today's advanced globalized world the Kurds lack their own national identity, and they have not paid sufficient attention to this:

-ههكه ئهم سهحكهمه تيورا زانستى دهر وونى و ههكه ئهم مفاى ژ
 تيورا [سو]سيۆلوجى وهر بگريين و جفاكئ خو باش بخوينين دئ گههينه
 وئ ئهنجاما مه دقئيت.
 -ههكه مهسهلا بابئ بهرزه و گهريان لديف بيخينه بهر تيشكا فان ههردوو
 تيورا دئ مه گههينته وئ راستئى كو مللتهئ مه هئش ل قوناغا دهستينكى دابه
 ل مهسهلا باز ئيرقائئى، ههه چهنده ههنگاقت ههقائين. (ل 100)

In the process of examining our society, if we look at psychological theory and try to benefit from sociological theory, we would obtain the results we are searching for.

If we put the missing father and the attempt at finding him under the scrutiny of both types of theory, we would come to the conclusion that our society is in the very first stage of civilization, in spite of making an effort to obtain it. (p. 100)

The act of losing the father, here, refers to the inability of Kurdish society to become a modern society. Consequently, the reader may feel that finding the lost father is necessary for the Kurdish nation, because he is also a figure of civilization, which means advanced culture rather than feudal society. The Kurds will be lost themselves, and will not make progress unless they find him.

In contrast, at other times the father represents backward ideas and social underdevelopment, i.e. he holds opposing meanings and ideas. Consequently, his loss is of crucial importance:

ئهم مللهتهكين ههمى تشتنئ بۆرى و كهفن دپهريسين، ههه باز دانهك
 بۆ نوبخازيئ ب تشتهكى كوهر دزانين قهت ب چاقهكى رهمنئ سههناكهينه
 دهمئ بۆرى، ... بهلى قهكرنا فى بابتهئ دگهل بابئ من ههچكو ئهه بهياناما شهري
 رادگههينم. (ل 84-85)

We are a nation that sanctifies everything that is old and past. We stand against every step towards modernity; we never criticize past actions... however, discussing this subject with my father was like a declaration of war (pp. 84-85)

Here the father represents traditional values that no longer hold meaning and are in fact holding Kurdish society back. In this sense his loss is necessary for the Kurds in contemporary life i.e. it is time to go with the contemporary world and leave behind ties with the past.

Another main character in *Geryan li Babê Berze* is Paşayê Kurda (the Kurds' pasha). He rebelled against the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century in order to establish an independent Kurdistan in Wêranşar (Viranşehir), a town in Urfa province in Northern Kurdistan.¹⁰⁵ Although Muhammad-Tahir calls the town Avan Şehir and he does not mention the name of Pasha, given the period and place of the events of the story, the apprised reader may know that the protagonist is Ibrahim Pasha, the leader of the Millî tribes. According to Sir Mark Sykes (1915, pp. 324-325) Ibrahim Pasha was the head of the Milli tribes, which consisted of a number of tribes from different origins, such as Kurds, Christians, Yezidis and Arabs. He indicates the safety and development of 'Viranshehr' (Wêranşar - Viranşehir) in terms of economy and trade during Ibrahim Pasha's rule. Sykes (ibid, p. 325) states that "in 1904, Ibrahim Pasha protested" but did not succeed in his protests.

Muhammad-Tahir makes this historical person one of the main heroes in his fiction; making use of both historical and fictional events he makes the Kurds' Pasha a brave character. The writer describes him in terms of his wisdom as a leader and his method of struggling against the Ottoman forces. The narrator depends on two sources in describing him; the first being what the narrator himself heard from his father, who in turn relied on Hosta Hûsên in his recounting. The second source is what the narrator found in his grandfather's Manuscript:

باش تێدا دیاره کو پاشایێ کوردا چهند بهایی دایه دهشتی و ئاقی،
دا هیزهکا ئابوری یا باش ههیبیت بشنیت عهسکهڕی خۆ ب هیز بکهت.
ئهو تهناهیای وی پهیدا کری شیا بیته وه لاتهکن پێ گوته کو بازرگان قهستا

¹⁰⁵ Wêranşar in Kurdish means 'ruined city'; perhaps this is why the author uses Avan Şehir (which means 'built city') as a place for events to unfold in his novel.

باژیر و مەملەكەتا وی بکەن، باری بازارگانیی ب رهوش و گهرم بیت. (ل 54)

It was clear (in the Manuscript) to what extent the Kurds' Pasha paid attention to the plains and the water supply in order to achieve a powerful economy which would be helpful in strengthening his military.

Furthermore, as a consequence of its safety his territory became an attractive region for traders. (p. 54)

The narrator makes clear that alongside achieving peace and a powerful economy the Kurds' Pasha was aware of the world and its development:

ناگه ژ دونیا دهرقه ههبوو، زیده یی هشیار بوو کا رۆژگار بهرهف
کیفه دچیت و خو دگهل د گونجاند شینا نه علمتا ل دهوروبهریت خو بکەت،
خو دکیشا مهیدانا کو دگهل کاروانی وان بچیت و.. (ل 57)

He was aware of the outside world, and he was conscious of the contemporary world and its directions, so he always tried to go with it. Instead of blaming his environment he attempted to go with its caravan.
(p. 57)

The narrator indicates that his consciousness of the world and its development goes back to the Pasha's intellectual ability and his wide experience:

بهلی من ل دههمەن و ناڤ ریزیت دەستنیسی و هەر هۆسا ل
ژێدەرەکی کو من زانی کو پاشا ژ زارویا خو بابی وی هەنارتبوو نسته مبولی و
ل گەنجینیا خو چەند سەفەر و گەریان ل ئورویا کربوون و گەلهک تیکهلیا
رهوشهنبیرییت کورد کرهه. (ل 59)

I have seen in the Manuscript's main body and its footnotes, and also in another source, that during his childhood the Pasha's father sent him to school in Istanbul. Moreover, when the Pasha was a young man he used to go to Europe many times, and he had good relations with the Kurdish intelligentsia. (p. 59)

That means Muhammad-Tahir wants to declare that the Kurds' Pasha, as a main character, is intellectual and educated. He has an awareness of life and the modern world.

Other characters that play a main role in *Geryan li Babê Berze* are Destnivîs (the Manuscript), Hosta Hûsên and 'Ezîzê Mela 'Elî (or Mîrza), who is the narrator's

grandfather. He is also the owner of the Manuscript, which the narrator found in a large, old box of his grandfather's. Subsequently, this Manuscript becomes the reliable source for the narrator's stories about Avan Şehir and the Kurds' Pasha. The narrator usually refers to the Manuscript in recounting his story i.e. he reminds the reader at regular intervals what is his source of information. Occasionally he compares the Manuscript's information with the stories which he had already learned from his father concerning Avan Şehir and the Kurds' Pasha. He can find both similarities and differences between the two sources. Thus, although Mîrza is sometimes absent from the text as a name, the reader always feels his presence.

In *Geryan li Babê Berze*, both Hosta Hûsên and Mîrza are from the same village and they are friends. They flee from the compulsory Ottoman military service towards Kolîn village, and then to Avan Şehir city in order to join the Kurds' Pasha's protest. Each of them has his own profession. Consequently, Mîrza works as administrative employee in Avan Şehir because he is an intellectual; whereas Hosta Hûsên is an illiterate character who works in an armoury as a repairman: "During his service in the Ottoman military he was well-known in all military units and blocks as an arms repairer." (p. 25)

His experience as a repairman makes him an important person in the Pasha's military, and the Pasha himself pays great attention to him. Consequently, he soon becomes employed in the Pasha's weapons factories. Moreover, Hosta Hûsên gets a good reputation in his village because of his efforts to resolve the problem of the lack of water:

ئەف ئافا بابیرئ تە قەخاری و ئەز و تو قەدخوین هەمی خیرا
 دەست و ماھۆل و نکراندنا هۆستا حوسینیه چونکی ئافا گوندی یا
 دویر بوو ئەفجا ژیان ل گوندی ب زحمەت کەتوو، پشنتی ئەو کەفر و
 زنار ب ماھۆل و قەلمین ئاسنی و بارۆتی شکاندین بەرئ ئافئ
 ئیخستە گوندی. (ل ل 24-25)

That water which we drank went back to the efforts of Hosta Hûsên's hands, hammer and digging. The village's water supply was a great distance away, so life in the village was difficult. However, he made it easier by destroying the rocks which had hindered the water's access to the village. (pp. 24-25)

These professional works which were conducted by Hosta Hûsên despite his being illiterate, make him an attractive character. In addition, his important role in the story as one of its narrators makes him occupy large areas of the novel.

However, as may also be observed in *Geryan li Babê Berze*, there are no female characters at all in the novel. This could be due to the women's weak role in Kurdish society at this historical stage.

To sum up, the main characters in Muhammad-Tahir's and Botanî's books include both the educated and the illiterate. Most of them, particularly Botanî's characters, unlike the protagonists in the previous historical phase, are magical. However, despite this, they are also realistic. In addition, what distinguishes the novels written by both writers from those produced in the previous stage is the number of characters who play main roles in the events of the novels, whereas in the previous stage there is mostly only one hero who plays a key role in the action of the novel. Memory also plays a smaller part in the creation of events, while in the previous phase the novel's story-line consists of the writer's own experiences in life.

On the other hand, however, Botanî's novel is more fictional than Muhammad-Tahir's, which latter can be seen as an historical novel, because of the way it recounts real historical events at a certain period of time in Kurdish history. Moreover, all Muhammad-Tahir's protagonists have social status, while some of Botanî's main characters are socially marginalized. However, in the novels which were written in the previous phase the heroes did not gain social status during their childhood, but when they grew up they did achieve social rank; Mokrî's hero becomes a leader of a group of peshmerga and Akreyî's hero becomes a doctor. In other words, one can observe a clear change in the way of dealing with characters in the present stage.

In both these historical phases a common feature of the protagonists is that they have been psychologically damaged. In the novels of first phase, this is because of their being under the Iraqi regime's rule; while in the second phase it is due to social backwardness in *Dirz*, and a consequence of missing national identity in *Geryan li Babê Berze*. Moreover, the hero remains someone problematic, who fails to achieve the authentic values he is searching for in a degraded world.

Time

In both novels the events take place in two different historical periods. The present events occur after the second half of the twentieth century, which can be understood from some events and allusions which refer to the 1980s and 1990s. In *Dirz*, the harsh economic conditions and the availability of the food shop agencies in the city are signs of that period. In *Geryan li Babê Berze*, it is clear that the first main period of the story is the Kurdish mass migration, which started all over the Iraqi Kurdistan region in 1991 as a protest against the aggressive policy conducted by the Iraqi Baathist regime against the Kurds. During the mass migration the father of the narrator of the story had been lost. This period becomes the present tense of the novel: "For two days and nights they searched for their father, although they obviously knew that it was difficult or even impossible to find him." This is the first sentence of the novel.

However, the second period in *Dirz* goes back to prehistoric times, when people used to live in caves; and this period is mixed with the time of Zoroastrian religion. Botanî mixes the contemporary events with those involving the cavemen and those living in the Zoroastrian period through a combination of reality and fantasy. He also refers to Pîrbaļ's childhood using the technique of flashback, suddenly linking this to his present life without following any chronological order. Similarly, Muhammad-Tahir links the episode of losing the father in 1991 with the second period of the novel, which is the early twentieth century, by using the technique of flashback. Following this, the rest of the events which go to make up the story relate to the circumstances of the Kurdish people during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, around the time of the First World War.

To connect between the two main periods of the story Muhammad-Tahir creates the third period of time, by looking back at the Kurdish situation a few years before the mass migration. In these years the Iraqi regime imposed conscription on the Iraqi Kurds during the Iran-Iraq and Iraq-Kuwait wars:

بەلێ وێ ئێفاری گۆتۆتکەک بە لاف بوو.. ئەو ژێ گۆتن کەرتهکی
 ئەلجەیش ئەلشەعی، دقیت بو خاری هەیهۆ... هەیهۆ... باژیر ژ وێ
 دەست و داری کەتە ئێکی دی، ئەف گۆلا مەنگ وەک کەفرەکی مەزن
 کەتیه تیدا و بو دەنگ و شلقین پەرچیت ئافی ل هەمی رمخا رەشاندن و

به لاقه بوون. (موحه مه دتا هر، 2001، ل ل 20-21)

However, that evening some news concerning the requirements of a group of the *al-Jaysh al-Sha'bi* (the people's army) for the southern part of the country spread among the people,... ah.. ah.. the state of the city changed. This news was like a huge stone falling into an enclosed swamp, sending out ripples of water which spread everywhere.

(Muhammad-Tahir, 2001, pp. 20-21)

The episode of conscription, to become involved in a war which had no connection with Kurdish concerns, corresponds to the Ottoman Empire's attitude towards the Kurds during the First World War. Muhammad-Tahir uses the Iraqi Popular Army to highlight similarities between the two periods of Kurdish history. These similarities enable the writer to convey the idea that 'history repeats itself' for the Kurds. In addition, he uses them as a prelude to returning the focus of the story to events in the early twentieth century:

ئهو چهند شهف بووئهم ل شكهفت و ناوسكا دنهستين، گهنج و لاويت
باژيرا ژى قهستا گوندي مه و گونديت دموروبهرا دكر ژ ترسا ههوا گرتنا
وان بو بهروكيت شهري سيفه بهللكي. چونكي جهندرميت توركا وهك
سهييت هار كهتبهونه دهر و كولانا و خهلك راييچ دكر بهرهف مهيدانيت
جهنگي جيهاني دهرن، كو مه دگوتئي سيفه بهللك. (ل 15)

We slept in caves for many days; the youths of the cities fled to our village and the villages around us, fearing conscription for the *Seferbelk* (or *Seferberlik*) war. The Turkish army were like fierce dogs, spreading out into neighborhoods and streets, and rounding people up to take them off to join in the First World War which we called *Seferbelk*.

(p. 15)

The Kurdish people escaped from their land during the Ottoman period in order to protect themselves and not take part in this war which had nothing to do with them. Then after more than half a century, during the time of the Baathist regime in Iraqi Kurdistan, they repeated the same behaviour. Muhammad-Tahir demonstrates that there was absolutely no change in the political situation in Kurdistan during the twentieth century.

As for using tenses, both novels start with the present tense and end in the future tense. In *Geryan li Babê Berze*, the middle of the story is dominated by the past tense; although the narrator sometimes indicates the present when he is writing the story. However, in *Dirz* it is difficult to find the boundary between the events, as a consequence of the mixture of fantasy, myth and reality. It is therefore clear that there are common trends during the different periods of time, starting in the past and ending in the future, but in irregular order, and the use of tense fluctuates between different tenses. According to Ali (2012, p. 309), this fluctuation between different tenses in narrating events is a feature of magical realism in *Dirz*.

Moreover, both novelists use the future tense, but they are doubtful about their people's future. Perhaps the doubtful anticipations of the writers relate to the unstable political situation in Iraqi Kurdistan during the period of writing and publishing the two novels. In *Dirz*, the narrator (Pîrba!) talks about an event which will occur in the future. He predicts that a star will hit the earth and will sink into the water (chapters 23 and 24). However, he mixes this episode with Noah's flood. There is an allusion which indicates that this incident will occur in the future, through mentioning the failure of an atomic bomb which will be used to damage the star before it reaches the earth, but it is hard for reader to distinguish between the two events. This kind of technique is a feature of magical realism fiction. Furthermore, sometimes the Kurdish reader may feel that the flood is a metaphor for the consequences of the civil wars which happened first in the 1980s and then in the 1990s:

ئوبالی نوغرو و له ناو بردنی شارستانییهتیمان خسته نهستوی
 لافاوکه بهس لافاوکهمان تاوانبارکرد. پاش دهستکاری، شیکردنهوهی
 وشیری، بو دواجار، میژووکهمان وا تومار کرد. (بۆتانی، 1997، ل 117)

The destruction of our civilization had been traced back to the flood. We only accused the flood. But, after an accurate and a conscientious analysis, it has become clear that our history has repeated itself for a second time.

(Botanî, 1997, p. 117).

It may be understood from the last sentence that the repetition of the civil war is similar to the flood and may damage Kurdish civilization. If this interpretation of the text is true, the events of the star, flood and civil war become a combination of the past, present and future.

Place

Both novels employ the settings where events take place for political purposes. Botani's novel expresses the question of identity and nationality, embodying this national discourse by referring to different geographical places. However, for Muhammad-Tahir, the place where events occur may be seen as an expression of the political instability in Kurdistan.

In *Geryan li Babê Berze*, there are four main places in the novel; two villages and two cities. In *Dirz*, one city plays a key role in the fiction, but this includes different areas in that city. During the current analysis we will observe that although villages are still significant, in the novels of this period cities are now increasingly used as the locations where events take place. This factor may have its origin in the political changes which occurred in this period, when the Kurds returned from exile abroad, for example in Iranian and Turkish refugee camps, and found that their villages had been destroyed. Consequently most of them began to live in cities, which were safer than villages, particularly those villages which lay on the borders with neighbouring countries. In the following analysis, I will start by discussing the concept of place in *Dirz*, and then in *Geryan li Babê Berze*.

In *Dirz*, the main place of the story is an unknown city; according to some political, social and geographical indications it is a city in Iraqi Kurdistan. Consequently the setting becomes an open place, and it can represent all the cities in southern Kurdistan. The narrator describes the city as follows:

ئای... شاریکی سهیر و ئهفسوناویمان ههیه. ههه کۆلانه، جۆری
 دهروانی، ههه گهرمهکه، خۆی له شیوهیی وهردهدا. دیواره قورهکان،
 ههسوودیان بهدیواری بهرد و گههچ دهبرد. ئهویش پاشتوقلی لهدیواری
 خشتی سوور و چیمهنتۆ دهگردد. (بۆتانی، 1997، ل 60)

Oh.. we have got a strange and legendary city. Every street has its own view, and every neighbourhood has a different form. The walls of clay are jealous of the walls of stones and gypsum, and the latter are jealous of the walls made of red blocks and cement. (Botani, 1997, p. 60)

These descriptions of the city are true for all Iraqi Kurdish cities during the twentieth century. Moreover, the descriptions reveal the socio-economic differentiation between the people of the city.

There are a number of places which have a major role in the city, such as the kiln of the public baths, caves, Pîrbağ's food shop and Pîrer's private clinic. Although Botanî combines a contemporary place, the kiln of the public baths, and a prehistoric place, the cave, he links them by mentioning the fire which exists in both places. This means that Botanî tries to link ancient and modern events and places. Furthermore, the kiln of the bath building is a departure point for travelling on to find other actual sites. Pîrbağ, in his travel with Pîrmem and Bore one night, starts out from the kiln of the public baths to visit different places, such Asin Koğên (in Pêncwîn town in Southern Kurdistan), Sikond, Şaneder and Mount Ararat. Then they travel to other places, such as lakes Wan/Van (in Wan city in Northern Kurdistan) and Zrebar (in Mariwan city in Eastern Kurdistan). As Ali (2012, p. 327) argues, for such travels as these normal time measurements disappear, because only in legends can characters make such journeys.

Pîrer's clinic is another meaningful place in *Dirz*. The clinic is simply a place for treatment of psychiatric patients; however, its function turns it into the place of romantic encounters for Xane and the doctor until Xane becomes pregnant by him. Consequently the doctor accepts himself as a criminal and comes under the direct influence of Pîrbağ. Instead of treating Pîrbağ, Doctor Pîrer accepts him as a wise man and as his *sheikh*. Thereafter Pîrer goes constantly to Pîrbağ's shop, until it becomes the place where Pîrbağ's group of associates are killed in front of Pîrer's eyes.

In *Geryan li Babê Berze*, using the time span of the story, one can refer to the places where events take place. As the first time period of the story is traceable to the *Reva Milyonî* (mass migration) in 1991, the place of the events is Iraqi Kurdistan. The main place is an unnamed village in southern Kurdistan. This village is the residence of the narrator of the story, and also his father, his grandfather Mîrza and Hosta Hûsên. The only description of the village is its problem with a shortage of water. There are also other temporary places where events take place, namely Çelê and Deştanê, on

the border between Turkish and Iraqi Kurdistan, where a large number of Iraqi Kurds found sanctuary at that time.

The second main place of the events, in Iraqi Kurdistan, is an unknown city, which in a similar way to the village remains an open place. The city can represent all the cities in Iraqi Kurdistan before the mass migration:

دەم ئێفاره و باژیر ب هینمی و ترس ل ژیر سیبەرا چاڤدیریا
سانسور و دویفه لانک و توپله کیت رژیمی وەک جاران ژینا خو
د بەتە سەر، هەر ئیک مژوولی کاری خو یی روژانهیه. (موحهمد-تاهر، 2001، ل 20)

The time was evening; life in city was continuously oscillating between safety and fear, just as it had been before, under the censorship and the followers of the regime. Everyone was busy with his daily work. (Muhammad-Tahir, 2001, p. 20)

This means that fear covered the land of Iraqi Kurdistan, particularly the cities, even if there were not any specific wars going on.

Moreover, according to the time span of the text, the second main period of the events is the Ottoman period in the early twentieth century, when the Kurdish Pasha protested in order to establish an independent state. That means the events of the story are transferred from southern Kurdistan to northern Kurdistan. There are two main places where events occurred in this new area. The first is Avan Şehir city, which is the capital city of the Kurds' Pasha, and most of the historical events of the novel take place there.

The borders of the city are constantly expanding, and it is well developed in terms of its buildings and trades. In addition, it is a location for military exercises and the arms industry. The method of development for Avan Şehir city used by the Kurd's Pasha is to pay attention to safety, agriculture and trades.

The other main place in the story in northern Kurdistan is Kolîn village, which is described more than other places:

ئەف گونده دکهفته بن چیایهکی لبر دا دهشت و لهیلانهکا پان و
بەر فره بوو، هندی چاڤیت ته قهتره دکهت هەر دهشت ئاف و جو و
جوبار بوون، ژبلی روپارهکی ب پیل و پۆش گا جۆت نهشیان لئیدهن.
ئەف گونده ژ وان گوندیت مەزن بوو، هەما ب چهوتی و بی خودانی، یان

خه‌مساری مابوو گوند هه‌که باژیره‌ک بخو بوو. (ل ل 34-35)

That village lay under a mountain and it had quite a wide plain. You could not see the end of the plain. There was also a great river running through it. It was one of the biggest villages; it remained as a village and did not become a town, as a result of a mistake or ignorance. (p. 34-35)

The narrator's description of the village shows that both river and plain are the source of its richness, particularly in terms of agriculture. Consequently, there are a number of rich people and traders in the village. The narrator states that there are many high buildings and big mosques, even bigger than those in the cities. In addition, it is the first village in which tobacco was planted (p. 35).

However, the writer makes clear that the village has two opposite sides. The external side of the village is its richness; whereas its internal character is one of deep sadness. The reason for this sadness is that during World War I, about one thousand people were taken by the Ottoman army to take part in the war; only about fifty returned and the rest disappeared (p. 36). The writer refers to the Kurds' situation during that period by considering these two contradictory descriptions of the village. This means that although Kurdistan is rich in terms of natural resources, the Kurds do not have control of their own land; consequently they suffer from being made fuel for the fire of wars, bringing them deep distress.

Here, it could be said that in the current historical stage, the village as the place for events still has its existence in the Kurdish novel written in the Behdînî dialect; while in the Soranî dialect there are attempts to discontinue using it as a main place in novels, such as in *Dirz*. In addition, in the present stage in both dialects the place in the fiction is an open place; whereas in the previous phase it is mostly restricted to one particular place.

The Significant Structure of the Novels

Based on Goldmann's notion of the existing conflict between the social groups in a certain society, I will explore the vision of individuals in both novels, towards themselves and the opposing social classes or groups. This kind of analysis will first

of all be helpful in order to understand the nature of the conflicts between the Iraqi-Kurdish social groups in this historical period. It will then reveal the changes which have occurred in the type of conflicts between political factions in Iraqi Kurdish society as a result of changes in political and economic circumstances. In addition, the information yielded by such an analysis can be used as a link between what has already been discussed in the previous section concerning the formal structure of the novels, and a further explanation of the world vision of the society and the novelists, in the next section.

As has been already clarified, both novels include a number of social groups within Kurdish society in a certain period of time. The novels express the discordant relations between these social classes/groups in Iraqi Kurdish society following their Uprising in 1991. This existence of conflicting social classes/groups may express the writers' vision towards the present socio-political conditions. Both Botanî and Muhammad-Tahir, in common with most Kurdish writers in this period, condemned the civil war. They traced every social problem, such as the widespread poverty, back to the conflicts between political parties on the one hand, and to those between the social groups themselves on the other hand. These unstable conditions led the writers to reflect conflicts such as these in their novels. However, because of the socio-political tensions in their community, they opted to use figurative and imaginative language in creating events and characters.

In *Dirz*, there are a number of conflicting social groups, such as the sick among the working class, poor women, doctors and gypsies, who are the lowest social group. These social groups are represented by Pîrbaļ, Xane, Pîrer and Zarê respectively. Their conflict ends by their killing each other in an abnormal way. In addition, all these social conflicts have been mixed with fantasy, legend and imagination.

The most obvious conflict is that between Xane and Pîrbaļ. Xane is from a poor family and has no-one to whom she can unburden her feelings. Having suffered from her husband's behaviour, she tries to persuade him to seek treatment for his illness. This, however, deepens the conflict between them. As Pîrbaļ firmly resists her advice, she feels herself to be in a hopeless conflict with him. At first she goes to complain about her husband's nature to his brother Bapîr, and then to the old woman Menîç; but they are both unsuccessful attempts (pp. 12-13). Finally, she decides to

go to see the psychiatrist Pîrer, her husband's childhood friend, in order to ask him to treat Pîrba's psychiatric illness. However, by falling in love with Pîrer, on the one hand, she finds herself guilty towards her husband, and on the other hand, this relationship creates further conflicts with Pîrba:

پیش خۆر هه‌لات، پهرده‌ی لاده‌دا. خۆی ده‌خسته سه‌رپشت.
 رووی هیمنی په‌شووکاوی له‌ ناوینه‌ی میزی توالیتکه‌یا ده‌دی. جوانی
 خۆی هه‌له‌سه‌نگاند.. سه‌یری خه‌ری پیربالی ده‌کرد.. له‌ کرده‌وه‌کانی
 په‌شیمان ده‌بووه. سه‌رزهنستی خۆی ده‌کرد. به‌زه‌یی به‌و می‌رده ده‌هاته‌وه،
 که ته‌واوی بروای خۆی پییه‌خشیوه!.. (بۆتانی، 1997، ل 49)

Before the sunrise, she drew back the curtain. She turned herself onto her back. She looked at the mirror and saw safety through it. She assessed her own beauty. Then she looked at the sleeping Pîrba. She felt sorry for what she had done. She blamed herself totally. She felt sorry for her husband, who had given her his complete trust. (Botani, 1997, p. 49)

Xane obviously knows that her romantic relationship with Pîrer and committing marital infidelity is a wrong choice and action. On the other hand, she continues her relationship with Pîrer and demands to find a way to get rid of her husband. In a conversation with Pîrer she complains about the gypsy Zarê's attitude:

-ئهو رۆژه‌ش هاته عیاده و شه‌ری پیفرۆشتم.
 - بۆ؟!
 - تا.. واز له‌ پیرباله‌ چشه‌ بینم.. دیاره، شیت و دۆم یه‌کتریان دۆزییه‌ته‌وه.
 - پیروزی یه‌کین.. من تۆم هه‌بی، هه‌موو دونیاشم ناوی. ده‌ربازم که. ئەم
 دۆزمخه‌ی ساله‌هایه‌ تیا ده‌ژیم بیته‌ پینه، نازادم که.

- پیره‌ر گیان.. چی بکه‌ین؟ بۆ له‌م ناومخته‌ دا، خه‌به‌ر دوا‌ی خه‌به‌رمان بۆ دئ؟ (ل 73)

- That day she came to the clinic and tried to fight with me.
- Why?
- I felt that I'd got rid of Pîrba! Çişe, but the problem is it seems that the madman and the fortune-teller have found each other.
- Congratulations to them.. If I have you (Pîrer), I will never ask for anything else in the world. Please, rescue me. Rescue me from the hell which I have lived in for so long...

- ...
- My love Pîrer, what are we going to do? Why, at such a time as this, do we receive bad news upon bad news? (p. 73)

After a deeply romantic relationship Xane seeks a way to leave Pîrbaļ, and finds herself in serious conflict with her husband.

Although both Pîrer and Xane see themselves in conflict with Pîrbaļ, Pîrer constantly attempts to treat Pîrbaļ's psychiatric illness. However, Pîrbaļ insists on rejecting his treatment. On the one hand, this is as a consequence of Xane's relationship with him, and on the other hand, Pîrbaļ does not accept the authority of the doctor class, because he sees them as traders rather than physicians. Consequently, he feels that he is superior to them. In a monologue he speaks with himself:

باش دهرانم که من به نهخۆش دهرانی.. منیش ئه‌وم که لهخۆم دهگهم.. من
خاوه‌نی گهورمترین نه‌ینیم که کهسیان درکیان پینی نه‌کردوه. (ل 37)

Yes, I know that he thinks I am ill. But I understand myself well..

I have the greatest secret, no one has felt it yet." (p. 37)

Despite Pîrbaļ's rejection of the doctor's treatment, and viewing himself as healthier than the doctor himself, Pîrer continues to treat him. Subsequently, one day Doctor Pîrer leaves a book concerned with psychiatric illnesses in Pîrbaļ's food shop. The next day, the doctor goes to his shop and pretends that he has left the book in the shop by mistake:

دکتور، له‌وه زۆر زانتر بوو که هه‌ست به‌شه‌ونخۆنی و ئازاری
دلی پیریال نه‌کا. به‌زه‌ده‌خه‌نه‌وه ده‌ستی خسته سه‌ر شانی و هه‌والی
کنتیه‌که‌ی پرسی.. له‌سه‌ر فه‌رده ئاردیکی (صفر) داینا‌بو. دایه ده‌ستی پیره‌ر،
چهند جاری کردیه‌وه، پرسی:
سه‌یرت کرد.. شتی نویی زۆر تیدا‌یه. (ل 40)

The doctor knew how Pîrbaļ would be feeling after reading the book.

He put his hand on Pîrbaļ's shoulder and asked about his book with a pretend smile. He had left it on a bag of white flour.

He gave it to Pîrer. Pîrer opened it several times and asked:

- How did you find it? It has some new ideas in it. (p. 40)

Although the book makes Pîrbaļ into a keen reader of psychology books, he still does not believe in doctors' treatments, particularly those of psychiatrists. It becomes clear to both Xane and Pîrer that one of the reasons for his aggressive attitude towards doctors is their own illicit relationship. Furthermore, they feel that Zarê is responsible for their romantic relationship being uncovered. This belief puts them in conflict with both Zarê and Pîrbaļ. The conflict now involves three different social groups.

The aftermath of their conflicts is that Pîrbaļ is able to exert control over the doctor Pîrer. As a consequence of doing something wrong and misusing his profession, the doctor is forced to admit his fault. Subsequently a new conflict appears between him and Xane when he accepts Pîrbaļ as his role model. So the conflict between the characters continues until they kill each other. The mass killing in this novel is an allegory used by Botanî to highlight the conflict between different elements in Kurdish society and its expression in the Kurdish civil war. Thus, this tragic fate of the characters, who represent different social groups, is an indication of the writer's hopeless and pessimistic view, resulting from the civil war, towards the fate of Kurdish society.

Similarly Muhammad-Tahir sees that the disunity within Kurdish society causes people to lose their national identity. As has been already discussed, the missing father, in *Geryan li Babê Berze*, is a metaphor for national identity, an independent state and power, and his sons are metaphors for the Kurdish people. Consequently, their disunity becomes an allegory for the conflicts between different groups, particularly the political parties:

هەر ئێک ژ برابیت وی پرسیار کربا، کا کەسێ بابێ وان نەدیتیه،
بێ ئێک و دوو دا سێ چار ئاخفتنیت تەعل و ئیقلدار بیژنی و
ئەنجامی وی کەتە پی خارنەک ل سەر سفرا گورگا. (موحەمەد-تاهەر، 2001، ل 5)

When any one of his brothers began to ask about their missing father, the answer would be several quick insults, and then they would show him that his destiny was to become food for the wolves. (Muhammad-Tahir, 2001, p. 5)

This means that finding the missing father is in doubt; in the same way, obtaining national identity becomes doubtful.

Muhammad-Tahir makes clear that one of the reasons for the conflict within Kurdish society is the existence of different radical ideologies among the Kurdish political parties. These conflicts mostly exist between the two major ideas, leftist and nationalist:

... وهك دهرزهكی پهیڤا بوو لئاڤ بهیڤا وان ئهقیټ بیر و باوهریت
 نهتهوهی توند و قایم و جوینهکا دی کۆ خو ددانن ب شورهشگێر و
 هزر و بیریت توندرو و چهپ رهو نهرازیوونا ههمی هزریت كهفن
 دكهن خو ژ دهستیكا میژووپی ههتا نهفرۆ هزرا نوی دگۆتن كهفا سهرمایهداریی یه
 یا كهفن ژی دگۆتن یا گریڤای چیفانۆك و ئهفسان و میتافیزیقیایه. (ل 31)

...A division manifested itself between those who held extreme nationalist ideas and the leftists who disagreed with all the old ideas, from the beginning of history until now. They claimed that the modern ideas were but the froth of capitalism, and the old ideas the product of myth, legend and metaphysics.
 (p. 31)

Although differences in ideas are normal in all societies, Mohammed-Taher suggests that the adherence to extremist ideology is the cause of all kind of crises, such as the loss of an independent state for the Kurds.

In *Geryan li Babê Berze*, another kind of conflict among Kurdish people results from the notion of old versus modern ideas, and this is the conflict between the younger and older generations. The older generation is always proud of their history and past, and they try to retain the old customs; however, the younger generation is against every kind of old-fashioned idea. Consequently, in the novel the act of losing the father is also a hint of the old customs:

مهزنترین چهوتی لدهف ههوه ههبیټ نهو ژی پبروزیا بابی یه
 هندی بمینیټ دئ پاشقهرو مینین بهرهف پیش ناچین چونکی مروف
 دهمی گریڤای رابردووپی خو بیټ نهشیټ چ هنگاڤا بو پیشه بهافیژیټ. (ل 31)

Your greatest fault is your reverence for the father. While you retain this reverence, you will remain an underdeveloped people and never find progress. Whenever people are tied to their past they never can take a step forward. (p. 31)

As the fiction *Geryan li Babê Berze* was written and published after 1991, the reverence for the past could be the reverence for leftist thought, and the new ideas

could be capitalism and globalization. However, it is also possible to understand it as a conflict between the younger and older generations.

Muhammad-Tahir justifies the different conflicts in Kurdish society by mentioning the instability in the Kurdish political situation over a long period of time:

هەر نیف چەرخەکی دا رەنگەکی داگیرکەرا دا هینە سەر مال و ئەردی
 مە یان هەکە ئەو نەهاتبانه دا کرێ گرتییت خۆ ب فیتکەکی رهوانه کەن.
 مال و گوند و مزگەفت و دیریت مە ویران کەن و مللەتی مە ژێ دەر بەدەر کەن،
 چونکی چەکی مە و وان نەهەف سەنگ بوو، چەند رەنگیت داگیرکەرا هاتینە
 سەر ئاخا مە و هەکە مە بەرەقانی ژ خۆ کربا، ئەو دابینژن ئەفە مللەتەکی شەرخوازە
 خوین رێژە کاری وی هەر شەر و جەردە و تالان کرنه، هەمی هەوار شەر دەینتە
 بەر دەرگەهی مە و بەرەقانی کرن ژێ تاوانه. (ل 20)

Every half a century a different occupier occupied our land, or the occupiers would send their followers at the blow of a whistle. They used to demolish our homes, villages, mosques and churches and expelled us, because our weapons were not equal to theirs. Several types of occupiers occupied our land; when we defended our land they used to say that we were a bloodthirsty and wicked people... ah wars beat on our doors, resistance and self-defense were a crime. (p. 20)

The different occupiers of Kurdistan brought different ideas, which led to the appearance of different social and political groups among the Kurdish communities. Thus, according to the writer's argument, the existence of several conflicting groups in such a society is normal.

In the foregoing it has become clear that there are various social classes/groups in the two novels, and that these social groups are different to one another. In *Dirz*, as a social novel, the social groups consist of civil groups, such as the sick among the working class, and the doctor and gypsy classes. *Geryan li Babê Berz*, as a historical novel, is based on the ideological and political components which go towards the creation of conflicting groups. However, both novels link the existence of conflicting groups to the civil war which occurred after 1991. Consequently, the discourses of both novels are at one with each other in condemning the civil war.

In contrast, in the novels which were written in the previous historical stage there are two conflicting groups, namely the peasant/working class and the landlord/Agha

class. The writers always support the working class against the Agha class. Thus, one can observe that with the changing political background of Iraqi Kurdish society the nature of the social components has changed. Consequently, the Kurdish novelists have changed their focus from tribal issues to a more modern view, adapted to the new social reality and demands. In addition, they have adopted new techniques, such as allegorical language and the use of myth.

World Vision between the Texts, Reality and the Authors

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, according to Goldmann's analysis of the works of Pascal and Racine, it is necessary to establish the nature of the world vision in the literary work which is being studied, and then to try to explore whether this kind of vision is structurally homologous to the ideas of a certain social class/group. However, it may be impossible to trace the relationship of the world vision of Botanî and Muhammad-Tahir to a particular social group and to the ideology of that social group exactly as has been done by Goldmann in the case of the works of Pascal and Racine for the French noble classes. Rather, I will try to find some possible relations between the structure of the novels of both Botanî and Muhammad-Tahir and the structure of Kurdish society after the Kurdish uprising in 1991 until 2003. However, to relate this world vision to a social group, I will attempt to consider the social experience in Kurdish society during this stage; following Goldmann's approach, I must use different mediating factors for this purpose.

Goldmann (1976, p. 19) argues that the historian of literature must ask:

what social and individual reasons there are to explain why this vision should have been expressed in this particular way at this particular time.

Goldmann has incorporated in his analysis of the works of Pascal and Racine three associated studies: the structure of the text: the writer's world vision and the social structure. Such an analysis of a literary work as this seems to be reasonable, if we accept that every literary work is the consequence of the interaction between social and cultural factors and the author's own imagination (Sutardi, Winarni and Wardani, 2013, p. 484).

Bearing in mind the aims of the present study, the most important factor to be taken into consideration is the political situation and its impact on Kurdish society, and on other fields such as the economy. Thus, this analysis will start with the political mediating factor in exploring the nature of the world vision expressed in both novels.

As has been clarified in Chapter Two, after 1991 a number of different changes occurred in Kurdish society. In fact, the political factor was the dynamic for these changes. Consequently, to determine the nature of the novels' world view, social reality at this period of time, and the authors' beliefs, I will begin by establishing relationships between the most prominent political occurrences and their consequences, such as their effects on different aspects of Iraqi Kurdish society, including their effect on literary works and on the degree of freedom of expression available.

During this historical phase, the most obvious occurrence was the widespread instability in the region, caused by the neighbouring countries. In fact, the attempt to disrupt the security and stability of the Kurdistan region by the neighbouring countries such as Iraq and Turkey, as has been discussed in Chapter Two, had its impact on the psychology of the Iraqi Kurdish people, including the intelligentsia. It served to generate the hopeless and pessimistic vision of the future of humanity in the writers' works. As has already been argued, in *Dirz*, Botanî predicted that a planet would crash into the earth and cause severe damage; moreover, his protagonists, Pîrbaļ, Pîrmem, Xane and Zarê all had to die because they no longer had a place in the world. Similarly Muhammad-Tahir's protagonist, the Kurdish Pasha, has no hope in his struggle; and Muhammad-Tahir is also doubtful about finding the lost father i.e. achieving the Kurdish future dreams. This hopeless literary view may be seen to result from the unstable political situation stirred up by neighbouring countries.

Other sources of instability in the region were the civil wars between the Kurdish political parties, particularly between the two major parties the KDP and the PUK, from 1994 until 1997. As a consequence of this unstable situation resulting from the civil war, and leading to the division of the region into two statelets, authors' lives started to be at risk. During 1994-1998 a number of writers were assassinated. In September 1994 the poet Abu-Bakr Ali was assassinated in Sulaimania; and also in

1994 Se'dî Berzincî, the Dean of the College of Politics and Law at the University of Salahaddin in Erbil, was kidnapped (al-Atrushî, 2000, p. 19).

According to Fawzî al- Atrushî (2000, p. 20) as a result of this exercise of violence against writers, and the lack of freedom of expression, on November 15 1997 twenty-five Kurdish writers in Sweden issued an appeal in solidarity with their colleagues in Kurdistan, to expose the death threats directed against the writers Muhammad Farîq Hessen, Reof Hessen, Seyd Ali Berzincî, Hême Kerîm 'Arif, Hamîd Rêbwar, Fuad Muhammad Ameen and Şadr al-ddin 'Arif. Similarly on November 20 1997 the Kurdish Intellectuals' Society of American and Canada issued a statement expressing their concern about the risk to the lives of Kurdish writers in Iraqî Kurdistan.

These threats made against writers, and the censorship of their works, led them to consider whether to stop writing, or to turn towards figurative language and ambiguity in their literary works. Under such circumstances magical realism seemed to be a suitable technique for Kurdish novelists such as Kakemem Botanî, who in a very metaphorical way condemned the civil war. Other writers, such as Muhammad-Tahir, expressed in their works a hopeless searching for the establishment of an independent and developed Kurdish state. Their protagonists appeared as problematic with no hope of achieving the societal values for which they searched, in order to build a safe and impartial world.

Although by September 1998 the civil war between the two major parties ended in an agreement, the so-called "Washington Agreement", through the mediation of the United States (Leezenberg, 2005, p. 639), freedom of expression still remained very limited and the region remained under two different administrations until the next historical stage i.e. 2003. However, the Agreement at least led to an easing of tensions between the KDP and PUK, which allowed them then to begin negotiating over their disagreements. Stansfield (2003, p. 100) points out that they became reconciled in many aspects, such as stopping 'media attacks', releasing prisoners, ending 'forced expulsion' and easing movement between Erbil and Silêmanî by reducing the strength of the checkpoints.

It has become clear from the above-mentioned argument that one of the main reasons for the harsh political situation in this historical stage was the Iraqi Kurdish

civil war/s. It might therefore be reasonable, having presented the external reasons, to bear in mind the internal reasons behind this civil war. Regarding the internal factors, S. Mansoob Murshed (2002, p. 388) argues that economic factors, alongside ethnic and religious factors, have an active role in the occurrence of civil strife and wars in 'developing' countries. Furthermore, Murshed (ibid) points out that:

evidence is accumulating that socio-economic variables, such as the desire to control natural-resource rents, social fragmentation, poverty, inequality and institutional breakdown, all play a role in contemporary civil wars.

Murshed's hypothesis regarding the occurrence of civil wars in the 'developing' world corresponds to a large degree with what happened in Iraqi Kurdistan in the last decade of the twentieth century. Thus, not surprisingly one of the major reasons for the incidence of the civil war between the KDP and the PUK was the matter of the customs' incomes from the Turkish-Iraqi border point, which were estimated at \$35 million annually and were the main source of income for the region (al-Khafaji, 1996, p. 35).

As has been discussed in Chapters One and Three, the economic factor is one of the major mediating factors in Goldmann's theory. Discussing this factor is helpful to justify our main argument concerning the Iraqi Kurdish novelists' adaptation to a new form of novel, arising mainly because of the political situation, and then because of the economic conditions. This is unlike the case of the French novel, which according to Goldmann's hypothesis of the link between economic life and the form of the novel, developed as a result of the economic changes in society.¹⁰⁶

If we look at the economy of Iraqi Kurdistan in this historical phase, what is significant is the economic crisis which was experienced by the Kurds. As a consequence of Saddam's Gulf War the UN imposed an economic blockade on Iraq and the Kurdistan region; however, Kurdistan also suffered from another economic blockade imposed by the central government.¹⁰⁷ Consequently the region faced great economic crisis at this stage, which had its impact on every aspect of the writers' lives and which reflected in their literary production. In *Dirz*, for instance, the

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter One, page 18, of this study.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter Two of the current study.

continuous conflict between social groups of differing social status is an allusion to the severe economic conditions and the civil wars in Kurdistan.

In this regard, one can argue that the civil war caused more economic problems, such as unemployment, and also the Kurdistan Regional Government changed its economic plan. The KRG became a monopolist in many economic activities and a competitor to the private sector in other activities. Subsequently the private sector withdrew from most of the economic activities within the region, and this in turn led to the withdrawal of private sector capital to other areas adjacent to the region (al-Doski, 2003, pp. 88-89).

These economic problems which resulted from the civil war and the government's monopoly of the economy in the region made the intelligentsia despair in life. In *Dirz*, Botanî relates the death of some of his characters due to starvation and economic crisis in his society: "Do you not remember that you died before us? You died because of starvation" (Botanî, 1997, p. 87). Botanî relates this starvation to the severe political conditions which were at the root of the desperate vision present in the writing of intellectuals of that period. That is why it can be said that Botanî's hopeless view of the future of humanity is typical of the view of his social class at that time. Likewise, one of the main factors making Muhammad-Tahir hopeless about the future of his people is this harsh economic and political situation.

According to Leezenberg (ibid, p. 637) until 2003 both European countries and the Kurdistan Regional Government agreed that because of the severe political and economic conditions, they could not guarantee the wellbeing and safety of Kurdish people wishing to return from exile:

In 2001 and 2002, just before the American-led war against Iraq, there was a discussion in the Netherlands and other European countries about whether northern Iraq was safe enough for the involuntary repatriation of rejected asylum seekers. The two Iraqi Kurdish administrations did not dismiss these proposals outright, but emphasised that they did not have the financial and other infrastructural means to accommodate returnees without substantial support from abroad. (ibid)

Both poverty and civil wars in Iraqi Kurdistan remained major problems for the Kurds. This unforeseen situation, following on from their partial separation from the Iraqi regime, affected them deeply, particularly the intelligentsia. Further, it became the driving force behind their hopeless world vision, which is apparent in this historical phase. Furthermore, these circumstances influenced the novelists to portray marginalized and psychiatrically disturbed characters. The response of novelists to the political crisis actually led to formal literary innovation and achievement.

Both Botanî and Muhammad-Tahir themselves experienced such harsh economic and political conditions, and the impact on their novels is evident. In order to explain both the form and content of the two novels, it is important to focus on the writers' biographies, relating this biographical information to the process of their literary production.

As we have already learned from their biographies, both Botanî and Muhammad-Tahir had been involved with the Kurdish intellectual milieu since they were young. Moreover, Botanî grew up in a family which had a strong relationship with politics, although he soon dismissed political life. Similarly Muhammad-Tahir grew up in a religious family, but he soon strayed away from religious commitments and began working in cultural affairs. Furthermore, both writers experienced upward social mobility after the 1990s as members of the Kurdish intelligentsia. However, the severe economic conditions affected their lives, as was the case for the majority of Kurdish people in Iraq. This is why their pessimistic and hopeless expressions of the contemporary reality can be accepted as their credentials for being members of their social class, which had suffered from various types of difficulties and crises. There is to a certain extent a homologous relationship between the world vision of the authors' class and the internal structure of their works. It could be said that both writers succeeded in expressing the world view of their social class and achieving maximum possible consciousness of the ideology of their class.

As has been suggested at the beginning of the present subsection, the Post-Uprising stage started from the mass migration and the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government. Soon after this, disputes and civil war started between the Kurdish political parties and groups, and all of these events occurred simultaneously with the economic blockade. We already know from the novelists' biographical

information that they both passed through the collapse of the Kurdish September Revolution in 1975 and the Anfal campaigns in 1988; consequently they had great hopes of the Uprising's outcomes. However, the harsh socio-political conditions led them to despair and to have a hopeless vision of the future and the fate of humanity. Subsequently, Muhammad-Tahir became doubtful about the achievement of his people's ambitions in *Geryan li Babê Berze*, and Botanî in *Dirz* predicted that the earth would be totally destroyed. There can be little surprise if the literature which emerges from such experiences within such a historical phase is a hopeless and pessimistic one, and their problematic protagonists are all traumatized in their own ways from frustrated ambition.

Both Botanî and Muhammad-Tahir have an interest in history, particularly in Kurdish history. Botanî's books containing his memoirs can be accepted as historical sources, because of their particularly detailed evocation of historical events. As for Muhammad-Tahir, the Kurdish critic Khalid Salih (2010, p.137) argues that if Muhammad-Tahir were not a story writer, he would be a historian. In an interview Muhammad-Tahir (2005, p. 43) differentiates between the work of historians and literary writers; he says that 'the historian's hands and feet are tied. They have to have documents and explain them; however, writers are free to fly like birds'. Although both authors have the capability to be historians, their works are not merely historical narrative, but the combination of real life, fiction and historical events.

Both writers combine the present and the past i.e. their characters are living in a conflict between present and past events. Botanî compares the present situation to the Zoroastrian period, and he links death in the time of Mithra to the present frustration and death. Furthermore, he merges the mass killing of his characters with a Zoroastrian ceremony. In the same way Muhammad-Tahir links the present moment (Post-Uprising 1991) to past events, namely the period of the Kurdish Ibrahim Pasha's revolt against the Ottoman Empire. As a consequence of the comparison between these periods of time, he mentions the defeats which happened in the past and then links these collapses to the present situation; consequently he is hopeless about the future and the fate of the Kurds. Perhaps the question which may be raised here, therefore, is why Muhammad-Tahir in *Geryan li Babê Berze* precisely links the Kurdish Uprising - including all its achievements and failures - to Ibrahim Pasha's 'revolution'? One can argue that this is an indication of his hopeless world

vision of the future of his people. Although Ibrahim Pasha's revolution can be described as a unified, and to a certain extent a strong and developed one, he was still unable to achieve his people's ambition by establishing a Kurdish independent state. In the same way Muhammad-Tahir believes that the present Uprising may not last, or achieve the Kurds' demands, because it lacks union and cooperation.

In conclusion, as a result of the Iraqi Kurdish uprising in 1991, the Kurds experienced a certain degree of stability; at least they no longer feared mass killing and genocide. However, the civil wars and the harsh economic conditions in the first half of the 1990s had their impact on civilian life. These factors to a large degree hampered writers' freedom of expression. But the situation was better than in the previous historical stage; at least now life in the region had begun to be conducted in Kurdish rather than Arabic. Consequently, as we have indicated, changes began to occur in the Iraqi Kurdish novel in this historical phase, particularly in the second half of the 1990s, when the civil war between the two major parties (the KDP and the PUK) ended and economic conditions improved.

The existence of a limited freedom of expression, and having been able to derive benefit from the works of Arab writers, together with the tensions between the political parties, impelled writers to find another way to express their ideas. Subsequently, they adapted new forms of the novel, such as magical realism and meta-fictional techniques. For this reason, one can argue that adaptation to new forms of the novel in Iraqi Kurdistan resulted from changes in both the economic and political situation, not only the economic conditions, as asserted by Goldmann in the case of the new form of French new novels.

Moreover, as a consequence of firstly the harsh political situation, and then the economic crises, the dominant world vision of the novel in the present historical phase is a hopeless vision, unlike the previous stage which was dominated by the tragic vision as a result of mass killing, genocide and harsh economic conditions. In the present stage, because of the Uprising, there was initially hope that the Kurds would be able to develop their region and achieve their main ambition of a nation state of their own. However, during the civil wars, this hope became meaningless, and particularly the Kurdish intelligentsia realized that the region was not officially a federal region; they also feared that the internal conflicts could eventually destroy the

region. Goldmann's notion of the relations between the writer's world vision and the world created in his literary work, is thus a valid approach in the case of the Kurdish novel, particularly if we focus on political issues as the main mediating factor in this regard, followed in second place by economic issues.

Both Botanî and Muhammad-Tahir experienced different political circumstances and defeats, such as the collapse of the Kurdish September revolution and the Anfal campaigns, and they were also familiar with Kurdish history; so it was difficult for them to have any hope for the Post-Uprising period under such circumstances. Bearing in mind that an important issue in Goldmann's methodology is to discover why a particular type of world view has been produced by certain authors in a certain historical period, it is no surprise that the works of both writers show a fluctuation between the present and past events, filled with hopelessness. However, despite what has been said, the writers attempt to show in their novels their loyalty to the concepts of Kurdish identity and nationality.

Chapter Five

The Kurdish Novel from 2003-2011, Self-Critical Vision

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed how because of the harsh socio-political and economic conditions, particularly the civil war in the years 1994-1997, most of the Iraqi Kurdish writers had a pessimistic hopeless view. Consequently, novelists created a type of hopeless problematic hero, who was in search of better social values, but was disappointed in his search for them. However, after Operation Iraqi freedom in 2003, the socio-economic situation altered, by virtue of the changed political context. This stage (post-2003) brought Iraqi freedom from the Baathist regime, accompanied by the acceptance of Kurdistan as a legal federal region.

Since 2003, particularly from 2005, when the second general election was held, general elections have occurred every four years. Furthermore, the administrative separation ended in 2007, and the two main political parties made a coalition following the 2009 election. In addition, for the first time an opposition movement appeared in the Kurdistan Parliament. These transformations have led to more freedom of expression and the development of literary and artistic creation.

Despite continuing divisions, the ambitions of the Iraqi Kurdish people changed somewhat during this period, towards the establishment of their own independent state, achieving more democracy, developing a strategy for a national infrastructure, and standing against corruption in order to achieve real social justice. As we can see through the analytical samples, the concepts of feminism, gender and environment have flourished in the discourse of local intelligentsia, including their literary works, more than in the previous historical stages.

In terms of the formal structure, in the current phase novelists continued to write in the same style and technique i.e. magical realism and metafictional styles, which were innovated in the previous stage. In addition, despite the fact that this new political situation brought more democracy and freedom of speech, especially to women, as well as the promise of wealth from oil and cultural autonomy, disillusionment with the elected government and its administrative corruption resulted in the writers adopting a self-critical vision as the dominant world view of their novels.

Consequently, the protagonists remained problematic, constantly criticising and searching for better values, but hopeful in this search.

The sample from the present stage will be two well-known novels by two renowned writers; firstly, ‘Abdullah Serrac’s *Silêkuk-Hoklêr* (Silêkuk-Hoklêr) published in 2011 in Kirkuk. According to a note at the end of the book, it had been censored and banned in five publications in both Hewlêr and Silêmanî because of its strong and direct criticism of the governing powers in the region. This prevention of its publication, together with its bold theme and innovative technique of narration, have caused it to win the acclaim of readers. The second sample is *Meryema Kiçe Jinek ji Zemanek dî* (Mariama, a Woman from Another Time), published in 2007, republished using the Roman alphabet in Diyarbakir in 2011, and translated into English (2009) in Duhok, and into Arabic (2014) in Cairo and London.¹⁰⁸ The following gives some biographical information about the authors, and outlines the theme of the novels.

‘Abdullah Serrac (b. 1937)

‘Abdullah Najim Majid, known as ‘Abdullah Serrac, is originally from the Baban family in Silêmanî; after the collapse of the Baban Emirate (1649–1850) his family went to Kirkuk (Serrac, 2013a, p.109). He was born in 1937 in Kirkuk into a middle-class family, and received his basic education in the same city; he then graduated from the Teacher Training Institute in Kirkuk.¹⁰⁹ He taught in primary and secondary schools for 30 years; he knows Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish, English and Finnish. As a result of his difficult economic situation he migrated to Finland in 1997, and has remained there since then (ibid). He states that the main reason for his migration was his economic situation, and the desire to have more freedom of expression in

¹⁰⁸ These are the translations of *Meryema Kiçe Jinek ji Zemanek dî*: 1. *Mariama A Woman from Another Time*. Translated into English by Huda M. Salih. 2009. Duhok: Khani Press. 2. *Meryema Kiçe Jinek ji Zemanek din*. Latînzekirin Sebrî Silêvaney û Dilawer Zeraq. 2011. Diyarbakir: Lîs. 3. *Mariam Imra’ah min Zaman Ākhr*. Tarjamat Samî al-Ĥaj. 2014. Qaheerah: Al-Hay’ah al-‘Āmah li-Quṣor al-Thaqāfah. 4. *Mariam Imra’ah min Zaman Ākhr*. Tarjamat Samî al-Ĥaj. 2014. London: Moment Digibooks.

¹⁰⁹ All information about Serrac’s biography has been quoted from two sources; 1. His book *Dîdar Bîniyekanim* (My interviews) which is a collection of sixteen of his interviews with newspapers, magazines and television, published in 2013 in Hewlêr. 2. I conducted an interview with him on February 6 2015 through a postal exchange and personal conversation.

his literary works.¹¹⁰ He writes literary creations in Kurdish, but has published a large number of journal articles in both Arabic and Kurdish since the 1950s, and has worked as a journalist in different newspapers and magazines, such as *Kurdistanî Niwê* (New Kurdistan) and *al-Mu'tamar* (the Congress).

According to Iraqi Kurdish critics (see Serrac, 2013a, passim) Serrac is one of the most famous innovators of the Kurdish short story, and has his own style in writing stories, novelettes and novels, which is known as a kind of fantasy using an obscure and complex language. He has also been a painter since 1946, and was awarded a Silver Medal in painting when he was in secondary school.¹¹¹ Serrac published his first short story *Rawe Gorg* (Hunting Wolves) in 1973 in *Beyan Magazine* issue 9, and he was awarded first prize for two short stories; *8:30 Beyanî*, *8:30 Şew* (8:30 AM, 8:30 PM) and *Birayîm Şorawî* (Ibrahim Şorawî) in 1979 and 1982 respectively. His first novel *Helkişan Berew Lutke* (Climbing towards the Peak) was published in 1990, and was later translated into French and Persian. In an interview Serrac (2015) indicates that although he initially admired Existentialists writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and Colin Wilson, since the early 1980s he has leaned towards Latin American magical realism.¹¹² He usually reads foreign works in

¹¹⁰ Serrac, 'E., 2015. *Interview by Ameen A. Omar* (the author). Exchanges by Post and Telephone. 6 February 2015.

¹¹¹ Serrac has shown five exhibitions of his paintings in Finland, and three in Erbil, Kirkuk and Silêmanî.

¹¹² Serrac has published 24 books, mostly about literature. The following is a list of his works, provided at the end of his latest book; however, the list lacks the date and place of publications. I have found some of these from books of his of which I have copies, and through his interviews. They are as follows: A) Novels: 1. *Helkişan Berew Lutke* (Climbing towards the Peack), Hewlêr in 1990; 2. *Kawlaş* (Cottage), Hewlêr in 1997; 3. *Sonatay Roñ* (The Sonnet of the Soul) in 1997 and 2005; 4. *Koçrrew... Koçrrew* (Mass Migration... Mass Migration), Hewlêr in 2003; 5. *Ejder* (Ajdar), 6. *Winge* (The Hidden Land), Berlin and Hewlêr in 2003 and 2005; 7. *Pertewazey Êrew Ewêkanî Rewan* (), 8. *Nawê lem Têkiste Binê* (Find a Name for this Text), Hewlêr in 2007; 9. *Efsaney Rengistan, yan Rengistanî Efsane* (The Legend of the Land of Colours, or the Colours' Land of Legend); 10. *Silêkuk-Hoklêr* (Silêkuk-Hoklêr), Kirkuk in 2011; 11. *Çon bûme Têtirwask* (How I became a Hawk). B) Short Story Collections: 1. *Lakêşe Ronakekan* (Light Rectangulars) in 1980, and in 1995 (in French, Paris); 2. *Mirdû Xewn Nabîne* (The Dead do not Dream) in 1981; 3. *Baram Nawêk Hebû* (Baram had a Name) in 1982; 4. *Perreng* () in 1984; 5. *Peyk* (The Correspondent), Paris and Hewlêr in 1995 and 2005; and 6. *Ko Çîrok* (Collected Stories) in 1991. C) Non-Fiction: 1. *Berew Astaney Romanî Niwê û Goşenîgakan* (Towards the New Novel and Viewpoints) - Literary Theory; 2. *Ba le Huner Bigeyn* (Let Us Understand Art) - Art Criticism; 3. *Peyvistan* (The Land of the Word) - Literary Theory; 4. *Donaydon yan Bedgorran* (Donaydon or Metamorphosis) - Essays in Literary Criticism; 5. *Dîdar Bîniyekanim* (My Interviews) - Interviews; and 6. *Kevaçe Reng Awiyekanim* (My Water Colour Paintings) - Theory of Art.

Arabic, Turkish and English. Serrac has published six short story collections, eleven novels and novelettes and seven books about literature, arts and politics (ibid).

Sebrî Silêvaney (b. 1972)

Sebrî Silêvaney was born on July 1 1972 in Zakho.¹¹³ He graduated from the Teacher Training Institute in Duhok in 1992. His first experience with literature started from reading classical and modern poetry, short stories and then novels in Arabic when he was student. Silêvaney started writing journal articles in 1987 and published his first work in a local newspaper in Duhok in 1992. Due to the harsh economic conditions in Iraqî Kurdistan, he left Kurdistan and settled in the Netherlands from 1993 until 2006; during that period he was particularly engaged in reading European and Latin American fiction.¹¹⁴

Since 1998 Silêvaney has been involved in novel writing; his first novel was published in Silêmanî in 2004, in the Kurdish-Roman alphabet, entitled *Avamezin , Kêlîka ku Masiyên xwe Tî Dihêle* (The Tigris, which Leaves her Fish Thirsty). He has published five novels and two books of poetry and criticism.¹¹⁵ His best-known work is *Meryema Kiçe Jinek ji Zemanek dî* (Mariama, a Woman from Another Time) (ibid). Currently Silêvaney is studying international relations at the College of Law and Politics at the University of Nawroz in Duhok, and has been a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) since 2014. He has worked as a journalist in different newspapers and magazines, such as *Alayê Azadî* (Freedom's Flag) in 1992 and *Nûbûn* (Renewal) 2006-2008, and as editor-in-chief of the magazine *Lîteratûra Cîhanî ya Wergêranê* (World Literature) in 2013.

¹¹³ The information about Silêvaney's biography has been taken from autobiographical material and interviews provided on his personal website, <http://silevani.webnode.com>.

¹¹⁴ See Silêvaney's personal website.

¹¹⁵ Here is the list of Silêvaney's literary works; A) Novels: 1. *Avamezin , Kêlîka ku Masiyên xwe Tî Dihêle* (The Tigris, which Leaves her Fish Thirsty), Silêmanî in 2004; 2. *Bîst Sal û Êvarek* (Twenty Years and a Night), Duhok in 2005 and 2012 (in Roman alphabet, Diyarbakir); 3. *Miryema, Kiçe Jinek ji Zemanek dî* (Mariama, a Woman from Another Time), Duhok in 2007 and 2009 (in English), and in 2012 (in Roman alphabet, Diyarbakir), in 2013 and 2014 (in Arabic, Cairo and London); 4. *Sîfra Silîvî* (Silivi's Book), Duhok in 2010. B) Poetry: 1. *Deh Xewn* (Ten Dreams), Duhok in 2008. C) Critical Readings: 1. *Ji Destpêkê heta Destpêkê* (From the Beginning to the Beginning), Duhok in 2010. 2. *Payîza Peyvan* (Autumn of Words), Duhok in 2009.

Both Serrac and Silêvaney are considered as well-known contemporary novelists in Iraqi Kurdish literature, whose writings reflect the contemporary social and political national issues. They both criticize the ruling system in the Kurdistan Region, and express their loyalty to the lower social class; in particular, they strongly defend women's rights by accusing the regional government of injustice between the social classes and genders. As will be seen through the analysis of their chosen works in the present chapter, Serrac is hopeful in demanding an opposition movement against the two main political parties in the region; however, Silêvaney's discourse can be described as merely a pessimistic critical view.

The Themes of the Novels

1. In *Silêkuk Hoklêr* (Silêkuk-Hoklêr), in 2011

'Abdullah Serrac's novel criticizes the governing system in terms of social, political, cultural and economic conditions in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, from the Uprising in 1991 until the date of its writing in 2007.

The theme of the novel is the rejection of the ruling system in Iraqi Kurdistan through the search for an alternative regime. Although the novel was published in 2011, according to the date which is on the last page of the novel it was written in late 2007. That means, as Senger Zîrarî (2013, p. 35) points out, Serrac was demanding that there should be an Opposition party in Kurdistan two years before the emergence of the opposing movement (*Bizutnewey Gorran* - The Movement for Change) in 2009. Serrac's main protagonists start to establish a basis for opposition to the current government by setting up a secret cell.

The first chapter of the novel constitutes a dialogue between a painting and its creator (the painter). The dialogue concerns political issues in the region. They both agree that the region has been split between two disputed parts. The *Silêkuk* part, which consists of (Silê)manî and Kir(kuk) provinces, is dominated by the PUK's rule, and the author likens it to the city of Sodom. As for the second part *Hoklêr*, which

consists of Du(hok) and Hew(lêr)/Erbil, this is dominated by the rule of the KDP, and the writer likens it to Gomorrah.¹¹⁶

The painting depicts a square city, which is called the eighth wonder of the world. This wondrous city represents the Iraqi Kurdistan region, and its four angles are Silêmanî, Kirkuk, Duhok and Hewlêr:

"سلیکوک – هۆکلێر" ناویکی پر به پێستی ئهو شارە چوارگۆشه و سه‌یر و ع‌اجباتیی و سه‌مه‌ره‌یه‌مه، پشوت هه‌بێ، هه‌یج سه‌رت گه‌ژ نه‌خوا، هه‌نووه‌که له چه‌مک و ته‌لیسمی ئهو ناوه ته‌یه‌که‌کشه‌م لێمه پرسه، لێ ره‌وايه گه‌ر په‌رسی: من که‌م، که له‌گه‌ل تو‌ی خوینه‌ردا ده‌په‌شم و، جیه‌انبینیم له‌م ده‌قه‌دا چیه‌؟ په‌رسیار و په‌رسیاری شایسته‌ ده‌مانگه‌یه‌نینته کاکله‌ی راستینه‌کان. (سه‌راج، 2011، ل 5)

'SilêKuk-Hoklêr' is a perfect name for that wondrous square city. Be patient and don't worry; don't ask me about the meanings and symbols of this mixed name. However, it's possible to ask, who am I, the one talking with you as a reader, and what is my vision of the world in this text? Asking appropriate questions will lead us to the heart of the matter. (Serrac, 2011, P. 5)

The first-person narrator, who is in fact the painting itself, initially discusses the title of the novel, and then, three pages later, reveals that this square city is in fact Kurdistan, with its four main provinces. The narrator maintains that in this city, because of the lack of social justice and the government's wrong policy, there are visible differences between the social classes:

ئه‌میه‌ستا "سلیکوک – هۆکلێر" وابینه‌ به‌ر تو‌ری چاوانت، که په‌که‌ته‌ی سه‌دان ته‌لاری بێند و، هه‌زاران خانگی نه‌وی و به‌نگه‌له‌یه‌ به‌گۆیره‌ی ناستی چینه‌یه‌تی جینه‌شینانیان، به‌گۆیره‌ی په‌له و پایه‌ی به‌لێنده‌ر و په‌راویزه‌کانیان، ... به‌گۆیره‌ی دوکانچه‌ سیاسیه‌کان قوت کراونه‌ته‌وه. (ل 8)

¹¹⁶ According to the Holy Books, Sodom and Gomorrah were two rich cities in the time of the prophet Lot, which were destroyed by God as a result of their people disobeying him and committing excessive sins (for more information about the two cities see Kiyolāshojlo, T., 2015. 'Sidom wa 'Amorah: Limāthā Hudima?' (Why were Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed?). Website *Al-Kalema*. Available at: <http://www.al-kalema.org/>. Accessed 17/03/2015.

Now imagine 'Silêkuk Hoklêr' is made up of a hundred high buildings and cottages according to the living status of the region's residents; according to the status of contractors and their marginal ones... according to trader politicians...(p. 8)

This means that the differences in social strata have political dimensions i.e. the author relates them to administrative corruption and the flawed policy of the officials in the region.

The first chapter of the novel, the conversation between the painting and the painter, is a clear criticism of hereditary rule and the continuous conflict between the political parties in Kurdistan, and the influence of these factors on the region's people. According to a footnote at the end of the chapter, this first chapter was already published in *Dengî Niwê* (The New Voice) magazine by the author, under the name of Biwêr Kardost (one of the main heroes of the novel). The remaining six chapters take the form of different discussions between the main protagonists (Biwêr, Ayînde and Birryar) about this first chapter and its social, economic and political contexts. The author relates every economic, cultural and social problem, for example abnormal sex and the marriage of young girls to old men, to the bad administration of the region. In addition, they discuss the formal structure of literary works in terms of characters, time, place, events, reader and writer, particularly in the contemporary novel, i.e. the technique of narration is that of a metafictional novel.

In his novel, Serrac asserts that there is insufficient freedom of expression. As a consequence of his three protagonists' feelings about the harsh social conditions, they begin to establish a secret cell in order to set up an opposition to the government. The reason for making it secretly is that they feel that the government is against every kind of opposing voice. In a dialogue between Birryar and Ayînde, Birryar lets her know that:

له خۆپیشاندانی فەرمانبهران و مامۆستایاندا،
 له‌مەر موچه و تهنگزه‌ی گوزهرانیان له‌هم‌مەر
 خێوی گرانیدا، سێ چواریک، سەر و گویلاکیان شکاوه!!
 دووسێش له چالاکه‌کانیان قۆلبه‌ست کراون!! (ل 124)

In the employees' and teachers' protest which was arranged because of the low salaries and expensive daily life, three-quarters of the

protesters were subjected to violence!! And two or three of the activists have been arrested!! (p.124)

This means that the deteriorating economic situation is also the result of faults in the governing system. Furthermore, it means that even demanding rights is forbidden in the region. However, despite the strict policies of the governing body against opposing voices, the three protagonists, with two other minor characters (Erdelan and Jiyar), continue to spread and enlarge their secret opposition cell.

2. In *Meryema Kiçe Jinek ji Zemanek dî* (Mariama, a Woman from Another Time), 2nd ed. in 2009

Sebrî Silêvaney's novel tells of the life and experiences of an elderly single woman who, when she was only 13 years old, was raped by an old sorcerer. This sexual harassment was the result of a plan made between her stepmother Mencol, and the old man Muhemedê Meyrê.

The theme of the novel is concerned with social ties, particularly the relations between male and female. It shows how men have determined everything in society according to their interests and desires; resulting in the development of a society dominated by men. In such a society there is a lack of happiness among members of the community, especially among women. The heroine Mariama says to her friend Nareen:

Pardon me, dear Nareen, for so long women have been treated as a mule that the worst of men ride while the best of them let her carry their weight and ride. Those in between keep their mouths shut. Now, women have decided to speak up and reveal the deeds of men frankly.

"Such testimony has been belittled"

True, because I am a woman. Normally, everyone sees with his own eyes, but a woman is seen through her organs.¹¹⁷ (Pp. 17-18)

¹¹⁷ The translation of the quotations of the novel is based on the translated edition into English by Huda M. Salih, not my own.

Here, the author wants to state that as a result of the political changes which happened after 2003 in the region, freedom of expression has appeared. Consequently, now it is time for women to raise their voices and express their sorrows and suffering in society.

The heroine of the novel is a painter. Her paintings, which are mostly related to her experiences, express her sufferings as a female in her society. Thus, the major conflict is between the protagonist and her society and social customs. Mariama criticises her society as a male-dominated society, and sees one of the main reasons for such customs as being the religion. Mariama embodies her criticisms of her society in an artistic way through her paintings; she also recounts her complaints to her friend Nareen, the only one who has attended her birthday party. Mariama sees that even in the present historical phase there is still a lack of attention to gender:

Since that time [1983] a lot of things changed with the exception of the men of this country who remained the same; still working for their stomachs and sexual desires. Alas, there is no difference between them and animals.

(p. 87)

Sebrî Silêvaney addresses his criticisms of Kurdish society through his problematic heroine and her sense of how men are still dehumanized animals. His character asserts that this society is dominated by men; its people do not follow any particular principle. Several examples from different ideological backgrounds are given, to demonstrate that even if somebody follows a precise ideology he soon retreats and denies it. This denial of principles leads to a lack of credibility and trust among them.

Silêvaney refers to three young people from three different social groups and beliefs; the revolutionary Hejar (Hejarê pêşmerge), the communist Islam (Islamê komonîst) and the religious Hawar (Hewarê Îslamî). These three people deal with Mariama in the same way that Muhemedê Meyrê had already done, namely that they use women only for their desires and lusts. Both Hejar and Islam have given up their beliefs; and Hawar is on the wrong path as he intends to convert Mariama's beliefs. Mariama becomes subject to psychological depression as a result of forming relationships with each of these differing men who meet her, each in his own way.

Silêvaney not only criticizes his country's social customs through his heroine's life story and attitude, but also by pointing to the consequences of administrative

corruption and the lack of equality in rights. Criticising the regional political authority is another theme of his work:

Nareen, once a politician, standing before my painting said: “if we don’t have trains in Kurdistan, why do you paint them?” I did not figure out which Kurdistan he meant; ours or that of the poor “inside us”, or that of the officials and “their wallets”? (p. 119)

This difference between the ordinary people and the class that was benefitting from political power, alongside the sexual abuse which Mariama faced, lead her to feel alienation from her society and country. Mariama frequently mentions that she is an alienated girl/woman in her society and country.

The Formal Structure of the Novels

Hero

In both novels the protagonists criticise their society. In *Silêkuk Hoklêr* the heroes believe that the political system in the Iraqi Kurdistan region is the cause of every social backwardness in their society. However, in *Meryema* the heroine criticizes Kurdish society in terms of its social issues and customs, largely concerning men’s attitudes towards women. The book also discusses democracy, modernity and the role of the governing system in protecting women’s rights in society.

In *Silêkuk Hoklêr* there are three main protagonists; firstly Biwêr, whose father is a victim of the civil war and whose mother is a poor widow. Then Ayînde, who is the only girl/child in her family and whose father is a rich man whose riches were the result of administrative corruption. Thirdly, Birryar, whose father is a poor working class man. The three protagonists are undergraduate students; both Biwêr and Ayînde are from the engineering department and are in love, and Birryar is from the linguistics department. All of them are writers; Biwêr is a novelist, Ayînde is a poet and Birryar is a writer on linguistic and philosophical subjects.

The names of these characters have their allegorical meanings; Biwêr means bold, Birryar means decision and Ayînde means future. Serrac deliberately uses these three words together to assert that the names of his characters are metaphoric and meaningful. He tries to convey his message not only through the actions of his protagonists, but also through the meaning of their names. In a dialogue between Jiyar, as a reader of different types of books, and the writer (Serrac) himself, who visits his character in the last chapter, Jiyar says to his creator (Serrac): "I've learnt from my experiences in life that the future is open for everything, but we have to make our own decisions and be fearless." (p. 184)

In another conversation with his friends Biwêr says:

بىرىارىكى بۇيرانەم لە مېشكدايە بۇ پلانېرى ئايندەي
ئەدەب بەگىشتى و رۆمان بەتايىبەتى، لە سەردەمى ((وینە)) دا.
ئەمۇش لەسەر جەدەل و دىئالېكتى: پەيوەندى و .. دابران. (سەراج، 2011، ل 150)

- I had a bold decision in my mind to make a plan for the future of literary works, particularly for the novel, in the era of 'images'. The plan is concerned with the dialectic of communication and separation. (Serrac, 2011, p. 150)

This means that even the names of the main characters are meaningful, each referring to a part of the story's plot.

For the purpose of making their decisions for a brighter future the protagonists organize a secret cell to be the basis of an opposition to the regional government. Thereby their ambitions are futuristic. In a discussion with Ayînde, Biwêr states that the social customs have affected the mental state of Cum'ê', a secondary character, and Biwêr suggests that such people would be suitable to join their cell:

-ئايندەخان، دەزانى دەروونى ئاوها چەوسىندراوېك، ئىنجانەيەكى
دەگمەن و گونجاوه بۇ چاندنى تەوى ئۆپۆزسىۆن! (ل 73)

Dear Ayînde, you know that such an oppressed figure is rare, and suitable to undertake the cultivation of the opposition's grain! (p. 73).

They constantly make all of their efforts to change the governing system by creating a voice of opposition and seeking an alternative system.

As previously mentioned, the author describes the region in the first chapter as a wondrous square city. His protagonists feel that as consequence of the wrong

governing policy, and the tensions between the two major political parties in the region, the region has been fragmented. This internal separation has serious consequences. In a dialogue between the painting and its painter (the two major characters in the first chapter), the painter states:

- جا برالەى ھىژا، ئەمۇ دوو چمكەى شارى چوارگوشەى جەنابت
 نەك لە كانگەى خۆشەويستتەو، بگرە لە رق و تۆلەو دەيانەوئ
 يەكترى بە ئيمەشەو ھەللووشن!!
 جا منيش وەكو توى خوينەر بېرم بو ديونكى ديكە چوو، ناشى ئەم
 ديوو يەو ديويان ھەيت؟!
 مەبەستم لە رووناكى و تاريكييەكەيە، يان پيشتر و پاشتر يان ھەبوويت، ...
 نايا ھەبوونى جۆر و شيوەى تريان ھەبوو؟! (ل 11)

- So, dear brother, the two parts of your square city want to damage each other, and all of us, as a means of revenge on each other!!

So I thought about another side of the matter, just like you do as a reader; is it not possible to have different sides?!

I mean darkness and light, or the availability of their past and their future; ... and then, were there any other possibilities available?! (p. 11)

The author refers to the risk of the region breaking down into two conflicting sides. He wonders if different opinions always lead to separation and severe tensions in a region.

Having less freedom of expression in the region is another consequence of the division and constant conflict. When Biwêr publishes the first chapter of his novel he is arrested by the police. Then because of Biwêr's satiric answers during the police investigation, the police send him to a psychiatric hospital. The government also places him under tight control. The government bans the region's media even from mentioning his name:

نەمويست راييگەيەنم، كە رۆژنامە و گوڤار و تى فى و گشت ميدياكانيان
 ئاگادار كرددو، ھەرگيز نابى ناوى "بوئر كاردوست" رووناكىي بەركەوئ. (ل 69)

I didn't want to let her (Ayinde) know that Biwêr Kardost's name has been banned from all mention in newspapers, magazines, T.V and all forms of media. (p. 69)

This is not first time he has been arrested by police, as he and his girlfriend Ayînde were also arrested previously, when he participated with his friends in a protest:

پاش ئهوهی له خۆپیشاندانیکی شاردا (بویر) لهگهڵ دهستهیی لاوو
لهناویاندا (ناینده)ش قژکیش کرایه ناو ماشینی چهکدارانهوه. (ل 25)

When Biwêr participated in a protest in the city, he and some other boys and girls were arrested. Ayînde was among them as well. (p. 25)

Serrac wants to make clear to his reader that arresting people is becoming a common thing in the region, resulting from the government's strict policy. The troubling consequences of the ruling system lead people to suffer and to criticise the system. That is why the heroes, as members of intelligentsia, are problematic heroes. They are in a constant conflict with the government, even if it is in a secret form, and they are attempting to change the ruling system. In a discussion with her friends Ayînde states:

-تیمدهگهن، ئا له رۆژگادا، چهندین جۆر ههلمهت و تهکان و
کۆشش هههه بو بنهمای گۆرانکاری. (ل 45)

Do you understand me, that in these days many attempts and campaigns are trying to lay the foundation for change.” (p. 45)

This search for change and better values in the region takes over the plot of the novel. As intelligentsia the protagonists feel that there are a large number of shortcomings and social backwardness in their society, all of which have their roots in the governing system of the region. That is why Zirarî (2013, p. 34) rightly argues that this novel criticizes the political system, together with politicians and their actions - which are mostly for the purpose of political interest - more than he does other sectors of society.

One of the unpleasant social phenomena in Kurdish society is that of old men marrying younger girls. Biwêr refers to that fact by mentioning his friend Şêrko's stepmother (see pp. 96-97). Biwêr not only relates this social backwardness to the governing system, but he also discusses with his friends the behaviour of Cum'e, who raped his mother when he was drunk, and links this behaviour to the wrong policies of the government:

باری ئابوری و، جۆرهکانی سیکسی ئاسایی و شاز و لادهر، له

یەكدی جودانین.

کار و کاردانەومیان بەسەر یەكەویە. ئەمەش ژینی خیزان بە ڕووتە

سیاسیە كەشەو دەبەستی. (ل 143)

The economic situation and the types of sex, including both normal and abnormal sex, are inseparable. Each of them affects the other.

This links the family's life to political direction. (p. 143)

Biwêr links families' economic and social conditions to the political system; he therefore strongly criticizes the government.

Moreover, concerning the link between social backwardness and the ruling system in the region; Serrac criticises another social phenomenon, which is that girls in Kurdish society are not free to choose their own husbands, instead their parents are responsible for this, particularly the father. The author allocates six pages (pp. 102-108) to the debate between Ayînde and her parents regarding her decision to marry Biwêr. Ayînde's father strongly stands against her and her mother's desire. Her father Hâcî Mewcud, is one of the rich men who obtained his wealth after 2003 as a result of corruption. He still has strong tribal ideas, and he disregards women's rights. When both Ayînde and her mother decide not to change their minds, and to definitely do what they have already decided concerning Ayînde's marriage to Biwêr; Hâcî Mewcud threatens them, in order to put ultimate pressure on them, by saying:

((سیکرتان دەکەم. تۆ ببێهش لە میرات و، سێ بەردیش

دەنیمە مستی دایکتەو. هەمی بێفەرینە..)) (ل 106)

I will deprive you of your inheritance. You will no longer have any fortune; and I will divorce your mother. (p. 106)

This attitude of Mewcud's is evidence of his tribal background and of men's domination over society. It is clear that the author's aim in giving such an example is to criticize his society's customs and traditions. But through this conversation between his characters, the writer addresses his criticisms to the government over the lack of legal protection for women's rights. That is why Ayînde as a heroine is in constant conflict, firstly with her society and then with the governing system, searching for authentic values to allow her and her people to be free and to make their own decisions under a more democratic rule.

As for the hero in Silêvaney's novel *Mariama*, the whole story consists of the heroine's (Mariama's) memories and her experiences during her life. Although all the stories in the novel are related to Mariama's recollections, a number of other characters participate in the events. These include: Nareen, who listens to Mariama's story from beginning to end; Muhamedê Meyrê, who raped Mariama and became her nightmare; Mencûl (Mariama's stepmother), Hejarê pêşmerge, Islamê komonîst, Hecî Hawar and Kirmancê Kamîrê.

Mariama is an intellectual painter. After being raped by Muhemedê Meyrê when she was only 13 years old, she faces much difficulty and hardship, owing to the pride with which girls in Islamic society regard their virginity, which is closely bound with the notion of *namoos* (honour).

She works hard, but without confidence, to prove her existence in her society, among the lower middle class. As a problematic heroine, therefore, she feels that she has lost her value after being raped. She makes every effort to search for authentic values in her society, and painting is one of her finest efforts. In her painting she addresses a critical view of the entire Iraqi Kurdish society. Furthermore, through her art Mariama constantly struggles for a society which offers the chance of at least independent action and thought, freedom from the need to obey or accept the demands of eastern-Islamic society, which is dominated by men. Eastern society in Mariama's view does not respect women and it is a society for men. She complains that all social classes have the same view towards women (see *Mariama*, pp. 22-28).

As a main heroine her ambitions in the early part of her life are personal ambitions. In other words, she has no wish to improve her economic situation, but to find her freedom. Thus, she claims the right to individualism and individual self-assertion for all members of her society, particularly for women. However, in the last part of her life her desires alter, to wealth and a materialistic viewpoint. Unfortunately, she can achieve neither individualism nor wealth.

As a consequence of her failure to achieve her ambitions and aspirations Mariama has become completely isolated from her society and feels alienation; she is unhappy with all social classes. She has already tried to be a member of the working class by becoming involved in trading, and working in a sewing shop with Hecî

Hawar. However, she dislikes this social class; in this regard she recounts her experience with Hecî Hawar as a sewing shop owner. She feels that this sector is completely dominated by males:

I remember my father therefore it was time for me to create an environment that would enrich my life financially...my confidence in men loosened, but projects needed men, especially in such a male dominated society. (p. 123)

Mariama's passive attitude towards this sector is only because this sector in her society is dominated by men. She is also against the middle class and the 'national bourgeoisie'. She has bitter experiences with both Îslamê komonîst and Hejarê pêşmerge as members of such a social class. Subsequently she strongly criticises the national bourgeoisie and never accepts the compromises that are entailed in becoming part of them. Mariama resists becoming absorbed into the more tolerant and more accepting bourgeoisie or aristocracy. She is comfortable with her own lower social class, and at the same time, strongly against the class which has suddenly, after 2003, gained upward social mobility; the class of which Muhemedê Meyrê is a member.

Muhemedê Meyrê can be seen to be a complex character. He sets himself up in front of people as a religious man, and he is a magician. He also has many transient sexual relationships: "Now, that visitor, [Muhemedê] Meyri, is sixty eight years old and no one is aware of his spider's web." (p. 45)

Mariama herself is the only person in her neighbourhood who actually knows his true character, a man who used the name of religion in order to deceive a child (Mariama herself) and rape her. Because Mariama is aware of his behaviour towards women, she never believes in him. He appears, in this regard, as a sexually promiscuous character. Characters, and indeed heroes and heroines, such as Muhemedê Meyrê have been frequent in Kurdish novels. Hesen Ibrahim's novels are perhaps the clearest example in this respect; in most of his novels, for example *Xeca Berlînî*, *Şevên Pirag*, *Sîlav û Mêrên Wê* and *Nejber Xatra Çavên Îsay bû*, Ibrahim's protagonists are of a sexually promiscuous nature.

In effect, Muhemedê Meyrê is the main reason for Mariama's isolation from society. Although she was an orphan child, in eastern society virginity is the most important

thing for an unmarried girl to be proud of, and to prevent her from feeling guilt. Mariama, therefore, asks:

The question is this “how can he exorcise me after he ended my virginity With a sealing wax?” he had taken not only my virginity; he had ruined everything beautiful in my life; my dreams, yearnings, names, histories, behaviours, and the images I held of my society. He broke them all. (p. 48)

Mariama criticizes her society on account of their way of judging women. For men “*namoos* (honor) is tied to a draper which they themselves tear” (p. 51). So Muhemedê Meyrê is twice a felon, once because he is a sex offender, and then because he has broken the honor of an orphaned girl child in a very strict society.

Mariama criticizes both Muhemedê Meyrê and all men in her society. After becoming an adult she recounts her bitter experiences to various people from different belief backgrounds, such as the revolutionary Hejar, the communist Islam and the religious man Hawar.

Hejar was a member of peshmerga in the 1980s during the Iraqi Kurdish May Revolution. However, after the Kurdish uprising in 1991, his thoughts have changed; he does not even want to remember the days which he spent with the Kurdish Revolution. His ambition now is only collecting money, and obtaining land and property. Most recently he has become a weapons trader on the border with his people’s enemy (p. 99). As for his relationship and dealing with his lover Mariama, he is no better than Muhemedê Meyri/ê:

Hajar was not like the others. Later, after I got to know him I said “God bless M. Meyri” because he could not have offered a better thing; Hajar did not give what he possessed. Days passed... most of the time, Hajar was a narcissist, rich with possessions but poor with passion. (p. 93)

It becomes clear for Mariama that Hejar’s relationship with her, like Islamê komonîst’s, is just for personal interest and not for mutual benefit. Islamê komonîst was a communist cadre for sixteen years. Then he left his job and changed his mind about Marxism. Islam is also a poet, and he is stylish enough. However, he

demonstrates to Mariama that he has no Marxist principles; and he is a person with contradictory ideas. Islam's love for Mariama is no more than sexual pleasure:

I asked him to make love to me [by having intercourse], but not from behind, so that I could feel my femininity and put out that fire inside me. He said "you are still a girl and it is better if we do it from behind". My request was different and apparently his own too, therefore he misunderstood me. He did not directly say "you are a whore and no one would marry you", he also said nothing like "you are an old maid imposing yourself on others"; he said "you want me to do as you want so in the end I will be obliged to marry you?"

Do you believe that a communist would speak in this manner? (p. 116)

After this conversation between them, Islam's intentions become clear for Mariama; she recognizes that he is not her dream man; and soon she leaves him. This attitude of his makes Mariama complain that in her society men do not follow their beliefs and that they are all the same.

Mariama's experiences of love do not end when she leaves Islam, but she faces a new experience with Hecî Hawar. Hawar is a strict dogmatic man and a shop keeper. He is well educated in the field of Islamic law (sharia). At the beginning he hates Mariama because she has no ties with the Islam: "I was a muslim only on my ID card" said Mariama (p. 129). Mariama's aim in meeting him is only to share with him in the sewing shop i.e. for business purposes.

However, after spending more time together, his behaviour towards her changes. He starts to establish a close relationship with her for two purposes; first, to make her adhere to Islam, and then to marry her. When Mariama recognizes Hawar's aims, she cuts off the relationship with him, because she has no wish to become a religious woman.

Sebrî Silêvanî presents his main heroine through her contacts with other minor characters who are from different social groups and beliefs. The whole story is related to one character's life; therefore, it is hard to hear the other characters' voices.

It becomes clear that the main protagonists in both novels are problematic heroes/heroines, who are in a continuous search for better values in their society. Sebrî Silêvaney's heroine struggles in order to gain her individual independence, and so she criticizes the society itself because of her own experiences and the kinds of men she meets, and the way that they treat her. However, when Serrac's protagonists criticize society, they address their criticisms to the governing political system; they want to change the ruling system in Iraqi Kurdistan region by making an opposition group.

In Silêvaney's novel there is only one main heroine, who recounts the sad moments of her memories to her friend Nareen. However, in Serrac's novel there are three major protagonists who are active, and work together as a team to change social and political conditions in the region. Furthermore, all of them participate in recounting events. In addition, unlike Silêvaney's, Serrac's is a metafictional novel, and the protagonists discuss different aspects of literary works, particularly the novel. This means that in the Kurmancî (Behdîni) dialect still there is no apparent development regarding the formal structure (hero), while in the Soranî dialect there has been significant innovation in the form of the novel since the previous stage.

In the Soranî dialect the innovations start from the second historical phase i.e. in the current phase one can argue that the novel is an extension of the same techniques and styles which were innovated in the previous phase. However, in the Behdîni dialect one cannot observe differentiation between the three historical stages regarding the formal techniques of the novel.

Time

In *Silêkuk Hoklêr* there is a clear allusion to the period in which the events take place. The novel consists of two texts; the first one, which comprises the first chapter, is concerned with the political geography of the Iraqi Kurdistan region after the Uprising in 1991. The second text constitutes the rest of the novel in six chapters, each discussing the ideas which have been expressed in the first text. That means that the time of events lies between 1991 and 2007, when the novel was written.

The dominant tenses of narration are the present and past tenses, since most of the text is a dialogue between characters. However, there are references to the future. The story of the novel, particularly in the second text, is narrated by characters in single first narrator view; both Birryar and Ayînde narrate two chapters, and Biwêr and Jiyar each narrate one. In other words, there are different voices in the novel. However, all of them have similar ideas concerning the socio-political conditions and literary creation.

In *Mariama* the narration in the earliest chapter soon shifts to the past. The novel is told from the first-person point of view. The narration follows and is limited to the heroine's experiences and thoughts.

There are two main times in the novel; first, the time of the narration of events, which is the present. This period of time takes several hours; according to the text it was on July 1 2006 in Mariama's house on the occasion of her birthday. On that day Mariama invites her friend Nareen to celebrate her birthday. Mariama recounts to Nareen her experiences of life from her childhood until the current moments, in a complaining and critical way. These events which Mariama experienced generate the second main time span of the story.

In this second time span, the focus is mostly on the events which occurred after 1983. In this year Mariama's father died and also she was raped by the old man, Muhemedê Meyrê, when she was only thirteen years old. The heroine recounts to Nareen all the difficulties and sufferings which she has faced after these two bitter events. She narrates her memories chronologically using the past tense.

This technique of narration, recounting memories chronologically from the past to the present, has been in evidence since the first historical stage in novels from the Behdînan area.

Place

In *Silêkuk Hoklêr* the place of the events is clearly mentioned by the narrator/s, and it is also clear from the title of the book, which is an abbreviation of the names of the four main cities in Iraqi Kurdistan. On the first page of the novel the painting itself refers to the place:

منیش وا خەریکم هێدی هێدی ئاماژە بۆ شارێکی مەرگەساتی چوار
 سووچی سەرپاگیر دەکەم، خەریکم تۆبۆگرافیا و سەمەرەکەمی نەخشەرێژ
 دەکەم ... "سلیکوک – هۆکلێر" ناویکی پر بە پێستی ئەو شارە چوارگۆشە و
 سەیر و عاجباتیی و سەمەرەییەمە. (سەراج، 2011، ل 5)

I am slowly trying to allude to a tragic city which is made up of four corners.

I am trying to draw its wondrous topography... 'Silêkuk Hoklêr' is
 an appropriate name for this wondrous city. (Serrac, 2011, p. 5)

Following this the painting itself explains this title, which consists of abbreviations of (Silê)manî, Kir(kuk), Du(hok) and Hew(lêr). Then the narrator calls it a square city. Because of the administrative corruption and the lack of social equity he describes it as the 'eighth wonder of the world', in the metaphorical sense of the term.

Most of the events occur in an unnamed city; however, the narrators refer to somewhere near to the citadel, so it could be Hewlêr/Erbil or Kirkuk: "In the park where the southern citadel lies we met Birryar; then we went to sit down under a tree..." (p. 45). In this city a number of places are used as the places for events, such as the university, the prison, the psychiatric hospital, houses and gardens; however, without description except for the square city as a whole and Biwêr's house.

In *Mariama*, depending on the times of events, we can determine two main places for the events.

The first and main one is restricted to a closed place, namely the heroine's house; a place where she celebrates her birthday party with her friend Nareen. In this place she narrates her story to Nareen.

The second place, which is more open than the first one, is Duhok city. It is the place where Mariama grew up and experienced her bitter life. Although the events happen only in Duhok city, i.e. a closed place, they occur at different points in the city.

Mariama was raped in Mayrê's house; she meets both Hejarê pêşmerge (in the summer of 1992) and Islamê komonîst (in July 1996) in the hall of the art exhibition; then she meets Hecî Hawar in a sewing shop in July 2002 and Kirmancê Kamîrê in a photographer's studio in July 2005. In addition, in recounting her memories, Mariama refers to the period of her childhood, when she went with her family and friends to Dubanê plain to collect wheat spikes (the remainders of the wheat in the field, after the harvest).

This technique of setting time and place is to a large degree similar to the technique of the 'traditional novel', as discussed in Chapter Three. This means that this sample of Iraqi Kurdish novels in the Behdînî dialect has not experienced any apparent development in this regard. This is also the case in other novels in this dialect, such as *Sotîngeh* (The Holocaust) by Bilind Muhammed in 2005 and *Memo Kew Berda* by Hesên İbahim in 2006. In both these novels the main characters recount their memories, and this style and technique is followed by a number of novels written in this dialect. However, in the present historical phase, the stories' events have begun to take place in cities rather than in villages.

In this historical stage the places in which the events of the novels occur are mostly restricted to cities. This may be the result of the development of Kurdish society towards modernisation. Compared with the previous stage, although innovation had begun since the second half of the previous historical period, the village still had a remarkable presence in the novels written throughout the entire stage (1991-2003). Moreover, despite the continuing presence of the prison as a place of events in the novels in the current stage, it is not described as a place of torture. Thus, despite the severe criticism of the governing system, the government is not seen as cruel in the way that the Iraqi regime was in the first historical period. More democracy and human rights have come to the region, which have had their role in the development of literary works.

The Significant Structure of the Novels

According to the nature of the protagonists' conflict with other social groups in the two texts, there is a kind of correlation between social groups, including the 'creative group', and the literary work. This means that by understanding the nature of relations between the different groups appearing in the texts, we can uncover more about the relationship between actual social groups within a certain society in a particular historical period. Not only this, but an understanding of these relations between social groups in the text throws light on the relationship between the 'creative group' and the literary work itself.

In both novels one can see a constant conflict between an elite group and politician groups, through the protagonists' struggle against unwanted behaviour and phenomena in their society. The heroes and heroines in both novels are well educated and from the lower middle class. They stand firmly against two major forces and forms of behaviour; social customs and corruption, which result from the governing system in the region.

In *Mariama*, the heroine Mariama is the voice of a depressed woman, who strongly criticizes the customs of her society, which impose many restrictions on women's freedom. The heroine speaks on behalf of females in her society, defending them and demanding their freedom. Her vehicle for doing this is her painting. Although all her paintings reflect her own experiences in life, they portray women's suffering in general in a society dominated by men.

The Arab writer Haitham Hussein (2013) points out that in his novel *Sebrî Silêvaney* reflects aspects of the complicity of women towards girls of their own sex, opening their eyes to the injustice done to other women, in miserable adherence to authoritarian man. Hussein adds that any failure to adhere to this behaviour may mean a loss of status or murder under any pretext, without the criminalization or trial of the killer, because the crime will be justified by arguments about 'honour', thus dispelling any possibility of accountability and trial. Hussein's observation of Mariama's society may contain a degree of truth; according to the Kurdish Women's Rights Watch and sociologists, after the Kurdish Uprising the number of women who committed suicide or were killed, mainly by family members, was significant (KWRW, 2010 and Bavî, 2014, p. 262). In a study concerning Women's Organization under

Conditions of Occupations and War Shahrzad Mojab (2007) concludes that even after Saddam's removal, in Iraqi Kurdistan:

Nearly one in seven women (13.7%) face violence on a daily basis; 7.11% have been threatened with honor killing, and the majority of these threats (63.85%) come from family members.

The reason for women's suffering in such a society are various. However, Silêvaney refers to two major factors; religion and the governing system. As for the religious factor, his heroine sees that there is no justice in her society, because of the role of religion and its heritage:

It was my wish to see them even for once admitting equality to prove God's caliphs on earth. I also longed for a court where rights are reserved but my sentence has been to let all men escape from me. For twenty [three] years I have been bearing all my pains silently. (p. 18)

Mariama's distress results from religious social customs which force her to be firstly in conflict with herself, in order to then stand against her society. After a long period of silence she decides to break her silence and raise her voice. For this purpose Mariama employs her painting to show her opposition to the male-dominated society:

- I do not blame girls Mariama.
- Me neither, Nareen. I pity them. Men are to be blamed since, for them, namoos, honor is tied to a drape which they themselves tear. As you notice in all my paintings thread and curtains exist. (p. 51)

In Mariama's society, the term 'drape' is a metaphor for a girl's virginity, which is the very touchstone of her honor. Here, Mariama speaks out against the fact that men themselves may tear this drape, and then accuse girls of being dishonourable. That is why her paintings are full of thread and curtains. This means that Mariama is a realistic painter; she reflects the reality of women's lives in her society. She attempts to uncover the psychology of women in a strict tribal and religious society which allows men to be free in life, and binds women with restrictions made by men.

Another reason for these restrictions in Mariama's society is the governing system. Silêvaney criticises Kurdish rule, since the rulers could not enact laws which

protected the interests and rights of all sections of the people. Even his heroine has pessimistic views concerning independence; she complains to her friend Nareen:

I occasionally think that we need to be under occupation; only then will we have a semblance of privacy, and a sense of appreciation. Only then can we preserve our hopes and dreams, and not have to sacrifice our values for the sake of worthless or tiny events and expressions. During the time of occupation, everything looked so sweet and valuable to us; our humanity, our nation, our future, life, death, and even the martyr. But now which one of them is still sweet and of value? (pp. 83-84)

This uncovers that, as a result of her bitter experiences, Mariama thinks that being semi-independent has led them to lose those things which are valuable in life. In her perspective the governing system is the reason for women's suffering and every shortcoming in Iraqi Kurdish society.

Similarly Serrac's protagonists think that being independent has not eased people's harsh social conditions. In a discussion Ayînde tells her friends Biwêr and Birryar:

پیش هه‌لیژاردنه‌کان، له میدیای بیستر او، بینراو و خویندر او یاندا به
هائینو هووت، دهیکه‌نه شامی شەریف، کهچی گەر گەر، هه‌مان

تاس و هه‌مان هه‌مامه! هه‌مان ناوو هه‌مان بحمی پینشوو قووت ده‌بنه‌وه!! (سەراج، 2011، ل 125)

Just before elections, they announce in every kind of media, audio, written and visual, that they will do make administrative reforms. However, after that everything remains as before! The same names and faces will stay in control!! (Serrac, 2011, p.125)

Here, as a result of the inadequacy of basic services and false promises, the heroine blames the government's performance and its democratic model. In this way Serrac's hero Biwêr demonstrates to his friends that one cannot separate economic and social conditions from the influence of politics and the type of sexual relations (pp. 142-143).

This means that in addition to the existing conflict between an educated elite and the prevailing social customs, there is another kind of conflict between the same social group and the governing system in the region, which is the dominant theme in *Silêkuk-Hoklêr*, and is also present in *Mariama*. Furthermore, this theme is present in

most of the novels written after 2003, condemning the administrative corruption and the ruling system in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Serrac's hero, Biwêr, explicitly announces that they will continue in their struggle until they eliminate the corruption by changing the system:

"ههتا جریوهی بآلندان مابن، ههتا خۆر له ههلاتندا بیت، ئیمهش له گۆتن، له رهخنه، له کردار ناکهوهین. (ل 85)"

(Whenever there is the chirping of birds, whenever the sun rises; we will never cease in our criticism, our words and our actions) (p. 85). This announcement of continuous conflict is also stated in the words of other characters. Ayînde in a monologue tells herself:

ئهو انگهه ئارهقه و خوینی ئیمهمانان به و بيسکی و دۆلار و
چی و چی دهگۆر نهوه، ئهدی بۆ منیش بری تابلوی راستینهی
ئهو گرژی و تیزییه نهکیشم نهگهر چی له چاوی دهرز یلهیهکهوش
بنۆرمه ئهتوار و کردوهکانیان!! (ل 43)

They exchanged our sweat and blood for whiskey and dollars and other things. So why don't I draw this realistic, this violent side of the painting; even if I look through the eye of a needle at their reality and acts!! (p. 43)

The protagonists in *Silêkuk-Hoklêr*, as members of an elite social group, feel that there is an obvious flaw in the administrative performance of the authorities and they decide not to keep silent. However, in *Mariama*, one can only listen to the voice of the heroine, who complains and paints against social backwardness and the governing system. Mariama lays blame for the widespread corruption by saying:

They have sacrificed their wounded living history written in blood for worthless deeds and manners. Whether it is hypocrisy or corruption, no one can best them. It is a race to see who can obtain the most possessions using nothing but false flattery. It is not logical that the outcome of our uprisings and revolts is just this...

This land has been liberated, but people are still occupied. (p. 88)

Mariama criticises the way of ruling and the administrative shortcomings by condemning corruption, and also condemning modernity in the form of consumerism. Hence, one can observe that in both novels the protagonists are aware of the social backwardness and the imperfections of the ruling system; for that reason they can be accepted as problematic heroes. Here, the relations between the groups in the

texts, and between social groups in Kurdish society in this historical period, correspond with Goldmann's hypothesis of homology between the 'structure of the world of the work' and the 'mental structure of a certain social group' (Goldmann, 1975, p. 159), since we know that both writers belong to the Kurdish intelligentsia and are against the governing system in Iraqi Kurdistan, demanding a more democratic and sophisticated ruling system. Their views cause their protagonists to be problematic, constantly searching for better values in their society. In addition, it causes them to have a critical world view, which we will explain in the next subsection, with reference to mediating factors in the realm of politics and economics.

The two samples show that the discourse of the Iraqi Kurdish novelists has changed as a result of the changes which have occurred in the political and economic background of the region. Compared with the novels which were written in the two previous historical phases, the nature of the conflict has changed in the novels written in the present phase. In both novels, the conflict is between an intellectual elite people, the novelists' social group, and the governing system in the region. For 'Abdullah Serrac the reason is mostly the administrative corruption and social backwardness. However, in Sebrî Silêvaney's view the reason for such conflict results from the lack of human rights and social equity, particularly in issues relating to gender and women's rights; he believes that the ruling system bears the main responsibility for this. In Silêvaney's novel the struggle is against the mainstream of social customs, which are dominated by men, and the ruling system.

World Vision between the Texts, Reality and the Authors

As has been shown in the previous sub-sections, both writers have a self-critical view. They criticize the regional governing system, social customs and the intellectuals who play a weak role in society. As both writers are critical of the political system of the region, and in accordance with the hypothesis of the present study, the political context is essential in determining other social and economic factors.

Resulting from the tensions between the Iraqi Kurdish political parties, the region separated between the two major political parties, the KDP and the PUK. During this period of separation an elite of Kurdish intellectuals and journalists addressed strong criticism to the region's officials. Serrac's novel *Silêkuk-Hoklêr*, which was written at the end of 2007 and published in 2011, is considered as one of the main examples. Describing the situation of the separation, the painter, Serrac's hero, in the first chapter states that:

واقیع فانتازیاتره له ئەندیشه و خهیاڵ لهم شارهدا عاموراییهماندا!
 جووتی قهلائی میژینهی تێدا ههڵکهوتوو، سهری قهلائی ئاپۆ
 نارایخامان کراوتهوه ... قهلائی ئارپانیللووش، ...
 بۆ ههس یهک لهو قهلاتانه، ناغایهکی میزهر لار دیاری کراون، خو
 ههموو شتیکم بۆ ناگوتری، گهر گووتم، ئهوان زمانم یان نام دهبرن! (سهرج، 2011، ل ل 16-17)

In this city (i.e. Kurdistan), which looks like Gomorrah, the reality is more fantasy than the imagination! It has two historical citadels; *Arabkha* (Kirkuk) citadel ... and *Arba'ū ilū* (Erbil) citadel ... an Agha has been chosen to rule over each of these citadels. I am not allowed to say everything; if I do that, they will cut off my salary or my tongue.
 (Serrac, 2011, pp. 16-17)

Serrac complains about there being two different administrative powers and about the disagreements between the two main parties in southern Kurdistan. He criticizes them and believes that this separation is the key reason for social backwardness and the reduction of freedom of expression.

Bearing in mind the theme of *Silêkuk-Hoklêr*, this deep anger against the two main political parties in Iraqi Kurdistan is the most obvious issue in the novel. Serrac, in his novel, announces that preparations for an opposition are being made:

تتیمدهگهن، ئا له رۆژگارد، چهن دین جور ههلمهت و تهکان و
 کۆشش هههه بۆ بنهمای گۆرانکاری. (ل 45)

Do you understand me, that in these days many attempts and
 campaigns are trying to lay the foundation for change.” (p. 45)

As discussed in the sub-section on the theme of the novel, Serrac, here, expects that an opposition movement will appear in the region; this was two years before its actual appearance (i.e. in 2007). Thus, based on the nature of conflicts between the social groups in both novels, one can observe a kind of homology between the authors' social groups and the structure of their novels; but not exactly like the homology between Racine's and Pascal's social group, the Jansenists, and the structure of their literary creations, according to Goldmann's analysis of their works.

Such above-mentioned unstable and conflictual conditions promoted a situation in which Serrac's and Silêvaney's protagonists developed as problematic heroes and heroines. Consequently, their novels portray a conflict between two value-systems, the superior values always being those which serve the public interest instead of personal interest or political bias. The two novelists believe that there is a lack of such values in their society; they therefore strongly criticize both the political system and society i.e. their world vision is a self-critical view.

Their self-critical vision did not only arise because of the political conditions, but was also due in part to other factors such as the economic situation. As has been clarified in Chapter Two, as a result of the changes which occurred in the political background in Iraq and the Kurdistan region post- 2003, the Kurdistan regional government had control of its natural resources for the first time in its history. Resulting from this improvement in the economic sector, the region became an attractive area for both foreign and domestic investment. However, as the government managed this sector, if there was any abuse of monopoly power, or any management corruption, it would directly affect people's living standards. In *Silêkuk-Hoklêr*, when Serrac mentions the existence of a huge gap between the ordinary people and politicians in terms of standard of living, he is making a clear reference to the government's monopoly over this sector.

Moreover, a number of Kurdish economists and intellectuals claim that this investment in the region paid insufficient attention to the establishment of

infrastructure projects. In an analytical study concerning investment projects in the Duhok province in comparison with other provinces of the region, Hozan Nayîf 'Ebdulqadir (2011, p. 44) lists the investment projects in the provinces of Iraqi Kurdistan region from 2006-2011, and shows that the rate of agricultural projects, for instance, was 4.4% and industrial projects 20.0%. This means that the region's investment policy only supported infrastructure projects to a limited degree, which might lead citizens to become consumers rather than producers. As a result of being aware of this policy, both Serrac and Silêvaney criticize the region's government through both their creative, and their non-literary, works. In an article entitled *Nameyekî Kirawe bo Sebah Rencder* (An Open Letter to Sebah Rencder)¹¹⁸ Serrac expresses his attitude towards ageing, the diaspora, censorship in the region and his critical view of the Kurdistan region's policy on investment. He (2013a, p. 142) states that the Kurds' economic situation will reflect their intellectual and political future; southern Kurdistan is becoming a place dominated by neighbouring countries and western companies. Thus, Serrac states that his main question is not "what do they take from us?", but "what do they give us?".

In his novel *Silêkuk-Hoklêr*, Serrac also criticizes the regional officials by indicating that they have made investment merely in construction i.e. skyscrapers, hotels and apartments which all belong to them (p. 21). Silêvaney also looks closely at the region's infrastructure development. In an interview with *Evro* newspaper, Silêvaney states that Iraqi Kurdish society does not have any sophisticated intellectual, economic and political systems; the society is more consumer-oriented than productive. He complains that life in this society still primitive and has not developed industry, art, and philosophy or science.¹¹⁹

Having discussed this, if we look at the biographical information provided on the two writers as another mediating factor, we can see that both writers have migrated abroad; Silêvaney spent thirteen years in diaspora and Serrac is still living there. Due to this, not surprisingly Serrac's criticisms regarding the performance of the Kurdistan regional government are stronger than those of other novelists. The

¹¹⁸ Sebah Rencder is a contemporary Iraqi Kurdish poet and a close friend of Serrac's; recently Serrac has made him responsible for all his literary and non-literary works.

¹¹⁹ See his personal website. Silêvaney has published all his journal interviews (without their original date of publication), articles and literary productions in his personal website; <http://silevani.webnode.com>.

reason for this may be because of the limitation of freedom of expression in the region. Fuad Sadiq Sabîr (2011, p. 21) maintains that the Kurdish writers who lived in Iraqi Kurdistan before the emergence of the opposition party, could not express everything, particularly in writings which encouraged people to protest. In contrast, the writers who lived in diaspora strongly criticised the government and the political system.

However, one can argue that Sabîr's view pays less attention to the role of press. As Nejdî Akreyî (2011, p. 163) indicates, the issuance of the Press Law (Article 7, number 35) in 2007 was a bold step at that time. The Article speaks of journalists' rights; according to it, the journalist is independent in his job, there is no authority above him except that of the law. Akreyî (ibid, p. 23) asserts that even the opposition movement took advantage of the free press in Kurdistan. Nevertheless, to be more precise, despite the issuance of the Press Law, there was limited freedom of expression before 2009, when the *Gorran* movement emerged. The Law could not protect the journalists from abuse and torture, because of the political parties' interference in the judiciary.¹²⁰

In spite of the journalists' aforementioned situation, both Serrac and Silêvaney criticised the Kurdish intellectuals and the journalists who lived in Kurdistan and were not active, because of their hesitant attitude towards the regional government's performance. As a consequence of mutual interest between a number of the Kurdish intelligentsia and the government, the intelligentsia played a weak role in criticizing the politicians' corruption and the lack of social justice (Sadiq, 2011, p. 21). In an interview with *Welat* newspaper Serrac (2013b, p. 133) states that as a consequence of the conflict between the two main parties, the parties attempted to buy the intellectuals' pens in order to guard their interests.

Serrac believes that this mixing between politics and literature has caused the latter to lose its function. In this regard, in *Silêkuk-Hoklêr*, Serrac's protagonist Birryar

¹²⁰ For more information about the abuse of journalists in Iraqi Kurdistan see Human Rights Watch in Kurdistan, 2010. 'Iqleem Kurdistan al-'Iraq: al-Şuħofiyon taħta al-Tahdeed' (Iraqi Kurdistan Region: Journalists are under Threat) Website *HRW*. Available at: www.hrw.org/ar/news/2010/10/28-0. Accessed 05/03/2015.

complains to his friend Biwêr that "You already said that deceptive politics has taken control of the functioning of arts and literature" (p. 98). Furthermore, Serrac relates the lack of a great literary masterpiece in the region, dealing with national issues, to such control of literature. In his novel, Serrac criticizes the Kurdish writers because of their inability to reflect the national genocide and collapse in a great masterpiece, by mentioning Pablo Picasso's ability to create a masterpiece of painting depicting the destruction of the village of Guernica:

لهو هیرشه درندهیهی سهر گوندی (ژیرنیکا) دا، نزیکه
 شهس سهد و پهنا قنربانی و، نوسهت بریندار و ئیفلیج و کهم
 ئەندامی لیکهوتوتهوه. کهچی ههلهبجهی خۆمان...
 -که هاوتیرییی "ناگازاکی" و "هیرۆشیما" به، مخابن هیچ
 شاکاریکی ئەوتوی بو نهکراوه!! (ل ل 46-47)

In bombing the village of Guernica the number of victims reached six hundred and fifty murders, and about nine hundred people were wounded, disabled or paralysed. Although our own Helebçe (Halabja) ... is similar to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, unfortunately no similar masterpiece to Picasso's has been created!! (pp. 46-47)

Serrac's criticism extends to both writers and political parties. According to him, both are responsible for the shortcomings in the area of literature and the arts. Moreover, in his novel, Serrac is against art which has become entangled with politics and has led to misunderstanding of women's rights:

ژن شهزمهزار و ریسواکردن به ناوی هونەر و سیکسهوه تهشه نهی
 کردۆته کهنا له ئاسمانییهکانی تهلهفزیۆن و، له رهواج و برهه دا به!!
 بازاری لهشفرۆشی و خوهرۆشی لهژیر چهندین درۆشی تهحراوته حری
 ورشه داردا ههرمینه!! (ل 177)

Dishonouring women in the name of art and sex has spread in their media and TV; they have made women engage in sexual activity for payment under the banner of liberal slogans... (p. 177)

Serrac complains that the political system, with the help of an elite of intellectuals in the region, has misunderstood women's rights; it abuses women instead of defending and protecting their rights.

In *Mariama*, in defending women's rights, Silêvaney also addresses his criticism to the Kurdish intellectuals and journalists, because of their keeping silent towards the lack of social equality:

Of all the intellectuals, authors and journalists who are as numerous as grains of sand; none of them could speak of this tragedy and yet their pens are not broken. (p. 84)

Although a certain number of intellectuals and journalists had apparently at least had a role in defending women's rights and highlighting the issue of social justice in their writings, Silêvaney's criticism is general. This pessimistic vision of the author may relate to his experience in Europe and the Netherlands, by comparing women's rights and freedom there with their situation in his tribal society. Silêvaney often makes such comparisons in his novels and even in his interviews for the media. In the first paragraph of *Mariama*, his heroine Mariama says to Nareen:

Truly, till yesterday, I was hesitant whether to invite you or not. You are returning from a European country and birthdays there mean danc[ing] and ornaments; while in these countries it is all grief and sorrow, particularly the birthday of a hopeless woman like me. Can you believe this? It is the first time I am with someone who lights and puts out candles with me, listens to music, kindly kisses me, and says "Happy birthday". (p. 4)

As previously discussed, Silêvaney's criticism extends to the governing system and social customs. In this matter, he sees that the writers and journalists have an uncertain role in defending such superior values which protect women's rights and stand against administrative corruption in their society.

Regarding the issues which relate to the local writers' books, Serrac criticises them for being unsuccessful in producing the desired works:

ئەو پەرتووکانەشمان بەلاوہ بایەخدارە، کە لە زمانانی بیانی
وەرگیردارون، چونکە تا رادەپەیک بڕوامان بە هەندێ نووسەری
خۆمالی جیلەق بوو. ئاخر، ئەوان لە هزری دەرەکی هەلەدەگۆزن و
کاویژی دەکەنەو، بە خویندەوارانی کەم ئەزمون و نا ئاگاداران
دەفرۆشنەو!! (ل 137)

We only pay attention to the books which were translated from foreign languages, because to some extent we do not believe in local writers. Indeed, they themselves take the theme of their writing from foreign writers and try to adapt it to the local situation, then sell these ideas to novice readers!! (p. 137)

Serrac's criticisms of the domestic writers, like Silêvaney's, may come from the idea of their weakened role in society. In his novel, he also discusses the relation between revolutions and literary works, referring to the idea that the literary work can be a mediating factor for change and revolution in a certain society. Serrac and Silêvaney, however, have themselves a clear presence in the Kurdish media both through their books and also articles, interviews and their own work as journalists.

To sum up, all that has just been said shows that since 2003 the Iraqi Kurds' social, economic and political conditions have changed; these changes have had their influence on every aspect of life, including literary creation. By establishing a federal region in Iraqi Kurdistan, the regional government began to improve the economic situation; these attempts were accompanied by the promotion of investment in the region. However, the administrative corruption in this sector made people, particularly an elite of intelligentsia, to be dissatisfied with the regional government's performance. This issue has become the main theme of a number of Iraqi Kurdish novels, and the world vision of these novels can be described as a self-critical view.

Both Serrac and Silêvaney relate all social backwardness to the political system in the region; the women's issue, for instance, exposes the shortcomings of the ruling system. Thus, the dominant world vision between the texts and society, in this historical phase (2003-2011), is a view which condemns administrative corruption, and inequality between men and women in terms of rights, in the region. However, the writers, particularly Serrac, are optimistic about the future and political change; unlike the writers from the previous stage, who were pessimistic and hopeless. Consequently, the hero/heroine remains a problematic hero, who constantly searches for the values which will lead to integrity in business matters and a growth of social equality. In other words, Goldmann's genetic structuralist methodology provides a useful approach in exploring the type of world vision of the Iraqi Kurdish

novel under particular socio-political circumstances, and in determining the nature of the hero/heroine in these works.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This study of the Iraqi Kurdish novel 1970-2011 has focused on the emergence and development of the novel under the impact of political conditions and their social and economic consequences, adopting Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralist approach. It has considered three different historical phases: 1970-1991 (pre-Uprising); 1991-2003 (post-Uprising); and 2003-2011 (post-Operation Iraqi freedom).

Goldmann's genetic structuralism as a Marxist literary criticism relates the development of literature to the development of social institutions and infrastructure. Goldmann proposes two different methodologies for analysing literary works; in *The Hidden God* this involves the notion of 'world vision', which means the feelings and ambitions of a particular social group in a certain historical phase, which are opposed to those of other groups.

Following Goldmann's definition of world vision the present study has attempted to explore the types of world vision found in Iraqi Kurdish novels in the periods under consideration. The study has demonstrated that this world vision changed according to the socio-political background.

However, in *Towards a Sociology of the Novel* Goldmann (1975, pp. 4-6) uses as his methodology the concept of a 'problematic hero', someone who, is in search of 'authentic values' in a 'degraded' world which has turned away from them. He has principally derived this notion of hero from Martin Heidegger, Georg Lukacs and René Girard. In his analysis of the French novel, Goldmann relates the appearance or disappearance of the hero to the economic system in bourgeois society. In both his methodologies of genetic structuralism Goldmann asserts that any changes in literary form depend on the economic or religious situation of a society.

The present study has combined the two methodologies of genetic structuralism, world vision and the problematic hero, and has demonstrated that the Iraqi Kurdish novel takes shape from and within political and socio-economic developments that are primarily marked not by religious and economic shifts, but primarily by shifts in political conditions that affect economic production. This is why the study has

suggested that in the case of Iraqi Kurdish novel it is important to concentrate on political and economic, rather than religious and economic, factors as the dynamic for the changing form of the novel.

Some of the study's findings indicate that this harsh socio-political situation resulted in widespread illiteracy in Kurdish society, which in turn obstructed the emergence and development of the Iraqi Kurdish novel, as there was little demand for longer works of literature. However, during a period of political stability, for example the four years following the 11 March 1970 Agreement between the leaders of the Kurdish September Revolution and the Iraqi regime, Iraqi Kurdish literature developed, and for the first time the novel as a new genre appeared as a printed book. The Agreement guaranteed a ceasefire between Kurdistan and Iraq, and allowed the establishment of schools using the Kurdish language, a university in Silêmanî, the Department of Kurdish Language and Literature in the University of Baghdad, and the founding of the Union of Kurdish Writers and an increasing number of publishing houses in Kurdistan. These factors paved the way for the emergence and development of the Kurdish novel as a new literary genre in Iraqi Kurdish literature.

This study has demonstrated that a significant event in Kurdish history after the collapse of monarchic rule in Iraq in 1958, was the outbreak of the Kurdish September Revolution in 1961, which led to the issuance of the 11 March Manifesto in 1970 by the Iraqi government. In addition, it has explored the way in which the September Revolution was instrumental in allowing the emergence of a new literary form for Iraqi Kurdish literature in the early 1970s. Later, during the period of the Kurdish May Opposition 1976-1988, particularly in the second half of the 1980s, the Kurdish novel flourished (at least in terms of quantity), as a result of the Opposition promoting a variety of different types of publication, later known as *Edebî Şax* (mountain literature) by Iraqi Kurdish critics. However, as a consequence of the fragmented nature of Kurdish politics, society and literature, Iraqi Kurdish novelists could not access the novels produced in other parts of Kurdistan. Moreover, as Kurdish people were divided among four separate sovereign countries, each of which sought to impose its own culture on them, Kurdish writers were more influenced by the literature of these cultures than by European novels.

It could be said that the emergence of the Kurdish novel in Iraq, as in other parts of Kurdistan, was a reaction to the sovereign country's aggressive attitude towards the Kurds. In addition, the attitude of the Iraqi regime, and class and political divisions within Iraqi Kurdish society, such as those that led to civil war, made the theme of resistance and war the dominant theme of the Iraqi Kurdish novel at its first emergence, this being an expression of the Kurdish suffering under harsh socio-political conditions.

Regarding the formal structure of the novel during the first stage (1970-1991), the hero appears as a problematic hero, who constantly searches for authentic values which allow him to be independent, and free from the political pressures which are a major source of social backwardness, illiteracy and poverty. However, he fails to obtain such values in his degraded world. For this reason, we can observe in the current study's example texts the way in which the hero in *Segwerr* is pessimistic and despairing in his search, and as a result of losing confidence in his struggle against the opposing group or force, demands his own death. In *Bohjîn*, the hero struggles to make those from his own lower-middle class more confident, and to eliminate every obstacle to their education. He sees the latter as the main reason for their disastrous situation, but the severe political conditions and tribal nature of his society make it a difficult task for the Kurds to overcome these obstacles at that time. These circumstances lead the hero (Sa'îd) to be a pessimistic problematic hero; but an active and resistant one. Similarly in the next historical stages (1991-2003 and 2003-2011), the heroes, who are psychologically traumatized, remain problematic, but each in their own way, according to the prevailing socio-political context in each stage.

In the second stage (1991-2003) both the semi-independence of Iraqi Kurdistan, and the new socio-political conditions, such as the economic blockade, civil wars and the lack of freedom of expression, caused the writers to use figurative language, and then to innovate with new forms of novel, such as magical realism and metafictional styles and techniques, particularly in the Soranî dialect. In fact, this development of the novel comes into view in different aspects. As regards the hero, we see the appearance of a realistic and magical hero. In addition, marginalized members of society also take their place in the novel as main characters; for example in *Dirz* (in the Soranî dialect), one of the samples for this stage. Another feature which

differentiates the novels in the second phase from those in the first, and is common to both Soranî and Kurmancî (Behdînî) dialects, is that more than one main protagonist plays a role in the events of the novel. This feature is the same in the third historical phase, except in the novels in the Behdînî dialect, as may be seen in *Meryema Kiçe Jinek ji Zemanek dî*. From the results of the analysis of the samples in the study, it may be said that the novels written in the Behdînan areas have developed less in terms of formal technique and style compared with the novels in the Soranî areas. In the third historical phase, as a result of political achievements, such as the establishment of a federal legal region, greater democracy and freedom of expression, what differentiates the hero from those in the previous stage is that the protagonists, in novels from both dialects, are more hopeful of achieving better values in society through their conflict.

Concerning the time span as an additional formal technique found in the Iraqi Kurdish novel, it has been suggested that in the first historical stage the harsh socio-political situation led novelists to recount their own memories in their narrations. As a result of this, the events of the story are often narrated chronologically, from the perspective of a single person. A further point is that in both novels under consideration in this period events shift between the time of the monarchy and the time of republican rule, although particularly focusing on the republican era. Consequently, the movement of the tenses is between past and present. The novelists wanted to highlight the idea that the Kurdish situation was not improved by the change of ruling system in Iraq, but that in fact it became worse than before. However, in the second historical stage, the events occur in different historical periods. Ancient history is linked to contemporary history, by using different techniques such as flashback, monologue and dialogue, and also by mixing fantasy, legend and reality. Both the study's example novels from this phase demonstrate that Kurdish history repeats itself; both point to the civil war in Iraqi Kurdistan and link it to the attitudes held throughout history towards the Kurds by the sovereign countries. Regarding the tenses in the novels of this period, as the techniques of narrative have changed compared with the previous stage, so the use of tenses has changed too. There is a clear fluctuation between past, present and future i.e. both novels start from the past and end with the future, through irregular fluctuations between the three tenses. In the third phase, in the Soranî dialect the technique of

narration and time setting is the same as it was in the second phase. By contrast, in the Behdîni dialect recounting memories chronologically still exists i.e. the narration is in one direction, from past to present. Here, it is possible to say that the novel *Geryan li Babê Berze*, written in the Behdînan area in the second historical stage, is almost the most sophisticated of all the novels written in the Behdîni dialect in the three historical stages, in terms of style and technique.

As for the aspect of 'place', in the first and second stages, there were political dimensions behind the choice of setting for events. In other words, the setting expresses the question of national identity and the harsh socio-political conditions. The novelists used the setting in which events unfolded as an expression of their conflict with the opposing group or force. Such a use of place as this is one of the reasons why the village, as well as the prisons where Kurds were tortured, was the main place of events in the first stage. However, in the second phase, as the economic and political context changed, novelists writing in the Sorani dialect attempted to make the city the main place for the events in the novel, something which we may see in *Dirz*. On the other hand, the village remained the main setting for writers in the Behdîni dialect. By contrast, in the third phase, perhaps as a consequence of the development and modernization of Kurdish society, the events in both Sorani and Behdîni novels take place in cities rather than in villages. Moreover, in the third stage, although the prison is still used as a setting for events, it is no longer a place in which local people are tortured.

As regards the significant structure of the novel, this reveals the relationships between social groups or classes, and indicates that, depending on their social and political context, in each historical phase different kinds of conflicts appeared between them in the Iraqi Kurdish novel. In the first stage the major conflict in the novels was between social classes, such as peasants or the working class and Agha/landowners. There is also a conflict between the Kurdish group, in the wider Iraqi society, and their opponent i.e. the Iraqi central government. In both conflicts the peasant or working class members are sincere in their beliefs, but are from a marginal class which suffers as a result of poverty and lack of education and freedom. In the second stage, the existing conflict in *Dirz* uncovers the social problems which appeared after the Kurdish semi-independence as a consequence of social backwardness. Perhaps the most evident conflict is that between Pîrba], a

psychiatric patient, and his wife, and also with his doctor, a psychiatrist. This conflict between them tells the story of the doctor's illegal relations with Pîrbağ's wife, and thus reveals the way in which employees misuse their professional position. In *Geryan li Babê Berze* the disagreement between family members leads to the loss of their father; however, the clear allusions in the novel declare that this conflict expresses the tensions between the Iraqi Kurdish political parties, and the civil wars in the region. However, in the third stage, the occurrence of the significant changes in the political context leads to the novel taking a different shape, in terms of its significant structure, and in some aspects of its formal structures, as discussed above. In this phase the conflict between the social classes has given way to a conflict between the intelligentsia and the local government. As a consequence of more freedom of expression, the novelists strongly criticize the performance of the regional government; this critical world vision of the writers may be seen as a self-critical view.

Resulting from the changes which occurred in the economic and political background in each of the above-mentioned historical phases, the world view of the novels has changed as well. As has been discussed in this analysis, the dominant world vision in the Iraqi Kurdish novel in the first stage was the tragic vision, which resulted from the harsh political and economic circumstances.¹²¹ The main social class at this stage was the peasant class, the class which had lost everything valuable in their life, such as their villages and fortunes, and whose loss had now caused them to be a marginal class in their society. Subsequently, the writers from this class, acting as their representatives, in Goldmann's sense of the term, expressed a tragic view in their literary works, a vision which was later described by Kurdish critics as a 'traditional world view'. However, in the next stage, after obtaining semi-independence, as a result of political and economic crises, civil war and the economic blockade, the Kurdish people lost their hope of achieving an independent nation state. For this reason, the dominant world view in the novels of this period

¹²¹ Here, using his concept of genetic structuralism, in *The Hidden God* he examines the works of Racine and Pascal, and determines their world vision as tragic. He relates the tragic world vision of these writers and their works to the decline in their economic, political and social status, and on an ideological structure created by members of the religious movement known as Jansenism. In identifying tragedy Goldmann to a large degree follows the traditional (Greek) tragic conventions; for instance, the presence of the element of fatalism or the concept of absolute morality, which find a precedent in Aristotle's criteria of tragedy.

was a hopeless vision. By contrast, in the post-2003 period, with the establishment of a legal federal region in Iraqi Kurdistan, came democracy, freedom of speech, especially to women, as well as the promise of cultural autonomy and wealth from oil. What distinguishes this period from the previous phases, is that an elite of intelligentsia began to criticize administrative corruption, particularly that which occurred in the investment sector in the region, which was related to tensions between political parties. In addition, they criticized social backwardness in the society, for example the inequality between men and women in terms of personal rights. Despite the aforementioned shortcomings in the political system, and the writers' strongly self-critical view, unlike the writers in the previous stages, they were hopeful of achieving better societal values. From what has been said, we may see that the worldview of the Iraqi Kurdish novel is not always the same, but that every historical phase has its own kind of worldview, mainly resulting from the political context.

Finally our approach in analysing the samples of the study shows that the Iraqi Kurdish novel does not have its own characteristic features in terms of formal, and to a certain extent thematic, structures, which differ from those of other world novels. Moreover, it becomes clear that although both the Soranî and Behdînan areas experienced the same socio-political situation, the novel in the Soranî dialect developed in many aspects, such as narrative techniques, and the way of dealing with hero, setting, time and place, more than that in the Behdînan dialect. The reason for this may go back to several factors which led the Soranî areas to benefit more from the improvements which occurred in the political context during the above-mentioned historical phases. One of these factors is the larger population in the Soranî areas, which consist of three provinces, Hewlêr (the capital of the region), Silêmanî and Kirkuk, while the Behdînan areas are restricted to Duhok city, together with some areas in the north and north-east of the Mosul plain. Another factor is that the Soranî dialect has been the official language in the region since the establishment of the Iraqi state, which allowed Soranî speakers to benefit more from educational and cultural activities than was the case in the Behdînan dialect areas.

There is an obvious link between the development of the Iraqi Kurdish novel and the socio-political context. However, to what extent this link is true for other literary genres will remain a fascinating question for further investigation, which I hope to be

able to address in my future studies examining the relationship between Kurdish literature in Iraqi Kurdistan and socio-political conditions in the light of genetic structuralism.

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