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A Kristevan Approach to Boumah Sheen

Noushin Pakzad[1]

[1] Department of Humanities, Faculty of Literature, Ilam University, Ilam, Iran.

Abstract

This article aims to analyze the novel *Boomah Shin*, which narrates the stories of a group of Kurdish characters, through the lens of Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic criticism. In this novel, various aspects of the indigenous culture of the Kurds and the complexities of the characters' personalities are explored, with each character recounting the bittersweet experiences of their past. Kristeva's psychoanalytic critique helps to reveal the hidden layers of the characters' identities and their interconnections. This critique also delves into the past and present of the Kurdish people to uncover the depth of personal relationships and the impact of the environment on their lives, beyond the superficial aspects of their existence during their journeys. The findings of the article indicate that a diverse range of Kurdish characters have unpleasant experiences regarding the prevailing symbolic order and nurture a longing for an ideal life and a suitable place to reside, reminiscent of the era dominated by the symbolic order, namely their childhood.

Key words: *symbolic order, the semiotic, Chora, mother, Kurds, defiance*.

Introduction

Mohammad Ali Ghasemi is a writer from Ilam, Iran who strives to reflect the culture and customs of the Kurds in his works. To this end, he addresses the social issues of his city through various literary forms such as novels, short stories, poetry, and essays. *Booma Shin* is one of the best works of Mohammad Ali Ghasemi, exploring themes such as local culture, urban, rural, and nomadic life in Kurd regions. Ghasemi's special attention to the places and spaces that encompass the characters and events, as well as his insight into the psychological aspects of character development, have made his novel a mirror of the culture of the people of Ilam and the Kurds of the region. The characters in *Booma Shin*, each in separate and distinct narratives, reveal their relationships with individuals, events, nature, the future, and also geographical boundaries. Simultaneously, through the outpouring of thoughts and feelings of the characters, a subjective view of the culture, customs, and lifestyle of the people of Ilam is presented, illuminating Ilam and its people through the exploration of the characters and events in the work.

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Kristeva's Views and Theories

1. The Semiotic and the Symbolic Orders

Kristeva believes that a complete distinction cannot be made between the subject and language. Influenced by post-structuralism and its emphasis on the importance of language, she attempted to link semiotics and psychoanalysis

and establish a connection between language and individual identity. In her view, language is not a separate and static system; rather, it is a dynamic signifying process through which an individual's energies, drives, and desires are projected outward (McAfee, 31:2003). According to this process, she posits that language encompasses two distinct functions: one is the rule-governed and logical use of language, and the other is the use of language in a way that does not adhere to grammatical rules and emphasizes emotional or poetic aspects (Ibid). She refers to the first function as the semiotic order and the second as the symbolic order. Based on Kristeva's thinking, a two-year-old child is immersed in the semiotic aspect of language and communicates through sounds and gestures, having not yet learned the rules of using language as a systematic structure. Kristeva states that when we enter the language system, the paternal law replaces the maternal chora, and our old fantasies guide our primal drives (Parkin, 51:2001). In fact, in Kristeva's psychoanalysis, the mother plays a central role (Gourin et al., 263:2011), where the child does not need to use language because all of their needs are immediately met by the mother. The child feels the need to learn language and the system of signification when there is a gap between need and its satisfaction. From Kristeva's perspective, from the moment the child recognizes the existence of another alongside himself, they become aware that language can refer to the other or the object, thus initiating the development of the child's subjectivity (McAfee, 41:2003). As the children begin to use language, they engage with its symbolic aspect, coinciding with the end of the mother's dominance as the only available object and the entry into a social world governed by paternal logic and social rationality.

Contrary to Jacques Lacan's belief that the age of two marks the end of the imaginary phase and the beginning of the law of the father, Kristeva's view is based on the inseparable connection and interaction between the symbolic and the semiotic throughout an individual's life. In other words, the semiotic is always accompanied by the symbolic, and alongside the logical aspect of language, its emotional and poetic dimensions are also utilized, shaping the identity of the subject in a dialectical relationship with one another. (Margaroni, 2004:13) From Kristeva's perspective, the semiotic aspect of language in adulthood is of great importance, as it is responsible for the transmission or discharge of human energies and desires through sounds, rhymes, rhythmic language, and imagery. Otherwise, the symbolic aspect of language is devoid of rhythmic and imaginative qualities.

2. Chora

Chora is another concept that Kristeva defines in relation to the secure initial space in which a child exists. Chora, which Kristeva often refers to as the semiotic chora, encompasses all pre-linguistic methods of communication, such as drives and desires, and the discharge of energy through which the child connects with the mother. In other words, the child uses it to control their relationship with the other. (Barret, 9) In fact, chora is a type of signifying system that does not utilize language and does not adhere to the laws of the symbolic order. Moi explains the concept of chora from Kristeva's perspective by stating that chora consists of rhythmic signifying drives that are repressed in the adult (94). According to Oliver, after recognizing their body parts and understanding the concept of the other, the child begins to repress chora, which, of course, remains active and unrepressed in some adults. (467) If the non-verbal mode of communication is not repressed and is utilized in adulthood, the individual either suffers from psychosis or has "defied" it.

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2. Revolt

Kristeva, due to the importance of language in the process of growth, refers to humans as speaking beings and believes that the individual identity of the subject is not fixed and complete because of

constant interactions, signifying aspects, and symbolic dimensions; rather, it is 'the subject in process.' This means that individual identity, as seen in the thoughts of other postmodern theorists, will always be flexible and subject to change. In fact, Kristeva emphasizes that the dominance of one of the symbolic or semiotic aspects can lead an individual's life to destruction. The semiotic drive leads to the liberation of energy and desires, while the symbolic order, on its own and without the influences of the signifying drive, is dry, soulless, and filled with isolation. Kristeva's solution for escaping this isolation is rebellion, so that the subject can protest within the rigid symbolic system. (McAfee, 167:2003) In explaining the need for rebellion, Kristeva states: "What can be done in such metropolises? Nothing but the buying and selling of goods... Those who wish to maintain a way of life where wealth and poverty do not hold much significance must create a space for an inner region. A secret garden... a psychic life." (McAfee, 172) This need, which is the need for rebellion, is essential for both the individual and society and can be social, political, or artistic.

From Kristeva's perspective, revolt is not necessarily political, but political, personal, or civil rebellion all share a common root and signify the dominance of the semiotic order in the subject. As Barret explains, rebellion is always necessary and may manifest itself through the expansion and development of art and aesthetic works, rather than necessarily through violence. (Barret, 2011:119) In modern culture and society, particularly in metropolitan life, as mentioned, art and literature are the best methods of revolt, as they incorporate both the "principle of pleasure" and "the generation of meaning for the other." (Kristeva quoted in Barret, 119) Among other arts, Kristeva chooses literature to explain the type of artistic rebellion and its impact. She states that storytelling evokes a free association of meanings that can recover lost memories. In this process, perception combines with the artist's images, and memory takes the form of words, leading to a revival of psychic life. (137)

3. Abjection

Another important theme in Kristeva's ideas is abjection. From her perspective, during a child's development, there comes a time when the child perceives the mother as abject in order to free himself from the threat of merging and dependence on the maternal object. This is a cornerstone of the child's growth and a significant stage in the development of subjectivity. However, the memory of this abject experience remains with them and continually poses a threat to independent subjectivity. This feeling towards the mother during the subject's quest for independence is what Kristeva refers to as abjection. She considers abjection a physiological function that seeks to maintain the boundary between mother and child. This repression has a significant impact on the onset of language learning and the development of the "self." (Barret, 6:2011)

Abjection is not, in fact, a hatred of dirt, but rather a way to free oneself from the threat to the subject's identity and a method for maintaining the symbolic order and its laws. (Oliver, 2002: 453) The subject's effort to create a distinction between imself as an independent subject from the abjection around it, which threatens to destroy its identity, sometimes manifests itself in the form of artistic expression. Paintings, poems, and stories that write about impurities, pollutants, and filth that represent repulsive themes and contents, are practicing abjection. (McAfee, 1385: 84) Kristeva sees, on one hand, the creativity of art and the influential role of the semiotic in artistic creation, and on the other hand, she considers it a method for expressing disgust towards the semiotic object. This is the endless interaction between the semiotic order and the symbolic order.

***Booma Shin* Novel**

The novel *Booma Shin*, published in 2006, consists of nineteen sections called 'virs' meaning memory. The story revolves around the experiences of several characters who are traveling together to an unspecified destination in Europe, leaving their homeland behind. Each 'vir' is a monologue from the perspective of a character's spirit who has drowned during the migration journey at sea. All these characters are Kurds. Each 'vir' shares a common theme, narrating the experiences of displacement, homelessness, and rootlessness of the characters. Among the characters, Hani is the main character who intertwines the urgent experiences of the present with bitter memories

of the past, highlighting above all the loneliness and sense of not belonging to any person or place. Other characters, with their own painful pasts, seek to escape from themselves and their surroundings to start anew in life. In this context, Ashour's experience is different from the others. He is a Kurdish Iraqi soldier who participates in the war against Iran and, amidst the chaos of the occupation of Mehran, discovers a newborn alone in a cradle in the village of Bahramabad and secretly cares for the infant for a long time to keep it alive. The story of Kouhi is also noteworthy. He is a painter who has chosen art as a means to escape the bitterness and pressures of life, which has also provided him with a decent income.

The novel *Booma Shin* tells the story of Kurds who are seeking to create meaning in their lives and start anew. Ghasemi writes about his self-exiled characters; people who have placed themselves in difficult conditions of relocation in search of their identity and meaning. In this novel, Ghasemi employs a naturalistic style to harness natural and environmental forces against his characters, rendering their efforts to confront these forces futile. (Loomis, 2002:120) However, he deviates from one of the characteristics of naturalistic novels, which is the author's neutrality, by creating parallel subjective narratives for his characters to effectively reveal their intellectual inclinations, desires, and personal aspirations. This very feature makes the novel a suitable candidate for psychoanalytic critique.

1. Hani

Hani is the main character of the novel, and in the first-person perspective, we become familiar with his situation and the characters around him. Hani poetically and subjectively recounts the dangers of their journey towards Ankara during their migration, and through stream of consciousness and association, memories of the past take shape in his mind. He initially speaks of the oppression of the Kurds in Turkey and the hardships and loneliness faced by Kurds like himself who have been forced to leave their homes to start a new life. He constantly sees himself as a lost man who has always been alone and subjected to the abuse and violence of others. He describes the difficulties of their brief stay in a silo that was used for keeping animals, where this group of migrants now sleeps, and in a corner separated by a curtain used as a restroom, they relieve themselves. Hani's feeling of disgust regarding this act evokes the notion of abjection and its connection to his past.

The subject of abjection is repeated several times in the narrative of Hani. Urinating in a corner of the shelter is tormenting for him, and he is distressed by the fact that the rest of the group is in a similar situation. From Kristeva's perspective, impurity and filth are parts of an abjection that, although they belong to us, we discard and detest because it is an object that threatens the dissolution and destruction of our subjectivity. The abject is never completely eliminated; rather, it remains a constant threat. The first instance of a child's abjection, as mentioned, occurs with the mother when the infant, at a few months old, sometimes rejects the embrace or milk of the mother at will. Hani's discomfort and his intense sensitivity to this issue indicate that the rejection of the contaminated object reminds him of his own childhood when he rejected the semiotic chora, namely the mother, and now he is tormented by the feeling of abjection toward his mother in his childhood.

In the third vir of the book, where Hani is once again the narrator of his story, there are references to his childhood when, driven by desire and hunger, he steals from an old beggar woman to buy zulbia (a type of sweet). However, upon returning home, the sweetness of the zulbia turns bitter due to the fighting and beating he receives from his mother and uncle. The memory of the theft related to his childhood does not end with a sense of remorse for his sin; rather, it is accompanied by anger over the shame that ensues. Hani's uncle places a hot skewer on his hand to punish him, and the neighborhood children gather to watch him get beaten. Teenage Hani is upset by the arrival of the children, but he feels justified in eating something that some wealthy individuals consume easily, while he, due to poverty, is not allowed to eat. This reaction from Hani represents a "rebellion" against the symbolic order and a longing to return to infancy, a time when there was no gap between need and its fulfillment. He implicitly wishes to return to his mother from his childhood multiple times.

Hani compares his crying and sobbing even to that of a newborn and speaks of being transferred to another prison, which immediately directs the reader's mind to the womb as the initial closed environment and the birth and first cries of the infant. He likens himself to an autumn tree, frostbitten, with branches that are still tender. The tenderness of the branches, which evokes his childhood, creates a connection between the dry, damaged nature and his vulnerable, exhausted body, reminding us of his intense attachment to childhood and his hatred of the symbolic order. Hani's hatred for Ankara and the oppression there against Kurdish migrants, his disdain for the minibus driver, his disgust for the brokers who are supposed to take them through Ankara, and even stealing money in childhood to buy zulbia, all reflect his aversion to the symbolic order.

As a narrator, Hani employs a poetic tone, sometimes rhythmic, with repetition and sound imagery, which, according to Kristeva, is close to the drives and energies of the symbolic aspect. (Moi, 97:1986) The poetic tone, the use of poetry, emotional text, and repetition are characteristics that form the signifying part of language and are remnants of infancy and childhood. Hani narrates as follows:

A fresh resonance was blowing. It was like the sound that comes from the mouth of an ancient tribal flute. A gentle breeze was blowing, carrying with it the fluid echo of indigenous music that had been wafting from the other side of millennia to this side of time. The wind seemed to be a messenger, urging its wild horse to gallop. It was a letter with the wind that showed the "ruins" of the past... It felt as if we were cousins of the Jewish people wanting to escape from the disaster of Pharaoh to the other side of the "Nile." (Ghasemi, 7:1385)

The narrative is rich and poetic. The presence of various metaphors and similes related to the native culture of the Kurds and nature indicates, from the very beginning of the work, a reference to the source, foundation, and point of origin. This beginning marks the start of a child's life: as Kristeva states, literary techniques and phonetic attractions, metaphor, and metonymy are elements we consider as aspects of the semiotic nature of the work. (Kristeva, 41:1984)

Another important point regarding the character Hani is the way the environment and space in which he and others find themselves are described. Due to the illegality of migration, they are forced to hide in places along the route to avoid being arrested by the police. Hani's description of the suffocating environment is striking. When they get on the minibus, fearing the police and the terrifying prisons of Ankara, everyone hides their heads under the seats, and the curtains of the bus windows are all drawn. The group has been told they are not allowed to speak Kurdish. The closed and frightening atmosphere of the minibus, along with the emphasis on silence and the prohibition of language, is precisely the semiotic cage intended to protect Hani from the dangers of the symbolic order.

Elsewhere, Hani compares his life in the world to the dark womb of his mother:

"In the dark chamber of the womb, I was practicing my solitary prison. My sentence was life imprisonment. I was to remain a prisoner forever. I had to get used to the darkness. To the parallel bars and the dryness stained with blood. The blood of someone’s happiness that had formed solely due to an incident, a vague and unfortunate moment, in the midst of a situation. I was my own cellmate... I couldn’t stand up straight there... I leaned against the slimy wall of my cell and waited. Was that dark chamber, that closed and hidden cell, not this crushed minibus with its curtains drawn?" (Ghasemi, 18:1385)

The narrative of Hani in the first and third sections of the book reflects his identity, which is dominated by a maternal signifier, as she constantly speaks of a secure semiotic chora and perceives every woman as a reflection of her own mother. In part of the tenth chapter, he equates the mother with the beloved and mother-nature to demonstrate that his object or "other" has never changed from the mother and is fixated on him. Hani has a supportive character and throughout the novel, he listens to others and tries to calm them down. At one point in the novel, he comforts Ashour to help him relax and sits alone to hear his story. His supportive nature is, in fact, another indication of his dependence on the signifier order and his recourse to it to solve the problems of those around him.

2. Ashour

Ashour's narrative is found in chapters ten, parts of chapter twelve, fourteen, sixteen, and eighteen. Ashour is from one of the Kurdish regions of Iraq, and due to his bitter past, he has chosen to immigrate. Throughout the journey, he is the most introverted and repeatedly complains about hearing the cries of a baby while others hear nothing. In chapter ten, Hani loses his patience and asks him about the sound of the baby, and from here, Ashour's story begins. He reminisces about his school days and recalls his teacher, Ms. Hosna, from whom he now has a keepsake. He recounts sneaking into the teacher's room and Ms. Hosna's anger when she called him a thief, but later she feels sorry for Ashour and says, "Take whatever you want." (Ghasemi, 143:1385) Ashour then takes a picture frame with Ms. Hosna's image in it and keeps it as a memento.

In chapter twelve, Ashour's storytelling reaches the point where he is a soldier in the war, fighting for the Ba'ath army. The Iraqi army has crossed the Mehran border and is in the process of occupying Bahramabad. Ashour witnesses the flight of women and children from Mehran with his naked eye. After several hours of conflict, the village of Bahramabad falls, and the Iraqi forces begin to seize spoils. Initially reluctant, Ashour starts searching for gold, but soon finds a newborn in a cradle instead, unable to cry from extreme hunger.

Ashour embraces the hungry newborn and weeps; he prepares the baby bottle and prays for him. After a while, he places the baby in the cradle and returns to the military base. In the following days, despite the danger that may arise if the situation is revealed, he visits the child every day and takes care of him. Having become completely attached to the baby, he says, "He was essentially my child. A piece of my flesh and blood that lay asleep in the cradle." (184) Elsewhere, he states, "I had changed in a different way; I felt it. A sense of empathy had awakened within me. I had developed a maternal instinct." (188) The baby, whom he has named Habib, gradually begins to utter sounds like any other newborn and smiles upon seeing Ashour. After some time, Ashour is transferred to the southern front to fight in Khorramshahr. After three months, he manages to get leave and immediately heads towards Bahramabad; upon arrival, he encounters the small corpse of the baby in the cradle.

Like Hani, Ashour has a difficult past. He was a disbeliever who had climbed over people's walls multiple times and even peeked into his teacher's room. A soldier who fought for the Ba'ath Party of Iraq, but the cry of a newborn has transformed him. He places a photo of Hosna and a small Quran above the baby, symbolizing his only attachment in the past and his belief in the words of revelation. Before seeing the baby in the cradle, he represented the symbolic order and paternal law, having entered the war according to the logic of the political order of his country without any mental slip regarding his actions.

Although Kristeva pays special attention to gender roles in society and defines two different aspects of language based on the roles of father and mother, the subject, in her view, is flexible and capable of change. She believes that a distinction must be made between "woman" and "femininity," as being a woman is a physiological definition, while femininity is defined based on individual identity. She states, "The identity of each person is a patchwork of various identifications based on ethnicity, region, gender, and politics." (quoted in McAfee,2003:163) The identity of the subject is constantly undergoing transformation in the process, allowing the individual to experiment and learn from experience. Based on this definition, and considering the permanent influence of the semiotic order on the symbolic realm, Ashour's transformation is defensible.

In fact, his character, which has been under the influence of the symbolic aspect, suddenly and based on a nudge, engages in the recovery of energies and rhythms of the semiotic order and takes on the role of a mother in the face of a solitary infant: he feeds the baby, holds it in his arms, and sings melodic lullabies. Although Ashour is not a woman, he immerses himself in the maternal role and employs the language of signs to nurture and keep the infant alive.

Ashour succeeds in creating a sense of satisfaction in the baby and is present during the golden stage of signification alongside the infant. In other words, no experience of objectification or rejection of the object has yet occurred from the

infant's side. Contrary to Lacan's mirror theory, the child recognizes its body parts and distinguishes itself from others at six months during the mirror stage. However, according to Kristeva's views, this event is premature and occurs when the infant, around three or four months old, rejects the embrace of the mother or the bottle. In the relationship between Ashour and the infant, objectification and abjection have not yet taken place, and in this way, the author has created a paradise of non-intrusive relationship amidst the war, demonstrating that the role of mother and child, belonging to the signifying order, prevails over the conflict of forces in war, which represents the symbolic order.

The death of the infant is, in fact, an idealization and eternalization of the mother-child relationship. It marks the end and a barrier to the beginning of the duality of object and subject, or the duality of affection and disgust towards the mother (due to objectification). It is a kind of stabilization and eternalization of the unity of the mother-child relationship. For this reason, this event transforms Ashour's character. He has shifted from a subject dominated by the symbolic order to someone for whom the signifying order is always and everywhere accompanied by the sign of the baby's cry. For Ashour, the world has become a different place. Fighting for the Ba'athists is meaningless; meaning is trapped in a moment of the baby's cry. As a result of this change in identity, Ashour is determined to change his world: to escape from a society dominated by the symbolic order to find a better relationship with the signifying order in another place, and perhaps discover an eternal core.

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3. The Painter, the Refugee of Art

The painter with the last name Kouhi is a young man from Ilam whose life story reflects the culture and mindset of the people of Ilam in the 1980s. One day, he accidentally sees a high school girl named Sabri and falls in love with her. He keeps this secret to himself for a long time, but his teacher, classmates, and father notice a change in his behavior. His father insists on an explanation, but the young man refuses to respond. He thinks to himself, "Now that my mother is gone, at least I have the image of Sabri. That can give me some peace." (Ghasemi, 87:1385) After struggling with himself for a while, he decides to inform Sabri. He draws a design on paper and writes "I love you," placing it among Sabri's books at school, unaware that his actions will have disastrous consequences. Sabri commits self-immolation, and relatives and classmates start spreading rumors about the relationship between the two. This is the past of the painter, which the refugees become acquainted with in a basement in Istanbul. The young man makes a living by painting and happens to earn a good income as well.

All of this young man's paintings depict a single image: a beautiful girl wearing a local Kurdish scarf adorned with poppy flowers, whose petals resemble flames, set against an ambiguous background. Hani, who likes the painting and is curious about the romantic phrase beneath it, asks the young man why he keeps painting the same image. The young man's response is rooted in his past; his painting is of the Ilami girl whose poppy flowers always burn like flames. The young man is well aware of the fate of many innocent Ilami girls whose destinies in the 1980s were nothing but fire. The repetition of a single design in all the paintings reflects a familiar and pervasive situation.

Due to the pressure and strictness of the symbolic order and her father's law, Sabri cannot be the object of the young man's love. Ghasemi effectively halts the narrative at a point that has yet to take shape. This premature ending of the narrative illustrates the oppression and cruelty of the patriarchal society of the 1980s in Ilam, which suppressed inherent and natural drives and desires in the realm of the symbolic order.

Although Kristeva's commitment is primarily towards producing content related to psychoanalysis or aesthetics and has not emphasized the concept of revolt from the

beginning, in her later works, she introduces revolt to steer her discourse towards social and political issues as well. (Keltner, 1:2009) The repression of the symbolic order, from the perspective of Kristeva's psychoanalysis, will soon lead to the disobedience and defiance of the subject. As we have seen earlier, Kristeva considers defiance to be a general term that can have personal or political connotations. In her view, since art encompasses pleasure and protest simultaneously, it represents the best form of revolt in our contemporary era. In addition to these characteristics, art has a calming aspect and serves as an escape from the bitterness of the symbolic order towards the chora of the semiotic period.

In explaining the interaction between the semiotic and the symbolic, Kristeva uses the term signification to elucidate the flow of meaning. According to her, signification is the result of the heterogeneous functioning of language in the two domains of the semiotic and the symbolic. (Barret, 2011: 14) It is heterogeneous because the manner of significations in these two realms is entirely different. This dual expression in art helps convey something that other communicative texts are unable to articulate. (Kristeva, 18:1984) This statement holds more truth in the realm of painting, as the linguistic signification is not prioritized, and language is not utilized as a medium of art. Lines, colors, and shapes communicate with the audience, and their type of signification is semiotic, meaning they are connected to our pre-linguistic emotions, desires, and memories.

In the modern era, political protest increasingly transforms into artistic protest. (Kristeva, as cited by Schippers, 55) A subject experiencing a sense of loss (for example, of a mother or beloved) begins to recover their identity through artistic transcendence. (Beardsworh, 2009:128) This improvement occurs by altering the destructive aspect of loss and working on its positive aspect, which is love. This is the property of art that creates a constructive aspect from destruction. (Ibid) According to Kristeva, the relationship between love and art is as follows: the barriers that make romantic relationships impossible pave the way for poetic expression and the symbolic language of poetry. (Lechte, 2004:349) Loss has directed the young man towards painting. At the same time, the cultural reality regarding the popular culture of Ilam, which is related to the symbolic realm, is illustrated through the symbolic choice of the girl's scarf or ‘Golwani’ and the flame of fire. Although, in reality, the symbolic realm does not suffer harm, art is where the forces of the signifying realm reach an explosion and reveal and express themselves. (Habib, 2012: 256)

4. Nature

Most events in the novel *Booma shin* take place in a non-urban settings. The stories of various individuals indicate that they were either born and raised in nature and the pastoral environment or sought refuge in nature after fleeing from their past. The spaces and locations are divided into two categories: mountainous landscape and urban. The urban space is closed, frightening, and suffocating, like the silo where refugees reside in Ankara, or the cramped and dark minibus that prevents them from connecting with the outside world, or like the small basement in Istanbul that accommodates a large population. On the other hand, the description of the mountains and pastoral life within them is non-romantic, naturalistic, and somewhat utilitarian. The father and son hunters in the eighth chapter are a good example of this perspective on nature. Nature serves as a source of sustenance and a place for the hunter to showcase his power. Despite the hunter understanding the language of nature and the mountain partridge trying to alert the hunter's son with its song, there is no romantic image of the beauty of nature or a friendly bond between humans and nature. This non-romantic, naturalistic perspective is entirely consistent with the themes and motifs chosen in the work.

The refugee characters in *Booma shin* are in flight and, from the beginning of the work, are transferred from one enclosure to another; from one cage-like place to another. From Heidegger's perspective, having a place to dwell means being meaningful and existing. He states that belonging to a place does not merely mean having a home somewhere, but that a person's natural environment and cultural background create a metaphysics of place and provide a semantic unity for existence and residence. (Field: 167: 2015) The

refugees in the work do not have a place to reside, and for this reason, their existence is at risk. Hani believes they are imprisoned without being incarcerated. (Ghasemi, 18: 1385)

The protagonists eschew the naturalistic environment, imbued with the violence of the symbolic order, and embark on a quest for an unknown utopia. Their journey constitutes a failed attempt to reach a destination that chora associates with a maternal, idyllic haven. Unfettered access to this idealized chora remains unattainable, rendering the journey incomplete. The sole pain-free and prosperous space remains untouched by the symbolic order of the external world and uncontaminated by its pervasive taint. Amidst war, occupation and bloodshed, this derelict location becomes the nucleus of a world that transforms Ashoor's character.

Throughout the novel, we observe a recalling conflation of characters and their respective narratives. This is not a mere metaphorical comparison intended to juxtapose distinct entities; rather it is a unifying identification that interconnects the characters' situations. For instance, upon seeing Sakar, Hani recalls her mother. In this instance, Sakar simultaneously represents herself, Hani's mother, and the image of a weary, solitary migrant woman. Similarly, while riding a minibus, Hani identifies it with mother's womb: "Wasn't this battered minibus with its drowned curtains, the same as the dark, confined hidden cell?" (Ghasemi, 18)

In the ruins, he sees himself as an infant seeking to suckle his mother's breast. This example shows us both his current situation and him as a needy infant requiring his mother's milk. These identifications intertwine the fates of some characters, and their similarities can even merge them. Especially since some characters in the work mirror each other and have similar pasts. For example, Hani and Ashoor, who both stole as children, are now alone and wandering; or like the Iranian soldier, who wants to find a specific flower for his daughter, and Ashoor, the Iraqi soldier, the commonality between the two is their relationship to their children.

As mentioned in the section of Hani, he desires a return to the maternal chora and finds no place for himself in a world confined by the atrocities of the symbolic. On the other hand, Ashoor has experienced mothering an infant. Hani's desire to return to the semiotic chora connects him with Habib, the infant in the cradle. Hani longs for a world without flaws, a place where rigid symbolic order has no place. Hani's yearning for a golden age aims to fill the void of his missing maternal chora and his identity crisis. Habib, the infant, on the other hand, benefits from the blessing of having a care-giver.

Conclusion

Booma Shin vividly portrays the indigenous culture, urban, rural, and nomadic life in Ilam and other Kurdish regions, taking into account places and spaces while also showcasing the psychological characteristics of its characters. In this novel, Ghasemi effectively narrates themes such as suffocating and constricted spaces, alienation, art and revolt, life in nature, and civilization, which are subjects of interest in Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic critique. The characters in *Booma Shin* reveal their relationships with individuals, events, nature, the future, and geographical boundaries through separate and distinct narratives, simultaneously presenting a subjective view of the culture, customs, and lifestyle of the people. The sense of displacement and the longing to settle in an ideal place intertwine the identities of the characters with the semiotic chora, bringing them together in life and death. The impact of childhood memories and the weights and rhythms of semiotics shape the social behavior and social identity of all characters. Hani, Ashur, and the artist are all products of their childhood experiences, and the connection between their past and present is inseparable. This confirms the strong presence of semiotic rhythms in the lives of adults.

The parallelism between the past and present of some characters in the work indicates that there is a cultural solidarity and similarity among the people of the Kurdish regions depicted in the novel. Their similar experiences reinforce the Kristevan theme of dependence on the semiotic chora. The desire to return to the mother, the act of mothering for the infant, and the description of the relationship between the infant and the child all affirm the existence of a connection between the semiotic and symbolic realms, as well as a

revolt against the symbolic order, which is a rebellion against the paternal and symbolic, and an effort to regain access to the semiotic chora shape the major themes of the novel.

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