



Dual Consciousness and Identity Conflict in Betool Khedairi's Absent 'Ghāyib'

Lecturer. Ahmed Ghazi Mohaisen
College of Education for Humanities- University Of Anbar

Abstract

This paper explores the conception of dual consciousness and identity conflict in Betool Khedairi's novel Absent (2004), focusing on the psychological dimensions of identity in a postcolonial context. The study uses Frantz Fanon's framework from Black Skin, White Masks (1986) that examines the psychological effect of colonization on how an individual views self. This research draws upon Fanon's insights to show how Khedairi's characters, most notably Dalal the protagonist in Iraq goes on a journey of fractured identities and cultural alienation under the influence of foreign colonialism. The study demonstrates the idea of psychological alienation as per Fanon, through a close analysis of the means by which society and family pressures fragment the self perception of Dalal. This paper ultimately concludes that Dalal's individual struggles elucidate more of the tensions surrounding identity within postcolonial Iraqi society, as those tensions continue to be colored by the effects of the colonial influence on individual and collective identity.

Email:

ed.ahmed.ghazi@uoanbar.edu.iq

Published: 1- 12-2024

Keywords: identity, dual
consciousness, alienation,
conflict, Dalal

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المخلص

تستكشف هذه الورقة مفهوم الوعي المزدوج وصراع الهوية في رواية بتول الخضيرى "غائب" (2004)، مع التركيز على الأبعاد النفسية للهوية في سياق ما بعد الاستعمار. تستند الدراسة إلى إطار عمل فرانتز فانون من كتابه "بشرة سوداء، أفتعة بيضاء" (1986)، الذي يتناول التأثير النفسي للاستعمار على رؤية الفرد لنفسه. تعتمد هذه الدراسة على رؤية فانون لإظهار كيف أن شخصيات الخضيرى، وأبرزها البطلة دلال في العراق، تمر برحلة من الهويات المجزئة والاعتراب الثقافي تحت تأثير الاستعمار الأجنبي. توضح الدراسة فكرة الاعتراب النفسي وفقاً لفانون، من خلال تحليل دقيق للوسائل التي تضغط بها ضغوط المجتمع والأسرة لتجزئة إدراك دلال لذاتها. وتختتم الورقة بأن الصراعات الفردية لدلال توضح التوترات المحيطة بالهوية في المجتمع العراقي ما بعد الاستعمار، حيث تستمر هذه التوترات في أن تتأثر بآثار الاستعمار على الهوية الفردية والجماعية

1-Introduction

Absent is the novel of how Dalal and her family survive in the war torn city of Baghdad. In the novel, it laces personal narratives that hold reflection of Iraq historical and cultural disintegration, how individuals agonize over trying to hang on to a precious misrepresentation of identity when the country is politically and socially unstable. Themes have been elaborated upon through the life of Dalal, that is, survival, cultural displacement, and search for self-identity. Her struggle to reconcile personal and those of society seems universal to postcolonial settings. Identity refers to real or imagined (mostly socially constructed) characteristics that population groups attribute to themselves or others in order to distinguish themselves from others and others from one another. We define ourselves as humans "for what we are and what we are not" in order to construct our identities and ourselves (Kidani, 2013, pp. 465,466). Tajfel defined it as "the part of an individual's self-concept that is nourished by his awareness; membership in a social group or groups, and the value and sentimental considerations associated with that membership". (Tajfel, 1978, p.63).

Absent by Betoool Khedairi is a contribution that is compelling, intimate, and indeed multi layered in terms of the psychological effects that external political and cultural pressures have on these characters. Identity refers to how people define themselves or are described based on their race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion. This affiliation can determine and influence their contribution to their country's political, economic, social, and cultural life. (Deng, 1999, p.9) The common perception of the presence of the specific features that make the group unique is the entry point into identifying groups, not the presence of a special feature or a set of attributes (Gurr, 1995, p.17).

Prominent in identity conflict and dual consciousness, Khedairi narrates the inner struggle that Iraqis are held to by the desire to retain a culture as well as adhere to an externally imposed (foreign) narrative. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* offers a relevant theoretical framework for analyzing these themes, specifically through his concept of "dual consciousness," which he describes as an internal division imposed on colonized individuals who must reconcile their native identity with the identity projected by the colonizer. Fanon claims, "The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man" (Fanon, 1986, p. 17), a split that is typical of the colonial crisis of identity. In this

paper we apply Fanon's theory to *Absent* to probe how Khedairi's characters suffer cultural dislocation, internalized inferiority and dual consciousness in a society so dominated politically. The aim of this paper is to analyze how Khedairi's characters correspond to Fanon's dual consciousness and to show the psychological consequences of social alienation and identity fragmentation. This study analyses how characters respond to their imposed identities in order to underscore the universality of the conflicts that characterize the identity of post colonial and culturally fractured societies.

2. Theoretical Framework

Understanding the psychological effects of colonization requires looking to Fanon's concept of dual consciousness. He writes that colonized persons internalize the foreign gaze that falls on them, thus losing their self worth and splitting up their perception of their own selves and the identities forced on them by ruling culture. Fanon continues: "It is not only the Other who freezes upon him the sense of his own existence, but it is also he who, feeling out of step with the environment, looks at himself and does not recognize himself" (Fanon, 1986, p.109). This internal division creates an endless self versus society conflict for the colonized, between how they see their own self and how others have constructed their identity.

Fanon discusses the concept of masks used by the society as an acceptance agent. This masks the characters with Dalal have no choice but to wear. In *Absent*, Dalal's interactions provide a metaphorical mask: she does not reveal her inner struggles or conform to social norms, which Fanon (1986) says 'the colonised becomes 'masked' by the expectations of the oppressor (p. 83). Sen (2006), in *Identity and Violence: Illusions of Destiny*, argues that when plural identities are ignored and singular identities are preferred, this unique and seemingly unchanging identity (illusion of identity) feeds and perpetuates conflict and violence in the world. One of the main sources of conflict potential is the assumption that people can be grouped into unique categories based on religion and culture. 'The sense of identification with one group of people can, with appropriate provocation, become a powerful weapon for brutalising another group' (p. 15).

In *Absent*, Khedairi has his characters experience the same psychological conflict. Written through Dalal, Khedairi's novel brings to attention the challenge of building a consistent identity while being influenced by the society around us and outside of us. Fanon claims that after a life spent in under meaning, colonized people find themselves in a 'zone of nonbeing' between a self diminished by other forces and a self longing to reconnect with its cultural roots (Fanon ,1986, p.12) and Dalal's experience fits that assertion. Given the challenges experienced by Dalal's sense of self as she has to continually resist imposed Western media narratives that contradict her Iraqi heritage, she exhibits a fragmented identity very much in keeping with Fanon's theorized concept of dual consciousness.

3- A Glimpse into Betoool Khedairi's *Absent*

Betoool Khedairi was born in a middle-income family in Baghdad in 1965 and her father belonged to Iraq while her mother was a Scottish. It was for this child who was divided between two cultures. She has acquired her basic education from the University of Mustansirya where she took a B.A. in French literature. A child who never knew that she had been born in such or such family or that she had to please such or such person; She was

living in an environment full of tensions between families. She sought solace in art and she writes (Safadi,n.d).

Absent by Betool Khedairi is a very detailed and personal insight into the life in Baghdad as they are in the state of sanctions, war and shortage. *Absent* was published in 2004 and it portrays the young Dalal, whose life is determined by socio-political and economical situations that characterise the community's life. The novel encompasses the rest of the Iraqi experimentation from identity, strength, and cultural survival amidst; external pressure, and internal conflict. In the experiences of the protagonist, Khedairi explores how the population of conflicted societies struggles and how they can sustain themselves. This paper aims to give some background information about the main issues, characters and how the author narrates the story to show the fight of Iraqis.

Absent gives audience a portrait of Dalal, a young girl who is brought up by her aunt and uncle in a middle class Baghdad area. This is more so because of her character which is raised by the Iran- Iraq war, a period after which there is continuous conflict and irreversible cultural changes. Her narrative reveals useful information about the socioeconomic situation of Iraqis as they struggle for existence in a condition of scarcity of resources and enduring insecurity, frameworks into which her survival chores fit. Khedairi situates the novel within the frame works of cultural and physical lack, the sanctions and the war permeate every aspect of the novel (Khedairi, 2004, p.23). Finally, by observing Dalal and her interactions with her family and friends , readers get deeper understanding of how Iraqi society copes, struggles and resists within culturally diverse and still politically vulnerable world.

The viewer follows Dalal's spatial experience but essentially her quest of navigating through identity. Since the beginning of the novel, she knows what the world wants and what her family and culture has in store for her. Her aunt and uncle represent the traditional Mayan ethos; obedience, humility, and reproductive fitness over and above personal drive. On the other hand, Dalal is the symbol of the young generation, who wants to live life, and wants more than bare existence (Khedairi, 2004, p.45). There is a point that Iraqi literature mostly depicts family issues and individual's identity in relation to family duties and Muslim values as characters struggle to seek independence (Muhsin al-Musawi, 2006). This internal fight of choice is well-pronounced in Dalal and since she is the main protagonist in the play, this moral hunger for a home represents Iraqis who find themselves torn between tradition and modernity. According to Seibt (2011), the only real way to solve identity based conflict is to integrate the people until there is no difference in identity by, "in-depth and long-term interactions of the conflicting groups that include identity-transforming practices of counseling, reconciliation, and trust-building" (p.229). To integrate means to remove specific cultures and identities, as it is noted with the phase identity transforming

One can clearly identify the theme of Resilience in *Absent*, and all Khedairi's characters seem to embody the amount of endurance needed for the inner and the outer trial. Both Dalal's family, friends and neighbors show relative resourcefulness though in distinct manners. The willingness of her aunt and uncle to live their lives this way and their submission to tradition reflect the optimism of a generation that may have not ever realized change was possible, but instead has just learned how to endure. There, Dalal inhibits psychological strength which reveals itself as a personal defiance against the community's

conventions (Khedairi ,2004, p. 92). Nadjé Al-Ali explains, for instance, that Iraqi women during war self-assert themselves a duty to nurture the family and seek for a realm in which they could achieve fulfillment, which is also implicitly exemplified by Dalal (Al-Ali, 2007).

Yet, one of the key components of the novel *Absent* is a kind of support necessary for Dalal during various trials in her life. Khedairi identifies family assets as being both a security and a limitation thus illustrating that while Dalal enjoys the support of her aunt and uncle, they also sometime hinder her. Family and community can afford support in critical hours, but they try to limit a person and his or her growth and liberty. Interdependent and suffering together which clearly portrayed the Iraqi social structure based on togetherness is Dalal's community. Yasmeen Hanoosh enriches our understanding of the subject by arguing that family configuration in modern Iraqi novel bears out general cultural imperatives and the dichotomy of the self's liberation and obedience to the collective's wishes (Hanoosh, 2008). In *Absent*, these communal relations are depicted as a survival strategy, a depiction of how community is critical resistances to outside forces and to financial precarity (Khedairi, 2004, p.76).

Since, Khedairi adds cultural connotations, which are familiar to the Iraqi audience, to her story. For instance food is a thematic element that symbolizes starvation though it is used as tool in passing down cultures. Food is scarce, but eating is a social activity, a sign of the accepting nature of Iraq and an appreciation of family dynamic (Khedairi, 2004, p. 53). Signifying this motif is the fact that the community is somehow resilient in maintaining some degree of humanity from which also stem the small consolations that come with appreciating cultures of people. Middle Eastern literature scholar Roger Allen analyzes the signification of such symbols as food through which cultural vigour and impact of war are illuminated, and sustenance as a representation of the ability to triumph over adversity.

Again, absence has been symbolized in the novel itself – the idea of absence is itself highly significant. Dalal is an unstable girl who does not have either safety or sense of family that war took away from her. This is not only a motif of physical absence but also concern for lack of anything that may be expected in future, due to the reality that the young Iraqis might not be able to find good prospects for them in future (Khedairi, 2004, p. 108). Me Likewise, the conversations of protagonist exhibit the pervasiveness of war in their life and sequent disintegration of community and self and separation from interconnectedness to solitude (Grimaldi, 2021). It also points out to a generation that has lost those wars, and the psychological wounds that come with war, even when one survives.

In *Absent*, Betoool Khedairi breaks the stereotype and tries to explain the existence of the Iraqis and their strength in facing difficult circumstances. It is for this reason that Dalal's experiences are emblematic of a universal human predicament of both negotiating exogenous conflict and personal and communal identity. The powerful Voice of the victim: Khedairi's never –giving narrative of Iraqi people that resist against dreadful calamities and still keep their identity and connection. In its way, *Absent* is a novel that adds to the sum total of the world's fiction and painting, providing a fly on the wall view of a culture that remains strong in the face of adversity. Khedairi leads her characters to convey as much of their Iraqi experience as can be summed up by the notion of absence and loss, but not as much as the instincts of survival, cultural valor, and the perpetual pursuits of one's identity.

4- Discussion

The cultural displacement of Dalal is further complicated by whether she is an inside or outside exile. She expresses this dislocation poignantly: “Though I was born in Baghdad, I have lived in Amman, Jordan, for a number of years, and have traveled quite a bit... Understandably, they were taking their impressions from the Iraq of the headlines” (Khedairi, 2004, p.195). In this quote, Dalal is underlining the difference between what she lives and what everyone thinks Iraq is, in the West at least: her identity is to be defined by stereotypes and misconceptions. This connected with Fanon's 'epidermalization,' as colonials assimilate the perspective of their colonizers. According to Fanon, the colonized person is consistently battered down from his/her societal expectations to ensure he/she feels alienated in its body and whole cultural identity (Fanon, 1986, p.112).

But constantly transforming her own experiences with Western perceptions makes her sense of belonging fray, a feeling Dalal shares. The space between her cultural pride, as reflected in her dual consciousness, and her need to meet this external pressure to conform to oppositional stereotypes is what she struggles to bridge. Such a displacement highlights Fanon's idea that while colonized “exist in a constant struggle against the images imposed upon them” (Fanon, 1986, p. 110).

Dalal's mother continues to show us how unresolved identity issues can cause constant conflict, her layered identity played out in multiple names. Dalal reflects, “My mother... ended up having three names: Sophia, her registered Christian name when she was baptized; Hazel, her domestic name... and a Muslim name when she converted to Islam to marry my father” (Khedairi, p.196). This multiplicity of name embodies both fortifying and alienating aspect because her mother's name means something culturally or religiously different for each of the names she carries. Here we see their idea of Fanon's "masked identity" as they use layers to fit in with society's rules. However, as “masks” that help the mother navigate multiple social spaces, mother's three names cause her identity to split, forming a split self as Fanon (1986) points out as the result of the mother having to accommodate many cultures (p.14). Maalouf (2000) clarifies in his book, *In the Name of Identity*, the distinction between the real identity and the new-age identity:

This is an essential point with regard to current concepts of identity. On the one hand there is what we are in reality and what we are becoming as a result of cultural globalisation: that is to say, beings woven out of many-coloured threads, who share most of their beliefs with the vast community of their contemporaries (p.103)

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon claims that, in an attempt to conform with a dominant culture's expectations, colonized people become people who are other than themselves, further splitting themselves apart. This dual consciousness, that Dalal's mother's three names represent, is represented by her continually shifting her identity to conform to a diversity of cultural contexts, where an alienation from her own, unified sense of self is a reality. A heavy burden which Dalal's mother has clearly felt as she tries to piece together her fragmented identity written to her in the names that have been built for her.

Dalal's view of the social conventions about naming reflect her mother's internalized conflict. As Dalal notes, “My foreign-born mother could never understand why people would

want to be called after a human being who had not yet been born” (Khedairi, p.195). The external impositions on individual identity which is evident in Iraqi society here is a towering reflection of a societal expectation of exacting traditionalism. According to Fanon, colonized people are made to conform to arbitrary cultural standards of dominant culture to the extent that they develop a dual consciousness impelling them to practice a foreign practice (Fanon, 1986, p. 120).

A greater struggle is waged with identity and autonomy than with imposed naming conventions. The fact in question, as implied by Dalal’s mother’s discomfort with the naming tradition, shows that this naming became a form of suffocation which the parents found uncomfortable, a doctrine that Fanon says aligns with ‘imposed identities fracture the self’ (Fanon, 1986, p. 14). This resistance to these conventions is a symbol for her yearning to retain agency over her identity, in the face of all the social conventions calling for mold. Like Fanon’s imagining of a colonized identity eclipsed under the weight of culturally imposed beliefs, this tension between self definition and cultural delineation is a mark of impossibility for acting from and being the real.

The theme of dual consciousness and cultural alienation is central to Dalal’s perception of her homeland, particularly as she reflects on the impact of Western influence: “This is a story that talks about an ‘old Iraq,’ familiar to Iraqis but unknown to the West, and it ends with a ‘new Iraq,’ familiar to the West but unknown to Iraqis” (Khedairi, p.196). This observation captures Iraq as a fractured vision of Iraq between the real cultural identity versus the post occupation identity made up by external narratives. This is of Fanon’s concept of dual consciousness that Dalal sees her country from two different sides, one that is firmly rooted in her heritage and the other that has been in a tincture of foreign points of view.

This tension can be said to illustrate Fanon’s point that colonized people have to live within them but also in relation to the gaze of the dominant culture. As Fanon (1986) puts it: “It is not enough for the black man to be black; he must be black in relation to the white man” (p.17). which emphasizes the individual’s self impression established by external narratives. This tension of the old and new Iraq, expressed in Dalal’s commentates on how cultural alienation is when the narrative of Iraq she identifies with moves to the background given the Western image of Iraq.

Reclaiming a people’s identity is an act of resistance against the environment that engenders this superposition of inferiority, argues Fanon. According to him, liberation can come about through the conscious refusal to accept these artificial identities because men are able to reverse the process and reassert their value and their cultural values. According to Fanon (1961), “The individual must take up the heritage of his people and set about reanimating it with his own life,” (p. 210). Conflict is the beginning of consciousness,” writes the famous psychoanalyst M. Esther Harding, in her book *Women's Mysteries*. In life, conflict remains inevitable and it turns out to be an opportunity for learning, experience, and insight. Conflict builds and defines lives, characters of human beings, their self-awareness, and their unsettled consciousness.

Dalal practices resistance in remaining determined to remember an Iraq she only knows through family stories but was isolated from in the history of that culture. When she finds it hard to put aside the imposed identity that disregards her heritage, she tells herself she’s one of Iraq’s cultural wealth, but the stories of how her family defended their origins are still

good sources of strength. This internalized pride, albeit conflicted, serves as a form of psychological resistance to the degradation around her, an act that Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o describes as necessary for self-preservation: "To resist is to exist, to exist in the fullness of one's own self, independent of colonial validation" (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 220).

Throughout the Resistance, for example, Dalal's uncle in *Absent* serves as an example of that resistance, fighting to keep Iraq's cultural legacy around. On one hand he tells Dalal, "Our country is the cradle of civilization," (Khedairi, p 14). This focus on cultural pride a quiet act of defiance in the face of foreign stories that managed to boil Iraq down to a place of political strife was a defiant statement on the Iraqi culture that did not deserve this foreign ending. This self assertion would therefore be according to Fanon's principle that "affirming the richness of one's own culture" can be seen as necessary to return to one's own identity and reject imposed inferiority (Fanon, 1961, p. 206).

On the other hand, cultural traditions such as using natural lip colour once imported cosmetics are no longer an option also help preserve Dalal's identity. In a childhood she describes as residing under 'imposed hardships' still, she remembers 'ruby red lipstick' (Khedairi,p.16) a symbol of pride and femininity (Khedairi,p.14). And asserting Iraq's historical significance despite foreign-imposed hardship This emphasis on cultural pride becomes a quiet act of defiance, asserting Iraq's cultural richness in the face of foreign narratives that reduce it to a place of political turmoil. Fanon would view this self-assertion as essential to reclaiming identity and rejecting imposed inferiority, aligning with his notion that "affirming the richness of one's own culture" counters the internalized inferiority created by colonization (Fanon, 1961, p. 206).

Similarly, the act of preservation through cultural practices is motivated as an act of self assertion, a charge of self in the face of denial as Fanon (1961) asserts, "reclaiming dignity in the face of denial" (p. 35). The family of Dalal clings to these practices by which they resist the erosion of their cultural identity; Dalal embodied Fanon's idea of self definition as a process of self liberation.

Accordingly, her aunt represents an internalized inferiority because she fights to maintain remnants of their cultural identity while her environment is despoiled. An Iraq's culture, she clings to as singing the song to her household vine and remembering the colours and vibrant decorations do for her a memory of the time when Iraqi society seemed a complete thing. The fact that she laments "What have they done to us?" as she looks around the interior of her home crumbling in front of her underperforms her cultural pride (Khedairi, p. 59). This is echoed by Fanon's claim that colonizers are "the weight of having to take up the burden of his or her culture as a person under siege" (Fanon 1961,p.207). Attempts to sustain cultural practices become resistant acts against the scriptural promulgation of a narrative where her culture is deemed less than.

With her body disfigurement, she reminds herself that she is different, and keeps feeling isolated. Khedairi (2004), describes how she "flows into [her] work like a machine that doesn't think," (p. 44), this quote reflects her detachment from her own body and identity. This disconnection mirrors Fanon's view that alienated people feel as if they are acting for a disinterested audience, an emotionally numbing 'mask' they wear each day (Fanon, 1986, pp. 20). The mask metaphor shows exactly how Dalal is psychologically – her identity is being obscured by a social role which belittles her self worth.

Dalal's sacrifice for her family is exactly what Fanon means when he says that the colonized person is often called upon to abandon personal desires to follow societal expectations. Dalal's decision to leave her studies illustrates this vividly: "I've abandoned my studies," she confesses that I've abandoned my studies and thus I have lost my woman of education identity (Khedairi, 2004, p. 79). And it's an act of sacrifice involving her internal battle, a duplicate of Fanon's 'double consciousness' in which the self becomes secondary to an identity forced upon it (Fanon, 1986, p. 29).

Dalal's inner conflict of the self's image with the societal ideal of beauty "If things aren't distorted, they may be more beautiful," (Khedairi, 2004, p. 61). This is her struggle with living an identity that is fragmented by the eyes of society. Fanon points out such disconnection is common to the symptom of alienation in which one's own image becomes warped by the pressures of conformity and acceptance (Fanon, 1986, p. 93). It is no surprise then that Dalal's experience of physical asymmetry because of a stroke reflects her psychological conflict as well. She refers to herself as a stranger with a crooked face, because, just as Fanon analogizes, "in the white world, the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema" (Fanon, 1986, p. 110). Her crookedness was physical, her split identity internal — she is faceless in the same sense that the face of any true self should not show the scars and degradation wrought by external forces. It forces Dalal to ask if she is worth anything, something Fanon would support saying that colonized people; "no longer feel at ease with their own body, because it has become something that others have taught them to despise" (Fanon, 1986, p. 109).

Add to Dalal's identity struggle the social expectations of her, that which compound the brief moments of solitude and individuality. It was in specific familial duties that were interrupted momentarily by her experience of a shower as becoming a moment of 'delightful dizziness' (Khedairi, 2004, 63), that she felt unable thus to escape societal pressures. Fanon writes that individuals in a colonized or oppressed state often feel the same sense of self that is endlessly subsumed by the demands of others, and as such, feels like an unattainable luxury (1986, p. 88).

An existential collation between Dalal, Iraq, social, and the political, with poverty and warfare are all considered by her. She thought how are you supposed to survive in society when society is in messes, and then she says, "We're all starving to death," (Khedairi, 2004, p. 102). Following Fanon's (1986) views, her reflections on the psychological price of life within a volatile, oppressive system where survival itself often feels an empty, pointless exercise, reflects what Fanon's thoughts are (p.109).

Therefore, the sentence "my mouth in return for our survival", is indeed evocative of Dalal's inner conflict between personal needs and demands of the family (Khedairi, 2004, p. 52). Fanon's theory reveals the process through which familial and social demands force marginalized people to relinquish their personal dreams, deepen the dual consciousness that confuses self worth (Fanon, 1986, p.77).

Finally, dalal's reference to sects' division "Help, some groups are threatening me because of my Sunni name"—shows to what extent social labelling has an impact on her self-perception (Khedairi, 2004, p. 196). Fanon's idea of "identity shift" where oppressed people project wearing of multiple layers of identities as a form of self-preservation is present in this situation. By using different identities, Dalal shows a protective mechanism regarding the

fragmentation of the society, called for by Fanon, who stated that identity was fluid and situational in the oppressive context (Fanon, 1986, p. 122).

Conclusion

In *Absent*, Betool Khedairi paints a strong picture of a country and of identity conflict and cultures caught between cultural pride and the pressures of foreign dominance post-colonial Iraq. In the post-colonial framework, the novel is stressing the fact of dual consciousness and the conflict of identities. Using Fanon's theories, analysis of Khedairi's characters grounds out the psychological complexity facing Khedairi's characters, especially Dalal, so fully embodied in the struggle of identity and the struggle of self against foreign intrusion and cultural expectations. The conclusion embodies the characters' ability to fold themselves back, it focuses on characters' resilience and commitment to cultural preservation and meanwhile, their acts of self-assert contribute to psychological resistance and reclaim dignity. Finally, the novel turns into a text that testifies to the might of the culture identity in the face of external interference, in conformity with Fanon's attitude on self-establishing as a liberating act.

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