



T.C.  
SÜLEYMAN DEMİREL ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI

ANALYSING MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM'S *THE HOURS*, ALI BADER'S *THE TOBACCO KEEPER* AND GRAHAM SWIFT'S *THE WATERLAND* AS  
POSTMODERNIST *BILDUNGSROMAN*

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DOKTORA TEZİ

DANIŞMAN  
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**MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM'IN SAATLER, ALI BADER'IN TÜTÜN BEKÇİSİ  
VE GRAHAM SWIFT'IN SU DİYARI ROMANLARININ POSTMODERN  
OLUŞUM ROMANI OLARAK İNCELENMESİ**

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DOKTORA TEZ SAVUNMA SINAV TUTANAĞI

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Yeni Tez Başlığı <sup>1</sup> (Eğer değişmesi önerildi ise)	Analysing Michael Cunningham's The Hours, Ali Bader's The Tobacco Keeper and Graham Swift's The Waterland as Postmodernist Bildungsroman	
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## YEMİN METNİ

Doktora tezi olarak sunduğum “*Michael Cunningham*’ın “*Saatler*”, *Ali Bader*’in “*Tütün Bekçisi*” ve *Graham Swift*’in “*Su Diyarı*” Romanlarının *Postmodern Oluşum Romanı Olarak İncelenmesi*” adlı çalışmanın, tezin proje safhasından sonuçlanmasına kadar ki bütün süreçlerde bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurulmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin Bibliyografya’da gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve onurumla beyan ederim.

Nabeel Nassr Noaman AL-DULAIMI

07.07.2017

(AL DULAIMI, Nabeel Nassr Noaman, *Analysing Michael Cunningham's The Hours, Ali Bader's The Tobacco Keeper and Graham Swift's The Waterland as Postmodernist Bildungsroman*, Ph.D. Thesis, ISPARTA, 2017)

## ABSTRACT

*Bildungsroman* as a literary genre never stops appealing to writers throughout the ages and across cultures. The subject of tracing the life and mental development of a character from childhood to adulthood has been repeatedly tackled by writers of different ages and nations. In the age of postmodernism this type of novel still holds an important place in the fictional world of many writers. Though the treatment of the bildung hero's life differs from that of previous ages, one could trace the development of the bildung hero in the novels of such postmodernist writers as Michael Cunningham, Ali Bader and Graham Swift. This study aims to analyze three postmodern Bildungsroman: *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham, *The Tobacco Keeper* by Ali Bader, and *Waterland* by Graham Swift. The selected novels for this study are important since the novels are written by authors from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

The study falls into five chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one is an introduction to the study, Chapter two provides a theoretical background and is divided into two sections. The first section deals *with* the concept of the *Bildungsroman* and its development through history. Section two is devoted to the discussion of postmodernism with special reference to selected fiction. The third chapter examines *The Hours* as a postmodernist *Bildungsroman* with reference to the *bildung* heroes' development in space and time. The fourth chapter is devoted to Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* (2008) and its description as a postmodernist *Bildungsroman* in which the artist (violinist) lives three different lives under three different names and identities which constitute three successive stages of his artistic development. Chapter five examines the *Waterland* by Graham Swift as a postmodernist Bildungsroman which reflects the postmodern individual's infinite quest to understand himself and the world.

The present study aims to trace and analyze the employment of the *Bildungsroman* genre in Cunningham's *The Hours* and Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper*,

Swift's *The Waterland* and how each of them conveys different psychological, spiritual, existential and cultural problems.

**Keywords:** Bildungsroman, postmodernism, *The Hours*, *The Tobacco Keeper*, *Waterland*



(AL DULAIMI, Nabeel Nassr Noaman, *Michael Cunningham'in Saatler, Ali Bader'in Tütün Bekçisi ve Graham Swift'in Su Diyarı Romanlarının Postmodern Oluşum Romanı Olarak İncelenmesi*, Doktora Tezi, ISPARTA, 2017)

## ÖZET

Bir edebi tür olarak *Oluşum Romanı* her dönem ve her kültürde yazarları cezbetmeyi sürdürmektedir. Bir karakterin çocukluğundan yetişkinliğine uzanan yaşantısını ve zihinsel gelişimini izlemek farklı dönemlerden ve farklı uluslardan yazarların tekrar tekrar ele aldığı bir konudur. Bu edebi tür, postmodernizm döneminde de pek çok yazarın kurgusal dünyasında önemli bir yere sahiptir. Ancak postmodernizm çerçevesinde, kahramanın yaşamı eski dönemlere göre farklı bir şekilde ele alınmaktadır. Oluşum kahramanının gelişimini; Michael Cunningham, Ali Bader ve Graham Swift gibi postmodern yazarların romanlarında görmek mümkündür. Bu çalışma üç postmodern oluşum romanını incelemektedir: bunlar Michael Cunningham'ın *Saatler*, Ali Bader'in *Tütün Bekçisi* ve Graham Swift'in *Su Diyarı* adlı romanlarıdır. Seçilen bu romanlar, farklı ülkelerden ve kültürel arka planlardan gelen yazarlar tarafından kaleme alınmış olmalarından dolayı önemlidir.

Bu çalışma 6 bölüme ayrılmaktadır. Birinci bölüm, çalışmanın girizgah bölümüdür. İkinci bölüm, teorik arka planı sunmakta olup iki alt bölüme ayrılmaktadır. İlk alt bölüm oluşum romanı kavramını ve tarih içerisindeki gelişimini ele almaktadır. İkinci alt bölüm ise seçilen kurgu eserler üzerinden postmodernizmi ele almaktadır. Üçüncü bölüm, oluşum kahramanının zaman ve mekan içerisindeki gelişimine değinerek *Saatler* adlı eseri postmodern bir oluşum romanı olarak incelemektedir. Dördüncü bölüm, Ali Bader'in *Tütün Bekçisi* (2008) adlı eserini, sanatçının üç farklı isim ve kimlik altında sanatsal gelişiminin birbirini izleyen üç safhasını temsil eden üç farklı isim ve kimlik altında üç farklı yaşam sürdüğü bir postmodern oluşum romanı olarak ele almaktadır. Beşinci bölüm ise Graham Swift'in *Su Diyarı* adlı romanını postmodern bireyin kendisini ve dünyayı anlamak için giriştiği sonsuz mücadeleyi yansıtan postmodern bir oluşum romanı olarak incelemektedir.

Bu çalışma; oluşum romanının Cunningham'ın *Saatler*, Bader'in *Tütün Bekçisi* ve Swift'in *Su Diyarı* adlı romanlarında nasıl uygulandığını ve her birinin farklı

psikolojik, manevi, varoluşsal ve kültürel sorunları nasıl ele aldığını incelemeyi hedeflemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Romanlarınin, Postmodern, Saatler, Tütün Bekçisi, Su Diyari*



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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

TO MY MOTHER'S SOUL

TO MY FATHER

TO MY DEAREST ADVISOR DR. SULE OKUROGLU OZUN,

TO MY DEAREST WIFE, DAUGHTER, SON,

TO MY FRIENDS AND EVERY ONE WHO SUPPORTS ME

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

*Bildungsroman* is generally expressed as a literary genre that concentrates on the moral and psychological development of the hero from childhood to maturity. It is a story about a sensitive person growing up who tries to find the way in this life by questing through many experiences. Mostly such novels start with a tragedy or loss which affects the bildung hero emotionally. The bildung hero goes on a journey to voyage overcome the loss or tragedy. Through this journey, the hero finds the right path in his / her life.

This dissertation aims to trace and analyse the employment of the *Bildungsroman* features in three postmodern novels by Michael Cunningham, Ali Bader and Graham Swift and how each of them exploit the personal life to convey different psychological, spiritual, existential and cultural problems. Also the study intends to highlight the techniques of the postmodernist writing through which the life of the bildung hero is presented. The similarities and differences between Cunningham's *The Hours*, Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* and Graham Swift's *Waterland* and the way each of them tackles with the development of the characters will be highlighted within the course of the discussion.

Cunningham is considered one of the representative American postmodern novelists. He employs the *Bildungsroman* in his novel *The Hours* (1998) in a very implicit and indirect way. The characters in the novel are mainly suffering from spiritual disintegration, psychological breakdown and loss of faith which result in sharpening their existential dilemma and difficulty in finding salvation. The chapter that focuses on *The Hours* is divided into two sections, the first one traces the employment of the *Bildungsroman* in Cunningham's novel *The Hours* in which his bildung heroes are shaped after Virginia Woolf and her *Mrs. Dalloway* with reference to the bildung hero's development in space and time. The peculiar craftsmanship is clearly seen through the characters who are enmeshed in the same net of spiritual dimness. The second section discusses *The Hours* as a postmodernist novel with special reference to its employment

of focalization, stream of consciousness and intertextuality as being some of the main features of postmodernist fiction.

The next chapter is devoted to Ali Bader and his novel *The Tobacco Keeper* (2008). Bader is one of the well-known postmodern Iraqi novelists who is also a well reputed prize-winner. In *The Tobacco Keeper*, his characters suffer from almost the same spiritual dilemma of Cunningham's characters with an additional cultural dimension arising from an identity crisis that inflicts the characters and makes them resort to art as being the only outlet that could compensate for this sense of unbelongingness. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first is devoted to Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* as a *Bildungsroman* in which the artist (violinist) lives three different lives under three different names and identities which constitute three successive stages of his artistic development. In the context of these three stages, the novel depicts the social, political and cultural history. The second tackles *The Tobacco Keeper* as postmodernist novel with reference also to its employment of the same features used by Cunningham such as focalization, stream of consciousness and intertextuality.

Then the study moves to examine *Waterland*, by Graham Swift, as a postmodernist *Bildungsroman*. Swift in his novel *Waterland* makes use of ancestral stories of the bildung hero Tom Crick, and creates a relation between the paradigms of the past and the present. By narrating ancestral stories, Tom is able to perceive the clumsiness of structural reality.

This dissertation is an attempt to trace the imprints of *Bildungsroman* tradition in three selected postmodern novels: *The Hours*, *The Tobacco Keeper* and *Waterland*.

### **1.1. Aim of the Study**

The present study aims to trace and analyze the use of the *Bildungsroman* genre in Cunningham's *The Hours*, Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper*, Swift's *The Waterland* and how each of them conveys different psychological, spiritual, existential and cultural problems. Also the study intends to highlight the techniques of the postmodernist fiction through which the life of the bildung hero is presented. The similarities and differences

between the novels and the way each of them tackles his characters' transformation will be highlighted within the course of the discussion.

## **1.2 The Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study is that it traces *Bildungsroman* features and the bildung hero development in postmodernism. The selected novels for this study are important since each novel is written by an author from a different country. The selected works, Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* and Graham Swift's *Waterland* are going to be examined to analyse the traces of *Bildungsroman* tradition in such postmodernist texts and how these novels deconstruct and reconstruct the tradition in a metafictional way.

## **1.3 Methodology of Study**

In this study, postmodernist and historical approaches were applied. This dissertation deconstructively examines the transformation of Bildung hero in his environment. The structure that the researcher followed in this thesis to approach is through the discussion of (1) the basic idea of *Bildungsroman* hero image, (2) the history of the *Bildungsroman* genre in general, (3) the idea of *Bildungsroman* hero in each novel alone, (4) How the writers deconstruct and deal with the hero image in their postmodernist novels.

## **1.4 The Limitations of the Study**

There are a number of limitations of the study. First, the American writer Michael Cunningham and his novel *The Hours*, the Iraq writer Ali Bader and his novel *The Tobacco Keeper* and the British writer Graham Swift and his novel *Waterland*, their works are not well known in the literary world. For this reason, there are adequate sources on the subject to explore in order to get a deeper insight into the issue. We mainly relied on the primary sources, periodicals and some internet sources. Second, there is a huge material on the formation of the *Bildungsroman* fiction as well as non-fiction.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF BILDUNGSROMAN

#### 2.1 Bildungsroman: Problems of Definition

Like numerous literary terms which resist clear cut definitions, the term *Bildungsroman* has been a subject of disagreements and disputes among scholars and critics. However, there are some who agreed on some certain aspects related to the term and the genre it denotes, and these aspects are better to be discussed to understand how *Bildungsroman* has transformed in time.

*Bildungsroman* has been a subject of fascination and interest for both readers and critics. This interest is due to a numbers of factors: the psychological presentation, explanation, and exploration of areas of the human mind and personality, to the wide range of possibilities it offers for the interpretation of certain aspects in the characters' behavior and development; and also to its depiction of the temporal and spatial worlds which lie close enough to the human world for these worlds to merge easily and silently with it. In an attempt to approach the essence of the *Bildungsroman*, many scholars try to trace the history of storytelling, among whom is Michael Bakhtin (1895-1975) who proposes three kinds of novel: the novel of ordeal, the biographical novel and lastly the family novel, which is culminated in the *Bildungsroman* or the self-cultivation novel (Jeffers, 2005:2).

Out of this last stretch the genre of the *Bildungsroman* has come to develop and take shape. Etymologically speaking, the word "*Bildungsroman*" comes from German, from *bildung* education + *Roman* novel (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*); or from German : *Bildung*, formation (from Middle High German *bildunge*, from Old High German *bildunga*, from *bilidon*, to shape, from *bilodi*, form, shape) + Roman, novel (from French, a story in the vernacular, novel) (*The Free Online Dictionary*). In both cases, the term refers to a literary genre in which the character development is traced from childhood till maturity in a work of fiction. As a literary term, *Bildungsroman* means "A novel whose principal subject is the moral, psychological, and intellectual development of a usually youthful main character" (Jeffers, 2005: 8). According to J. A.

Cuddon the term *Bildungsroman* is a German term which means 'formation novel', which follows the maturation of the bildung hero especially the hero or heroine through various stages of life. This term, Cuddon adds, is more or less synonymous with *Erziehungsroman*—which refers to an 'upbringing' or 'education' novel— whereas the former term refers to "a novel which is an account of the youthful development of a hero or heroine (usually the former). It describes the processes by which maturity is achieved through the various ups and downs of life" (Cuddon, 1999: 81-2).

Edward Quinn, in his *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms* proposes a simple definition of the term in question, stating that *Bildungsroman* (education novel) is:

A German term for a type of novel that focuses on the development of a character moving from childhood to maturity. Sometimes known as a coming of age novel, the form usually charts a movement from innocence to knowledge. Prominent examples include Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849–50), James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), and Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1959). (Edward, 2006:93)

In the above-cited definition, the phrase "coming of age" is used as a synonym of *Bildungsroman* denoting the fact that the novel traces a character development till he/she reaches to an age, i.e., adulthood or artistic maturity. So, it is a prerequisite of a *Bildungsroman* to follow up the character from an early stage of life, mostly birth or even before birth, till adulthood. M. H. Abrams, in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, asserts that the *Bildungsroman* illustrates:

the development of the bildung hero's mind and character, in the passage from childhood through varied experiences- and often through a spiritual crisis—into maturity, which usually involves recognition of one's identity and role in the world. (Abrams, 1999:139)

Although many scholars and researchers consider Abram's definition a model to be followed and applied, many others have found it difficult to agree with him on more specific details, such as the extent to which American novels are able to fit within traditional German definition of *Bildungsroman*.

It is worth mentioning here that there are subtypes or variations that are associated with 'Bildungsroman' all focusing on the character development of an individual, such as an *Entwicklungsroman* or "development novel", a story of general growth rather than self-cultivation. There is also an *Erziehungsroman*, "education novel" which concentrates on training and formal schooling, and *Künstlerroman*, "artist novel" which traces development of an artist and shows a growth of the self (Abrams, 1999: 193). The *Künstlerroman* is a Bildungsroman whose main concern is the growth of an artist, regardless of the art he/she exposes, temporarily and spatially from childhood into the stage of maturity that signals the recognition of the bildung hero's artistic destiny and mastery of an artistic craft. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Künstlerroman* is: German: "artist's novel", class of *Bildungsroman*, or apprenticeship novel, that deals with the youth and development of an individual who becomes—or is on the threshold of becoming—a painter, musician, or poet. The classic example is James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). The type originated in the period of German Romanticism with Ludwig Tieck's *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* (1798; "Franz Sternbald's Wanderings"). Later examples are Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890) and Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929). Unlike many *Bildungsroman*, where the hero often dreams of becoming a great artist but settles for being a mere useful.

In other words, regardless of the subtype, whether *Erziehungsroman* or *Künstlerroman*, the genre of *Bildungsroman* encompasses the story of development of a character from an early stage of life up to a kind of maturity. There must be a line of development traced in the course of the novel, and this line is usually explicit and clear as it passes through different phases of life. However, sometimes this line is implicit, fragmented and requires careful attention to be highlighted, as with the post-modern novels discussed in the present study.

Because of the variety of definitions of the term, and the large disagreement about its nature, and in the light of the above-stated definitions given by critics and scholars, it is safe to say that the present study adopts a definition distilled from the above-given definitions. Therefore, the present study will use the term *Bildungsroman* as far as it indicates a story of a single individual's growth and development within the course of the novel, in context of some specific social orders. This development traces in a way or another process of coming-of age, or maturity of the individual in question. It could also be fragmented, implicit and scattered in accordance with the requirements of the narrative technique used in the novel as observed in postmodernist texts.

## 2.2 *Bildungsroman*: Historical Background

Traditionally, the *Bildungsroman* has indicated the maturation process of young boys through adolescence, and culmination with the achievement of self-identity. The end of the eighteenth century, in 1795 witnessed the emergence of the concept of *Bildungsroman* with Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship". In 1870, Wilhelm Dilthey, a German philosopher, in a research, claimed that the abovementioned novel by Goethe was the first novel that initiated the genre of *Bildungsroman* (Au, 2011: 4).

Because of the various definitions of the term *Bildungsroman*, and since there was no agreement on a particular interpretation of the term, a variety of interpretations are used. Among those varied interpretations and functional expressions are "a novel of formation", "development of artist from childhood to adulthood" and later "coming-of-age process" which is more used by the American novel.

The genre's ambiguous characteristics have given rise to questions about its relevance to twentieth-century literature and criticism, and increasing numbers of critics inquire whether the "*Bildungsroman*" designation is "effective as a descriptive technical term" (Hardin, 1991: x). For instance, Hartmut Steinecke explains that even German scholars who specifically examine nineteenth-century German novels have begun to object the idea of a true *Bildungsroman* genre, and German scholar Friedrich Sengle refers to a "literary-historical mythology" surrounding the genre (Steinecke, 1991: 70).

Some purist German critics believe that this term is restricted to its local ambient and it is too difficult to apply in contexts of contemporary literature, as Susan Cohlman claims:

It is the nature of the *Bildungsroman* to become 'dated' because it is based on the idea that nothing in the external world remains constant. The particular *Bildungsprozess* that was right for *Wilhelm [Meister]* would not and could not be right for the individual growing up twenty, fifty or a hundred years later. The hero of the *Bildungsroman* is at all times representative; he is never universal. (Cohlman, 1990: 20)

In fact, Cohlman's above-cited opinion seems lacking objectivity as the term itself has not been agreed upon and remained fluctuating beside novels whose bildung heroes do not necessarily follow the same path as the genre originally describes. Moreover, the word '*Bildungsroman*' has been borrowed into English with a wider meaning than the original German one. Such a borrowing is quite normal, and words often change their meanings when they travel from one language to another. With regard to the word '*Bildungsroman*,' many people seem unwilling to accept it, and see the English usage as wrong (Bonar, 2002: 7).

Dilthey in his *Poetry and Experience* presents an ideological dimension of the genre beside the aesthetic one. The nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*, he suggests, is a product of the sociological circumstances in Germany, and therefore has to be explicitly contrasted with the high realistic works produced in England and France. In particular, Dilthey asserts that the repressive state of power and the lack of a convenient public vein during the Romantic period result in the creation of novels that tackled self-centered bildung heroes who retreat from active engagement with the social world (Dilthey 390). During the Wilhelmine Empire, the Weimar Republic and the Nazi reign, German scholars occupied themselves with differentiating between ever finer gradation of *bildung* and with enhancing the thesis that the novel of formation possesses an inherent national particularity, this was often done in an expressly chauvinist fashion. The *Bildungsroman* was celebrated as the German answer to decadent French and English "novel of society" (Boes, 2006: 232).

The interpretation of the term *bildung* and its employment in English has not been proven an easy task, but in an eighteenth-century context it can be generally defined as a "verbal noun" meaning 'formation' transferring the formation of external features to the features of the personality as a whole" (Hardin, 1991: xi). *Bildung* also connotes the cultural and spiritual values of a specific people and social stratum in a given historical epoch and by extension the achievement of learning about that same body of knowledge and acceptance of the value system it implies (Hardin, 1991: xii)

Most American novels which are classified as *Bildungsroman* genre do not completely comply with this latter definition of *bildung*. Nevertheless, recognizing a particular value system is not so integral to a more contemporary American coming-of-

age process. Therefore, despite what purist critics argue, James Hardin suggests that “it may not be logically defensible to define the *Bildungsroman* as a novel embodying the ideals of *bildung* presumably extant in the age of German Classicism” (Hardin, 1991: xii). Hardin's argument testifies that the *Bildungsroman* as a hybrid genre is so responsive to the historical and cultural environment. Thus, each culture or country produces its own tradition of *Bildungsroman* since transformation of the hero is environment dependent.

The evolution of the genre in England and America follows different paths as far as the history of politics and the novel are concerned. The idea of *bildung* was translated by Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), J. S. Mill (1806 – 1873), and Walter Pater (1839-1894) into the idea of Culture, an idea that was later realized in the fiction of Charles Dickens (1812-1870), William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863), George Eliot (1819-1880), George Meredith (1828-1909), Henry James (1843-1916), and (in the next century) by E. M. Forster (1879-1970), Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), George Santayana (1863-1952), Saul Bellow (1915-2005), Margaret Drabble(1939-), and other less remarkable authors. The liberal tradition of Western culture, the flexibility of the society, the Protestant interest in and respect for personal differences, the unfolding of the biographical and the family novel—helped American writers not only sustain the collective Weimar classicists’ case for the cultivation of the individual, but also helped them open new vistas in understanding the ramifications of individuality in fresh novel contexts. (Jeffers, 2005: 4).

There is a general tendency among critics and scholars to consider the *Bildungsroman*, or the novel of formation, a nineteenth-century phenomenon which ceases to exist in subsequent ages, simply because the modernists and post-modernists are more obsessed with the fragmentation of the line of the development of time within the novel. They care for "synchronic models of human experience (epiphany, vortex, shock)" and for the so called "small-scale diachrony (the stream of consciousness)" (Boes, 2006: 231), of more than caring for the linear or sequential time development. Therefore, the form of *Bildungsroman*, being interested in the minute and long-term changes that inflict the character, whether physical, spiritual or psychological, could no

more exist and cope with the requirements of modernist and post-modernist models, according to them (Boes, 2006: 245).

In fact, the above-mentioned argument is far from being adequate, and it is simply refuted by the most famous modernist examples of *Bildungsroman* such as James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), Thomas Mann's *Tonio Kroger* (1903); *The Magic Mountain* (1924); and *Dr. Faustus* (1947), André Gide's *The Counterfeiters* (1926), Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-27) and D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913) which is considered a *Bildungsroman* of the subtype of *Künstlerroman* ("artist-novel") according to (Abrams, 1999: 193).

As for the suitability and viability of *Bildungsroman* for the purposes of post-modernist fiction, there are many examples of works that can be read as *Bildungsroman* novels, however fragmented and implicit the development line of the bildung hero may be, and this is particularly true of Cunningham's *The Hours* (1998) and Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* (2008). The analysis of these novels is the main goal of this study. If the *Bildungsroman* never ceases to attract novelists, it has been also a rich field of study for critics and scholars of different approaches. In this regard, there are two tendencies or schools that viewed this genre from two main perspectives.

The first one asserts that this genre is upheld to strict historical standards, in other words, it believes that "the term should still refer to the traditional German concepts of bildung" (Bonar, 2002: 5) and its original meanings and rules as they appeared in the early German models of the genre. According to this view, the term "*Bildungsroman*" must be abandoned and left for its original creators, i.e., the eighteenth-century German novelists whose works are most revealing of it. But this suggestion of abandoning it entirely does not sound a good one, according to Carly M. Bonar who diagnoses some problems with it. One of these problems is that: "Authors writing about youth bildung heroes in the twentieth-century would not benefit from having their novels included in a genre that has historically been granted much critical respect" (Bonar, 2002: 8). Hence, the term would be invalid as a classification for most of the contemporary literature. Consequently, many contemporary authors' novels would miss the advantage of working from a historical framework, and their novels lose their historicity, and this means: "Their novels would essentially lose their history-- the

progression of literature that has made room for the creation of contemporary youth bildung heroes" (Bonar, 2002: 10).

Also, if those contemporary novels are not categorized as *Bildungsroman* novels, it will be difficult to trace the path of development of this significant genre. Consequently, the authors "whose books are acknowledged for successfully working within such a genre earn critical validation, and contemporary authors may consequently suffer from a complete resignation of the genre" (Bonar, 2002: 14).

On the other hand, the other approach to *Bildungsroman* implies that it is an evolutionary genre which has encountered a process of steady growth and development. This process makes it justifiable to include other novels which trace a line or lines of development in the bildung hero's life story, and this definitely clarifies the complication connected with the term. The changes that appeared in the modes of life, the ways of thinking, and the complexities of life, whether materialistic, psychological, spiritual, or cultural, are surely reflected in the changes of the modes and styles of writing. Buckley asserts that "the *Bildungsroman* is no longer a novel which depicts the idea of maturity in an educational way but it encompasses many issues like the conflict of generations, provinciality, alienation, loss of identity and the larger society" (Buckley, 1974: 18), such issues that Cunningham, Bader and Swift tackle in their novels are discussed in the coming chapters. In the *Bildungsroman* of the contemporary narratives, the bildung hero is not required to reach maturity through a long journey or to pass through a spiritual crisis; rather, he has already gained understanding of his place in the world and understanding of the way the world works (Bonar, 2002: 7). So, the basic features of the genre which were created in the eighteenth century would witness some adaptations and modifications in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries. Still, the genre will continue to mean the same thing. That is best expressed by Bonar as he writes:

As times have changed, the development of twentieth-century bildung heroes has changed, and authors writing coming-of-age stories at the end of the twentieth century are unquestionably working from the tradition of the *Bildungsroman* genre, despite reasonable incongruities between classical and contemporary bildung heroes. Because modern bildung heroes are different from their predecessors and stories of their adolescence are changing, twentieth-

century literature already calls for an expansion of the *Bildungsroman* genre. As our society continues to evolve, the nature of adolescence and the coming-of-age process will undoubtedly endure, at the very least, subtle changes (Bonar, 2002: 12).

This last view appears more plausible simply because the genre of *Bildungsroman* is still in use by numerous novelists, and it proves to be sufficient for the purposes of their writings, regardless of the era, literary trend or culture. The fact that this genre was developed by German writers and adopted by others of different national and cultural backgrounds, and that it is still used by writers from all over the world, indicates that the genuine artistic forms and genres may travel everywhere. Thus, this thesis will concentrate on the use of *Bildungsroman* elements in two novels written by different novelists coming from different literary traditions and cultures.

### **2.3 *Bildungsroman*: The Bildung Hero vs. Society:**

Because the focal point in every *Bildungsroman* is its bildung hero, in this study much attention is given to it since it is a basic element for each novel that is categorized under this genre. According to a more common definition of *Bildungsroman* it is a novel tracing the development of a specific character, a bildung hero, through the different stages of life from childhood up to maturity. That is why it is also called a coming-of age novel. This tracing is not necessarily chronological; this depends on the kind of time and the narrative techniques used by the writer. However, there must be one bildung hero, and there must be a sort of development in his/her mental, psychological and social life. Therefore, it must be mentioned that the context of that development or the surroundings of the bildung hero are very important in the *Bildungsroman*.

It is the bildung hero who always gives credibility and accuracy to the classification of all narratives. For example, if he is a superhuman or a gigantic figure engaged in a series of battles, it is called an epic. If he/she is a rogue, or a *picaro*, the novel is called a picaresque novel. Similarly, if there is a bildung hero and there is a transformation in his life, and this is the subject matter of the novel, it can be called *Bildungsroman*. The relationship between the bildung hero and his/her surroundings in epics, for example, is that he influences, and changes his surroundings, whereas in

realistic novels, including Bildungsroman, the surroundings influence the bildung hero and may shape his/her life. In this regard, James Hardin states that:

Coming of age novels present more of the people and the surroundings influencing the bildung hero and explaining to us the gradual formation of his inner self that is to be presented. Also, this type of novel shows more events and happenings with their emotional effects on the bildung hero, whom we should see becoming through himself. (Hardin, 1991: 17)

According to Miles and Gottfried's "Defining the *Bildungsroman*" (1976), this genre, unlike picaresque and confessional novels, presents "a progression of connected events that led up to a definite denouement" (Miles, 1976: 122). What connects these events is the bildung hero through his thoughts and reflections, as well as the balanced relations with the surroundings. Such a balance is described as "a peculiar balance between the social and personal, being able to explore interaction" (Miles, 1976:122).

In order to understand the relationship between the bildung hero and his/her surrounding in Bildungsroman, Miles believes that it must be compared with the epic-hero, the picaro, and the confessional bildung hero, because the Bildungsroman by itself is a combination of several other novel genres. For convenience, the following figure, which is based on Miles' taxonomy of the novel, may help present the gist of the comparison (Au, 2011: 6)

<b>Type of Novel</b>	<b>Literary Aspect</b>
<b>Hero</b>	The bildung hero is an influential factor to his surroundings Focuses on the special task or journey Usually chronological
<b>Picaresque</b>	Turned outward toward society Emphasis on materialism Episodic
<b>Confessional</b>	Retrospective Bildung hero is spiritual outsider

	Turned inward toward consciousness, more on the thoughts and reflections
<b>Bildungsroman</b>	Bildung hero is influenced by his surroundings Balanced of both society and consciousness Chronological

The *Bildungsroman* hero is not necessarily heroic like traditional heroic characters and not necessarily a rogue or *picaro* engaged in a series of tricks and adventures on the road. He (or she) is basically a realistic character who is engaged in some real life situations in which he/she may develop complicated relations with the society, family or people in general. With regard to the immediate relations of the bildung hero the family members are important since childhood of the bildung hero will continue to influence his/her future. In this regard, W.C. Hendley tells us that “we often find the bildung hero of the Bildungsroman in an uneasy relationship with his father or without a father at all” (Hendley, 1984: 89). He adds that novelists of this genre usually focus on the main character's early life or past. That is why a careful examination of what the bildung hero has gone through already makes the readers able to see how he/she develops before going through the stage of adolescence and then maturity. So the relationship between the bildung hero and society, according to Dilthey, is that he is engaged in a double task of self-integration and integration with society. The first one, i.e., of self-integration implies the second. For this reason Dilthey reads the Bildungsroman as "a fundamentally affirmative, conservative genre, confident in the validity of the society it depicts, and anxious to lead both hero and reader to a productive place in that society" (Au, 2011: 15).

Also, bildung hero shares common traits with that of autobiographical novels. But the main difference is that in the latter the first-person viewpoint may make it biased and not neutral in its treatment of the bildung hero since it is he/she who tells the story. In the Bildungsroman, the narrator is necessarily an outsider. In this regard, Kearney writes:

An autobiography is a story of the self that is closely related to the *Bildungsroman* in many important formal and thematic ways. The bildung hero of an autobiography commonly starts out as a novice, encounters and overcomes the challenges of adversity, and ends his or her story as a more mature adult character as a result of their experience. (Kearney, 1988: 4)

In his *The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism*, Mikhail Bakhtin argues that the Bildungsroman presents to the reader “the image of man in the process of becoming” (Kearney, 1988: 19) and that it situates its bildung hero on the threshold between different historical eras:

The hero emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself. He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him . . . It is as though the very foundations of the world are changing, and man must change along with them (Bakhtin, 1986: 23).

It can be said that it is the relationship with the society or the outer world which shapes the life of the bildung hero of a *Bildungsroman*. Here, the early childhood experiences are always highlighted as being responsible for much of his/her adulthood psychological and other problems. This is particularly true for Cunningham's female bildung hero in *The Hours*, whose life is exposed through three characters, historical and literary ones in addition to the real life of Clarissa Vaughn, as shown in the next chapter of the present study. Also, the fluctuation in the life of Yousif Sami Salih in Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* has a permanent influence on his subsequent life, as an artist and as a man. Also the life of Tom in Graham Swift's *the Waterland*, reflects the postmodern individual's infinite quest to understand himself and the world.

#### **2.4 Bildungsroman: Current Uses and Functions**

The genre of *Bildungsroman*, since its birth, has continued to appeal to novelists during all ages. It is still used in various languages, by different writers, and for different purposes. Although some of the current novels are not completely and purely Bildungsroman, still they retain that general outline of this genre is based on the idea of development or transformation. Therefore, careful readers can find some literary

elements of *Bildungsroman* mixing with post-modern novels. At the same time, with passing ages and the rise of new trends in fiction, the genre of *Bildungsroman* lost some of its original elements.

According to some critics, the *Bildungsroman* qualities are in a way responsible for popularizing some of the twenty-first century bestsellers novels (Au, 2011: 18). *Harry Potter*, a best seller novel by J. K. Rowling, is a very good example to prove this. This series and other books which revolve around an adolescent undergoing hard situations till he/she reaches maturity are very common and very appealing to reading public. The success of such teenager novels is ascribed to the fact that most of the readers are interested in knowing

about how a character could pass through difficulties to draw lessons from the story, in addition to the entertainment resulting from reading. *Bildungsroman* novels are known to educate their readers about "personal growth and self-consciousness, usually towards adolescents and young adults" (Iverson, 2009: 18). They allow individuals to understand the experience of how to pass through this stormy period to reach maturity. They focus on how the bildung hero departs from the stage of being immaturity and enter adulthood. Because of the complex nature of the *Bildungsroman* novels, they could offer a variety of aspects of knowledge which make them considerably didactic. In order for the novels to be really able to educate they must inform the readers at different levels: psychological, social cultural, philosophical, aesthetical, and historical. The focus is not only limited to the immediate surroundings and problems, but the bildung hero's personal growth and development as well.

Since the *Bildungsroman* conveys the maturation of the bildung hero and his chronological development, it takes into consideration the development of the bildung hero temporarily and spatially. Thus, time and space "are considered influential to the role played by characters and the effect inflicted by the author's specific style of characterization in contemporary point of view (Grillet, 1992: 130).

Time is regarded as the principal character in contemporary novels. The new literary tradition of inward movement and interruption of chronological progression as essential writing technique in the general layout of the novel clearly appeared in Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* and Kafka's *The Trial*. The concept of time in the modern novel

has lost its conventional characteristics. Time does no longer follow the linearity and sometimes it is difficult to recognize the time of the event. So the present time consistently renews, duplicates, develops, and contradicts itself without accumulation to be past or future .i.e. time has lost its real boundaries (Proust, 2003: 131).

This interruption of chronological time sequence is to be found in Cunningham's *The Hours*, when the scene of purchasing flowers with three women in different ages is repeated. Time in the contemporary novel has lost its boundaries and became timeless. Richard's repeating of an excerpt from the letter that Virginia Woolf wrote before her suicide, creates a sense of déjà vu<sup>1</sup>. It can be inferred that the events lack in the merits of time, and time in this case remains unchanged (Cunningham, 1998: 49). The abyss that cannot be crossed looms large between man and his world on the one hand and the human being and insufficiency of the world on the other hand to absorb these aspirations. This can refer to the absurdity of Albert Camus who asserts that absurdity does not exist in the man or things but in the impossibility of finding a relationship between them (Grillet, 1992: 62).

As it is found in Camus's *The Outsider*, the bildung hero (Meursault) practices vague conniving of malice and impression. The relationships between this man and the surrounding things are not innocent and absurdity always leads to disappointment, isolation, rebellion, and finally death. Here the maturation of the bildung hero is associated with celebrating death as a final solution for his existential ordeal (Camus, 2000: 78). The existential predicament of Meursault is also echoed in *The Hours* as in Virginia's and Richard's Suicide and Laura Brawn's escape from her home showing her disinterest and nonconformity toward the conventions. In the light of what is mentioned above, Cunningham's *The Hours* can be viewed as an example of postmodernist Bildungsroman. This novel is a well-reputed one in the literary circles and was well-received by the critics on both sides of the Atlantic in the first decade of the second millennium. They consider it as a daring attempt in the narrative technique besides retelling what is unsaid by three different women belonging to three different epochs in all their details. The novel represents prominently the maturation of the bildung hero or

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<sup>1</sup> The feeling that you have previously experienced something which is happening to you now

a list of bildung heroes although their journeys are occurring in one single day. Nevertheless, the single day encompasses their entire journey of life. The journey of each of them is introduced and highlighted in this single day. The novel reflects the qualities of the Bildungsroman, particularly its subtype *Künstlerroman* in addition to the coming of age aspects. The characteristics of the Bildungsroman can be applied to Clarissa Vaughn and *Künstlerroman* to Mrs. Woolf, while coming of age to Laura Brown. In addition, the autobiography, which is so closely related to the Bildungsroman and coming of age respectively, can also be applied to Richard who represents the autobiography of the novelist himself while Richard's mother Laura Brown represents the novelist's mother as Cunningham declares once. This novel as a manifestation of postmodernist *Bildungsroman* will be further discussed in the next chapter of the present study.

Like Cunningham's *The Hours*, Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* is also considered as a bold attempt in the Iraqi narrative experimentation and the theme as well. Its Bildungsroman elements are more clearly traceable than in the former novel. Whereas *The Hours* retells the lives of three women in three different epochs, who share somehow the same existential predicament, *The Tobacco Keeper* retells the life of a violinist named Yousef Sami Salih who lived under three different names, belonging to three different religious dogmas. But the basic thing these three identities share is that they are passionate artists, and they are unified by the love of Baghdad. They complement each other and there is a linear character development which is divided into three parts. Graham Swift in his novel *the waterland* makes use of ancestral stories of the protagonist Tom Crick and creates a relation between the paradigms of the past and the paradigms of the present. By narrating ancestral stories, Tom is able to perceive the clumsiness of structural reality.

## **2.5 Postmodernism and *Bildungsroman***

Postmodernism as a concept is very ambiguous to be interpreted. "It is relatively a fluctuated concept which has hardly been understood, this is due to the various applications of the term itself which leap immediately to the minds of many people that it means the ideas of fracturing, fragmentation, indeterminacy and popularity" (Malpas, 2005: 4). Primarily, the term of postmodernism as a doctrine is used to illustrate a

particular historical period of Western development in the world of technology, consumption trend, cyber civilization and digital age, while the term of postmodernity as a process is used to illustrate a certain form of the contemporary culture (Hutcheon, 2000: 23-24). In the artistic field, postmodernism cancels the boundaries between the culture of elite and popular culture; art is not restricted to the elite but it has become in the hands of everyone (Huysen, 1986: ix).

Generally speaking, the word 'postmodernism' has been mentioned in the literary circles since the 1960s, but it has not been taken into consideration by the critics or theorists as a doctrine or tendency. Its usage was too little to be used, and in 1970s and 1980s as well: "The postmodernism of 1970s and 1980s offers little cause for either despair or celebration; it does leave a lot of room for questioning" (Hutcheon, 2000: 10). The real celebration of postmodernism as doctrine emerges in the late 1980s and the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the pivotal event that is associated with its emergence: "The Berlin Wall was the most potent symbol of the Cold War and its accompanying suspicion. This was a world uneasy with rapid technological change and ideological uncertainties" (Sim, 2001: 121).

The debate about postmodernity and the confusion with postmodernism began with the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas and Jean François Lyotard. Both of them were involved in differentiating between both terms; postmodernity and postmodernism. Habermas asserted that the term of postmodernism is an extension to modernism in its universal form, and its roots can be traced back to the context of Enlightenment rationality. According to him, the world is still primarily based on the principles of modernism. While Lyotard confirms the notion of postmodernity because postmodernism does no longer exist as a doctrine, but just a process. Lyotard finds out that postmodernity "characterized no grand totalizing narrative but by smaller and multiple narratives which seek no universalizing, stabilization or legitimation" (Hutcheon, 2000: 24). Lyotard asserts that the postmodernist fiction is not committed to the genres specifications.

It is well known that postmodernism as a trend or theory emerges as a reaction or a revolt against modernism. Modernism in its turn systemizes all the levels of life and based on reason as the only source of reasonability. Modernism as a system of thought

and life rejected all what preceded it; it glorifies science and reasonable logic as the ultimate end. Consequently, the man of modernity is no longer the master of his destiny; he is systemized as a machine in the age of inventions. Modernism with its drastic changes and dramatic acceleration brought with it disastrous results the calamities of the two World Wars pushed man to react or revolt against the catastrophes of the results of the reason and science. Science itself stays incapable of answering the existential questions which strike the man of modernity. (Newman, 1985: 107)

For all the above-mentioned, postmodernism comes as a revival to the modern man from his spiritual and existential dilemma. In an attempt to revive the meaning of life and humanity which has been lost through the disintegration and frustration that convey the life of modern man, postmodernism retreats strongly to the remote past and digs out history, religion and its icons besides the past philosophies, seeking answers to the predicament of modern life. Postmodernism, in its perpetual efforts to find out rational answers to irrational questions (questions of death and the unseen), found through its figures that logic and pure reason are no longer the ideal solution which gives reasonability to life under modernity, but the solution lies in mixing faith with reason.

In fact, it is too difficult to pin down any definition to postmodernism; the prefix 'post' indicates that it depends on its predecessor 'modernism'. Therefore, postmodernism comes as a continuation or an addition to modernism. In a broader sense, postmodernism tries to break down current notions and ideologies (Wood, 2009: 81). According to Wallace, the change in attitude between modernism and postmodernism lies in their attitudes towards the crisis in the understanding of meaning and truth. Modernism takes into consideration the restoration of truth and its continuous search for ways to resolve this crisis, whereas postmodernism accepts this crisis as status quo but at the same time tries to destruct the facts that modernism is based on (Wallace, 2001:23). These responses are characteristics of the various attitudes towards the philosophical issues that both currents have to deal with.

The thematic difference between modernism and postmodernism is also explained by Hans Bertens: The postmodern attitude resists the modernist intellectualization of experience and rejects modernism's supposed interest in

transcendent, timeless meanings. Postmodernists' favor provisional meaning, which is, according to Bertens, is the product of social interaction (Bertens, 1997: 8). By alluding to the same idea, Hutcheon says that postmodernist writers first inscribe and then undercut the autonomy of art and the referentiality of history, in such a way that a new mode of questioning/compromise comes into being. This contradictory mode is what Hutcheon calls postmodernism (Hutcheon, 2000: 65).

David Lodge views the shared commitment of both modernists and postmodernists to innovation and a critique of tradition as a reason why the currents have a relationship of continuity. The shared values are important, even if the manifestations of these shared values are different. At a formal level they share self-reflexivity, fragmentation and a concern for both literary and social history (Hutcheon, 2000: 51). The intertextuality that is prevalent in postmodernist works depends on, among other things, modernist texts, otherwise the postmodernist parodic play with convention and history would be impossible.

At a more theoretical level it is possible to argue that postmodernism questions the same issues as modernism. Hutcheon sees the investigation of the cultural assumptions that underlie our models of history, as an example of the concerns shared by modernism and postmodernism. At the same time, postmodernism has also expanded modernism. Hutcheon provides an example of this expansion with regard to the ironic distance that modernism had set up between art and audience. Postmodernism intensified this attitude using "doubledistancing" (Hutcheon, 2002:51). Although postmodernism has alternated between some of modernist techniques, these still constitute its foundations. In other words, there is continuity between the two, Hutcheon believes that the struggle in opinions between those who see postmodernism as a continuous stage of modernism, and those who see it as a break from it is unsettled: "There is still an even more basic underlying opposition between those who believe postmodernism represents a break from modernism, and those who see it in a relation of continuity" (Hutcheon, 2002:25). However, postmodernism has been formulated according to the field of knowledge that the thinker or theorist is engaged in. Brian McHale in his book, *Postmodernist Fiction*, states that the term postmodernism is interpreted by many thinkers and theorists. Each one of them looks at the postmodernism from his point of view:

Thus, there is John Barth's postmodernism, the literature of replenishment; Charles Newman's postmodernism, the literature of an inflationary economy; Jean-François Lyotard's postmodernism, a general condition of knowledge in the contemporary informational régime; Ihab Hassan's postmodernism, a stage on the road to the spiritual unification of humankind; and so on. (McHale, 1987: 4)

In fact, another concept, which is not mentioned by McHale in the previous quote, is deconstruction. The concept, which is developed primarily by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, proposes to decentralize all the conventions that mark the text. Deconstruction has changed the traditional systems of meaning in general. This critique comprises also a shift in the way of thinking to the relationship between language and world (Geyh, 1998: xx).

In literature, postmodernism manifests itself basically in the field of fictional narration rather than in poetry and drama. The world of novel is greater than poetry and drama in depicting and incarnating the complicated and varied worlds and changes that the contemporary life may offer. The postmodernist fiction is the most fertile land where postmodernism plants its seeds. Hence, the following section will concentrate on some features of postmodernist fiction that this study tackles.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *THE HOURS AS A BILDUNGSROMAN*

#### 3.1 The Hours

*The Hours* is a novel written by Michael Cunningham (born November 6, 1950) and published in 1998. It won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the 1999 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. It is received well by critics who considered it a difficult practice in the creative narrative writing. Cunningham's professional writing career started in 1984 with *Golden States*, then he wrote *A Home at the End of the World* in 1990, *Flesh and Blood* in 1995, *The Hours* in 1998, *Specimen Days* in 2005, *By Nightfall* in 2010 and eventually *The Snow Queen* in 2014. Among his novels, *The Hours* marks an important milestone in his history as a writer; it brings him fame as being a notable literary work admired by critics and readers alike (Young, 2003: 5).

*The Hours* traces the activities of three women through one day in each one's life. One of the narrative strands explores a day in 1923 when Virginia Woolf begins to write *Mrs. Dalloway*. The second centers around a day in the life of Laura Brown, an American housewife, in 1949, when she spends part of her time reading *Mrs. Dalloway*. The third narrative line takes place on a day in the late twentieth century when Clarissa Vaughn hosts a party for her poet-friend Richard. The chapter alternate with rough regularity between these three main characters.

The prologue details the suicide of Virginia Woolf. She leaves notes for her husband then she walks to a nearby river. She selects large stones from the bank, places them in her pocket, and wades selects large stones from the bank, places them in her pocket, and wades into the water (Cunningham, 1998: 3-8)<sup>2</sup>. The chapter retells the early mornings of the three main characters alternately and regularly. Clarissa Vaughn leaves her New York apartment to buy flowers for a party she hosts in the honour of her best friend Richard, a poet and novelist dying of AIDS, and who has received a

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<sup>2</sup>The study depends primarily on the first edition of Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*. Picador, 1998.

prestigious literary award for his life's work. She goes over to Richard's apartment to pick him up for the party to find him sitting on the windowsill. He tells her that he loves her and jumps out of the window to his death (Cunningham, 1998: 195-203).

The novel turns to Virginia Woolf on a morning nearly twenty years before she commits suicide when she is writing *Mrs. Dalloway*. She wakes up thinking about how to begin her new novel, which will detail a day in the life of a woman named Clarissa Dalloway. Because of Virginia's health Leonard has moved her from London to the suburbs, even though she desperately wants to return to the city. After lunch, Vanessa Bell surprises her sister Virginia by arriving early for tea. Vanessa's three children while playing in the garden find a dying bird and make a grass bed for the bird with Virginia's help. After burying the dead bird in the garden, she wanders to the train station, where she contemplates taking a train to London. Leonard follows her to the station and brings her back to the house. Virginia Woolf has convinced Leonard to move back to London later. After some thought, she decides that Clarissa will not commit suicide, but that someone insane and sensitive will do so instead (Cunningham, 1998: 113-186).

The attention turns to Laura Brown, a mother living in Los Angeles after World War II. She is married to Dan, a war veteran. She feels that her role as a housewife suffocates her. She thinks that she should be happy, because her husband is kind, her son, Richard, loves her and she is expecting a baby. Laura feels that something is wrong with her but tries to convince herself that she is normal. She seeks comfort in books, specifically Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Through reading, she can step out of her life and critically examine her own experiences. The subject matter of suicide also forces her to consider the idea that she wants to find a way out of her own life. Eventually, Laura attempts suicide and ultimately leaves her family to move to Canada. In the final chapter, an older Laura comes to stay at Clarissa's apartment in the wake of her son Richard's death. After they speak, Clarissa reflects on the meaning of the passage of time (Cunningham, 1998: 217-226).

*The Hours* presents a new attempt to manifest "character development" which is scattered within the episodes. However, this development is available but needs a careful reading to trace it. This is in a sense a *Bildungsroman* element. The next section

of this study will be devoted to the analysis of *The Hours* as a *Bildungsroman* which conveys the development of characters until reaching a further level. Moreover, it depicts the impact of time and space on the characters. The second section tackles the postmodern features in the novel and how these features reveal the development of three major characters as bildung heroes of their postmodern stories.

### **3.2. The Hours as a Bildungsroman**

Though Cunningham does not label *The Hours* as a *Bildungsroman*, it can be considered so. The characteristics of the genre and its subtype can be applied to the novel. The journey of the three women and Richard is taking place in a single day of their lives; however, the memories of the characters expose the entire journey. Clarissa Vaughn and Laura Brown are good examples to prove that this novel can be considered a *Bildungsroman* in which the development of the character is obviously seen. Clarissa, who lives totally in the past, is moving and living according to her romantic relationship with Richard that occurs when they were young. Cunningham manages to incarnate Virginia Woolf's ability to create distinctive pasts for her characters. According to Steven Monte, an American literary critic, Woolf's skilfulness in creating distinctive pasts "can be linked to Proustian uses of memory" (Steven, 2000: 592). Cunningham, like Marcel Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past*, succeeds in re-depicting the images that are depicted in the past, and he presents them in the present in enormous metaphorical moments that are too difficult to be recorded.

Undoubtedly, Cunningham's admiration of *Mrs. Dalloway* stems primarily from Virginia Woolf's marvellous ability to mould the past and present in just a single day without leaving gaps in the narrative structure or falling in monotonous repetition; the same

thing is done by Cunningham who emulates the past and present in just a single day efficiently without his work being an imitation or pastiche. J. Hillis Miller casts light on this technique: "Repeatedly during the day of the novel's action, the reader finds himself within the mind of a character that has been invaded and engulfed by a memory so vivid that it displaces the present of the novel and becomes the virtual present of the reader experience" (Hillis, 1985: 59).

### 3.2.1 Clarissa as Bildungsroman in Mrs. Dalloway

The first character that is tackled by Cunningham is Clarissa Vaughn who, in fact, is created after *Mrs. Dalloway's* Clarissa. Clarissa Vaughn is a New Yorker in her forties. She lives in a modest apartment with her daughter and her friend Sally. Although she gets married later to another man and has a daughter from him, Clarissa never abandons Richard, her ex-boyfriend, though he is queer and engaged in a relation with a man. She never complains of his behavior; on the contrary, she respects his privacy and stays at a proper distance between his privacy and her love for him. In fact, this reminds us of Clarissa Dalloway in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, who refuses to marry Peter Walsh, the man whom she loves, and prefers to marry another man (Mr. Dalloway) because the latter respects her privacy, while the former used to interfere in her private affairs. Her love for Richard can be seen in the light of many perspectives. Firstly, it is the first love that she experiences in her life; secondly, his ability to write poetry and fiction that she is fond of deepens this attraction to him (the heroine of his latest novel is Clarissa Vaughn); thirdly, Richard's perpetual disease resulting from AIDS becomes a kind of moral burden that she must carry.

Actually, her vehement love for Richard can be seen in her excessive interest in the party, in which Richard will be celebrated for his literary award as if the party were a kind of celebration of Richard's expected-short life. This love is also indicated in Clarissa's fondness of recalling a kiss from her past.

The moments of the kiss she shared as a young woman with Richard has remained with her though she knows that her friend has a relationship and though she is emotionally involved now with a woman named Sally:

Richard was the person Clarissa loved at her most optimistic moment. Richard had stood beside her at a pond's edge at dusk, wearing cut-off jeans and rubber sandals. Richard had called her Mrs. Dalloway, and they had kissed. His mouth had opened into hers; his tongue (exciting and utterly familiar, she'd never forget it)...They'd kissed, and walked around the pond together. (Cunningham, 1998: 98)

James Schiff, an American critic, explains the importance of this moment to the development of the entire novel as he says that: "the self is often depicted as being alone

and detached, a kiss serves most crucially as the initial point of physical contact, the moment at which the gap between people is bridged" (Schiff, 2004: 371). In fact, lovers usually remember their first love because it represents the most romantic period they experience and the moments they share stay long in their memories.

Indulging in Richard's love, Clarissa remains detached from the world in which she has never experienced her own development. Her relationship with Richard is somehow a kind of obstacle that prevents her from reaching maturity. She is a prey to a mysterious need that invades her and prevents her from seeing the enlightenment despite her complete persuasion that Richard is not the right man who can provide her with the security and proper life. This opinion is confirmed by the psychoanalyst Marilyn Charles who believes that: "Richard is the person she might have loved had she not opted for security" (Charles, 2004:307). It is not easy, perhaps, to track her development inwardly, however, the complexities of modern life, the daily pressures, and the loss of meaning in life beside the state of fragmentation and disintegration that Clarissa has experienced make her fail in finding a proper place in her world and reaching maturity. Cunningham himself sheds light on this particular point in an interview. He states that Clarissa of *The Hours* is, just like Clarissa of Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, unable to find her way and celebrate the beauties of life because she devotes herself to Richard (Spring, 1999: 78).

Brigit Spengler believes that Clarissa in her attempt to defy death by celebrating life, and project the past on the present, "heightens a sense of awareness and a more positive attitude towards life" (Spengler, 2004: 66). Surely, this point of view cannot be refuted since Clarissa's perpetual concern is to refuse the idea of nihilism; she never imagines how her life will be after Richard's departure to the other world. Her grappling of life with Richard and her attempt to slow down his death make her unable to realize the real essence of life as an individual human being. This, consequently, slows down her maturity and self-identity that occurs after Richard's death.

After Richard's death, Clarissa is not called Mrs. Dalloway anymore since the name, which Richard used to call her as his favorite name, is derived from the fictional world in which he is involved. This is a kind of emancipation that occurs inside her, which culminates her self-identity by reaching maturity though she is more than 50

years. Tory Young, the American critic who studies all Cunningham's works, states that "*The Hours*...ends with the self-definition of Clarissa. Now that Richard has died there is no one to impose a name or, we infer, a narrative upon her" (Young, 2003: 40). He quotes from *The Hours* to sustain his view: "And here she is, herself, Clarissa, not Mrs. Dalloway anymore; there is no one now to call her that" (Young, 2003: 226). She is now experiencing another hour; another life in which she happily goes on or perhaps, she reaches to a conclude persuasion that she is a victim of a certain mode of thinking that has accompanied her for long. She is fascinated by the idea of being immortalized in Richard's work, but unfortunately, Richard's works will go into oblivion eventually. Although the hours she has lived with Richard are full of agony and expectation of the worst, they are the hours that she seeks to live. The contradictory feelings inside her are the reasons why she resorts to the mystified relation that covers her life with Richard without perceiving her self-identity. Richard's death is the turning point in her life through which she discovers that her life must go on in another direction, perhaps, it is more beautiful and valuable than the one she used to live with Richard. Her friend Sally may be a good compensation for her perpetual losses with Richard. Her journey towards maturity passes through the most spiritual crisis (death) which is considered the most existential predicament that human being stands confused and bewildered to explain:

Soon Clarissa will sleep, soon everyone who knew him will be asleep, and they'll all wake up tomorrow morning to find that he's joined the realm of the dead. She wonders if tomorrow morning will mark not only the end of Richard's earthly life but the beginning of the end of his poetry, too. There are, after all, so many books . Some of them, a handful, are good, and of that handful, only a few survive. It's possible that the citizens of the future, people not yet born, will want to read Richard's elegies, his beautifully cadenced laments, his rigorously unsentimental offerings of love and fury, but it's far more likely that his books will vanish, as will Laura Brown, the mother, the martyr and fiend. (Cunningham, 1998: 224-5)

Cunningham, in this quote, tries to shed light on the author's obsession with immortality. In fact, the writers' perpetual aim is to engrave their names in the coming generation's memory; the existential dilemma that concerns the writers is how to be immortal after their leaving. Moreover, the importance of quote lies in paving the way

to the relationship of Clarissa with Laura Brown, Richard's mother, beside drawing attention to Brown's life.

### 3.2.1.1 Transformation of Laura Brown

Laura Brown who represents the link between Clarissa and her son Richard is the other character whose journey includes *Bildungsroman* features. Since *The Hours* has no single bildung hero, but three bildung heroes beside Richard they appear alternatively and each one has her own section. Laura Brown is a young woman in her twenties and she represents the typical woman in a society which has already dust off the aftermath of WWII. Laura, who lives in Los Angeles in 1949, feels that she can no longer endure the role of the devoted married woman According to Stephanie Coontz, an American historian; the successful family in the period of post-war era depends primarily on the housewife. Laura as well as her counterparts in the society of that time, who were fed up with their familial state, began to look forward for something else (Coontz, 1992:36). Though USA had witnessed developments in many fields, the favorite outlook of woman stayed dominant in the 1940s and 1950s. Cunningham succeeds in delving deeper in the period of post WWII from which he picks the character of Mrs. Laura Brown and reconstructs her life as he imagines it to have been, in the same way he deals with the character of Mrs. Woolf's that he takes from 1920s. Carolyn Byrd in her essay "An Examination of Two Wives and Mothers in *The Hours*" gives an objective analysis to Mrs. Brown's crisis. Byrd compares Laura Brown with her own mother as they have some points in common. Both of them get married after WWII and they pass the same spiritual crisis. She adds that the place where Laura lives in is a kind of a burden because "most American houses built in the 1940's did not have rooms that the wife could use for her own purposes, although many husbands had separate rooms as their retreat/ study/ library" (Byrd, 2003: 5-8). Byrd mentions that her mother divorced her father three years later because she had a job in a period when society looked at the working woman that her husband failed in providing for his family (Byrd,2003: 10). Laura, who is waving between the pressure of being a housewife and mother and her desire to be free, finds her consolation in reading *Mrs. Dalloway*. Yet, unfortunately, her house cannot provide her with enough time and space to read.

Mrs. Brown's misery stems from her commitments towards her son and her husband who is considered as a war hero. Besides, she is expecting a newborn; therefore, all these ties make her unable to taste her real life. The gleam of hope for her is reading *Mrs. Dalloway* and her relationship with her friend Kitty. Reading Mrs. Dalloway deepens her desire to be free and experience another life which she has ignored (Young, 2003:55). *Mrs. Dalloway* links the characters in the novel. Her relationship with Kitty and the intimate moments that she shares with her are simply an echo of reading *Mrs. Dalloway*. She tastes these moments as an escape from the spiritual dimness imposed on her by the oppressive world. These moments and the lack of harmony between her and her husband have a great influence upon Richard. Young proposes that "Richard's abnormality is the result of severe emotional problems in his parents." (Young, 2003:58). Obsessed with her desire to be free, Laura Brown leaves her son with her neighbor Mrs. Lash and escapes to a hotel room, a room of one's own, in order to read and live in a parallel world, a virtual one.

Cunningham's *The Hours*, as said before, is constructed upon Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and its characters. Therefore, Mrs. Brown, in the hotel room, picks up *Mrs. Dalloway* and begins to read. Reading *Mrs. Dalloway* determines the decision of suicide. Actually, Cunningham tries to imply that literature has the power of transformation. According to Andrea Wild, in her essay "The Suicide of the Author and his Reincarnation in the Reader", "*The Hours* goes beyond the text itself and the creative act of writing; it includes the act of reading, too" (Wild, 2013: 4). Since it is a postmodernist text, the reader is not a consumer of literature but also it is an essential part in creating meaning since each reader has his/her own interpretation of the text. There is no central meaning created by an author god but multiple meanings. Actually, *The Hours* belongs to the postmodern fiction that depends mostly on intertextuality. Intertextuality permits the reader to get involved in the literary work. Wild asserts that:

Cunningham acknowledges that the reader is not a mere consumer of literature but that the very act of reading calls the text into being.....and a text cannot be regarded as an absolute entity standing on its own and that the meaning of a text is created through the process of reading. (Wild, 2013:4)

As Mrs. Brown's alienation from her surrounding is psychologically deepened, she finds that reading of *Mrs. Dalloway* is a way to live in another world that breaks the chains of alienation that she feels. In her retreat to the hotel-room in which she wants to read and enjoy her isolation, Mrs. Brown begins to be deeply engaged in a process of thinking and intensive moments of depression as her sub-conscious mind leads her to think of death as a final solution for her crisis:

It is possible to die. Laura thinks, suddenly, of how she--- how anyone--  
-can make a choice like that. It is a reckless, vertiginous thought, slightly disembodied---it announces itself inside her head, faintly but distinctly, like a voice crackling from a distant radio station. She could decide to die. It is an abstract, shimmering notion, not particularly morbid. Hotel rooms are where people do things like that, aren't they? It's possible---perhaps even likely---that someone has ended his or her life right here, in this room, on this bed. Someone said: Enough, no more; someone looked for the last time at these white walls, this smooth white ceiling. By going to a hotel, she sees, you leave the particulars of your own life and enter a neutral zone, a clean white room, where dying does not seem quite so strange. (Cunningham, 1998: 151)

Unlike her home, which can be considered as a hostile place, the hotel is a neutral space in which her journey towards maturity will be determined. She reaches to a conclusion that death here is maturity that ends her own psychological agony. In her hotel room she is invaded by a lot of thoughts that occur inside her; she imagines how life would be after her departure to the unknown world, it may be beautiful, comfortable. She thinks that absolute freedom may or may not lie within: "It could, she thinks, be deeply comforting; it might feel so free: to simply go away... There might, she thinks, be a dreadful beauty in it, like an ice field or a desert in early morning" (Cunningham, 1998 151-52). Like Clarissa Vaughn, Laura Brown realizes well that if she has gone, she will go into oblivion. In addition, she will not only kill herself but her son, her husband and the other child who is still growing inside her; life is still providing other sweet moments:

She stroke her belly. I would never. She says the words out loud in the clean, silent room: "I would never." She loves life, loves it hopelessly, at last at certain moments; and she would be killing her son as well. She would be killing

her son and her husband and the other child, still forming inside her. How could any of them recover from something like that? Nothing she might do as a living wife and mother, no lapse, no fit of rage or depression, could possibly compare. It would be, simply, evil. It would punch a hole in the atmosphere, through which everything she's created-the orderly days, the lighted windows, the table laid for supper-would be sucked away. (Cunningham, 1998:152)

Mrs. Brown at those moments determines her choice to remain alive and drastically changes the course of her life. By her leaving, she will break everything that she has made, and she will disregard the duty of motherhood. Through this spiritual crisis, she reaches to a conclusion that she must complete her message and the time of her departure will come later. Again, in the chapter that follows this scene, Cunningham asserts that it is not Clarissa and her counterpart Mrs. Brown who will die, but another one who is more important and greater than they are. In fact, Cunningham makes that these two characters move according to what occurs in Woolf's mind while she was writing *Mrs. Dalloway*: someone else will die. It should be greater mind than Clarissa's it should be someone with sorrow and genius enough to turn away from the seductions of the world, its cups and its coats"(Cunningham, 1998: 154).

With manipulating time, Cunningham recalls Virginia's image in Mrs. Brown's stream of consciousness, preparing to kill herself by water. In fact, the image of Virginia Woolf when she is drowning in the river has an echo in Mrs. Brown's mind when she imagines her bed that she lays on water. It is proven that Mrs. Brown is another phase of Mrs. Woolf's life, the phase in which Woolf is fed up with her life in Richmond and seeks for death as a solution to her crisis: "She imagines Virginia Woolf, virginal, unbalanced, defeated by the impossible demands of life and art; she imagines her stepping into river with a stone in her pocket. Laura keeps stroking her belly" (Cunningham, 1998: 152).

In fact, Cunningham has the ability to deconstruct the boundaries between life and death through the circles that connect one character to the other. The relationship between the three women cannot be separated; each woman is an echo to the other. However, Virginia is the one who implicitly moves the events of the novel. Laura's journey towards maturity can be seen in this light; she is the receiver (the reader) who receives the message from the sender (Woolf). Laura Brown has the privilege that she is

the only one among the other characters who experiences the state of death. According to the German philosopher Heidegger, death is not something to be experienced through life; "it does not exist for an individual to experience. Very few, who have superiority, pass through this experience" (Cianconi, 2009: 34). Hence, Laura Brown's conviction not to commit suicide stems from her last vision that her hour has not come yet; there will be time enough to follow her dream. She reaches maturity through spiritual crisis and comes to believe that life deserves to be lived.

### 3.3 Mrs. Woolf: as a *Bildungsroman* Heroine

If the concept of the *Bildungsroman* applies to Clarissa Vaughn and Laura Brown, *künstlerroman*, which is a subgenre of the *Bildungsroman*, can be applied to Richard since he represents the artist in the novel. Once again, if Clarissa and Mrs. Brown represent the part of reading as receivers (readers), Woolf represents the part of writing .i.e., the part of sender according to Roman Jakobson (Jakobson, 1960: 350-77). Cunningham, in the chapters that deal with Mrs. Woolf, tries to retell a certain period in the real Virginia Woolf's life, specifically the period when she was writing her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. In Cunningham's novel, Virginia lives in Richmond, a desolate suburb outside London, recovering from a nervous breakdown and she is starting to write her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Cunningham relies on the writing time of *Mrs. Dalloway* as a point of departure to his novel because all his characters, in a way or another, rotate on the axis of what it is occurring in Woolf's mind. That means all the characters move or behave as if they were inspired by her writing or even her life; it is a kind of telepathy that takes place between her and them. Even the technique of stream of consciousness is deconstructed in the novel.

By manipulating time, Cunningham inserts, at the beginning of the novel, the prologue in which Virginia Woolf puts an end to her life by drowning herself in the river in 1941, and then he returns in time to depict her as she was writing her novel in 1922. By using such a technique, Cunningham breaks the traditional narration in which "writers usually obey rules that define the pragmatics of their transmission" which means that he avoids the traditional introductions such as "Here is the story of ---, I've always heard it told or I will tell it to you in my turn...etc." (Lyotard, 1984 :21). According to Young, Cunningham inserts the scene of Virginia's suicide in the prologue

due to his conviction that her self-annihilation is almost unavoidable just like what happens to the American poet Sylvia Plath in real life. Though the prologue informs the reader about the thoughts of her suicide, it also has opposite effects on the destinies of other characters (Young, 2003: 50-1). This prologue is also repeated by Richard. It is the death of the author that is suggested by Cunningham. The author is no longer the creator of his work; it is a part of this creation and the reader will be part of this creation, too. The author keeps a distance between the fictional world he is involved in, and the reader who takes his part to contribute. According to Ronald Barthes, readers must separate the literary work from its creator in order to liberate the text from the interpretive tyranny. The essential meaning of a work depends on the impressions of the reader, rather than the "passions" or "tastes" of the writer; "a text's unity lies not in its origins," or its creator, "but in its destination," or its audience (Barthes, 1977: 159).

Since Virginia Woolf lives in two parallel worlds, real and virtual ones, her journey into maturation goes in two intersected and interrelated levels. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the virtual one has a great role in directing her compass in real life. Her journey towards maturation is not compatible with the traditional stories that "recount what could be called positive or negative apprenticeships (Bildungen)" (Lyotard, 1984: 20). In other words, the hero's undertakings, whether successful or not, are estimated by the legitimacy of social institutions. Woolf, the creative writer, lacks the ability of compatibility between the needs that are imposed by familial and societal conventions and the needs of creative worlds. She could no longer stand her husband's care and doctors' instructions, who advise her to stay in Richmond against her desire to be free in London and that deepens her isolation. She feels that they are restraints which confine her spirit; the instructions that steal her life. Another source of her misery, according to Young, stems from her inability to be a mother; by the advice of the doctors to her husband, Leonardo, Virginia is deterred from becoming a mother (Young, 2003: 53).

Mrs. Woolf's single day, which is not measured by the ordinary time but by the psychological time, is culminated with Vanessa's family visit. Vanessa and her children's visit represent for Mrs. Woolf what is left from the happy memories. In addition, Vanessa and her children fill up her life; the life that lacks the intimate and warm atmosphere of motherhood as Mrs. Woolf states: "Vanessa will be her mirror,

just as she's always been. Vanessa is her ship, her strip of green coastline where bees hum among the grapes" (Cunningham, 1998: 114).

Though the short staying in accordance with the physical time does not exceed a few hours, it lasts long in the narrative time since Vanessa and her children's stay are the turning point in Virginia's journey towards maturation. This maturation is experienced in a spiritual crisis and it culminates in death. The scene of the dead bird which is found by Vanessa's children who are preoccupied with how to bury it, enlightens Virginia that Clarissa (heroine of her novel) must not die but someone who is more important than her must die. When the children leave the garden, Virginia has lain down beside the dead bird, and then she decides in the moment of revelation that she, and not Clarissa, is the bride of death:

Before following them, Virginia lingers another moment beside the dead bird in its circle of roses. It could be a kind of hat. It could be the missing link between millinery and death. She would like to lie down in its place. No denying it, she would like that. Vanessa and Julian can go on about their business, their tea and travels, while she, Virginia, a bird-sized Virginia, lets herself metamorphose from an angular, difficult woman into an ornament on a hat; a foolish, uncaring thing. Clarissa, she thinks, is not the bride of death after all. Clarissa is the bed in which the bride is laid. (Cunningham, 1989: 121)

According to Egyptian mythology, the Egyptians used to sacrifice a bride to the river of the Nile as a symbol of fertility. Mentioning the bride of death and Virginia's suicide by drowning in the river can be seen in this light; her suicide is a kind of sacrifice so that her Clarissa can live immortally.

The author dies but her work and the characters she creates do not. Virginia reaches her maturity after the long journey of chasing the existential inquiries: "Someone else will die. It should be a greater mind than Clarissa's. It should be someone with sorrow and genius enough to turn away from the seductions of the world, its cups and its coats" (Cunningham, 1998: 154).

The American character, in its pursuit of the American dream, finds himself away from the original innocence because of the accelerated pressure of modern life. The narrative of coming of age permits writers to interrogate this issue. They find

themselves retreating to the world of childhood as an understanding to their maturity "Only childhood is ours. The rest belongs to strangers" ( Birdwell, 1980: 1). Hence, in this light, Woolf gets her maturation in the moments when she experiences her childhood.

Like Richard, Virginia culminates her journey towards maturation in death. Death is the only way that permits her to cross the abyss; the abyss that looms between her virtual world in which she is absorbed and her real world which she cannot cope with. Virginia realizes, from the first moment of her journey in the virtual life that dying dramatically is her lot. Her sense of death without achieving something to immortalize her deepens her conviction that the body will vanish sooner or later. She wants to put an end to her life in a memorable way; dying in water "yet she is dying this way, she is gently dying on a bed of roses. Better, really, to face the fin in the water than to live in hiding" (Cunningham, 1998: 159).

Woolf finds out that death is the only outlet for her dilemma; it is the only way that lessens her agonies resulting from detaching herself from the real life and living in a virtual one. Clarissa Vaughn's maturation is enhanced after Richard's death that makes her look at life differently. Eventually, Laura Brown's development takes place when she is in a hotel room where she decides to die. Surprisingly, the three women who have three different identities, in fact, are but mirror reflections of the first woman (Woolf) as if they were a reflection of herself. In other word they are the mental states that Mrs. Woolf wants to live. Ironically, what prevails the atmosphere of these characters is death due to the rebellious spirit of Mrs. Woolf and her ungovernable longings to escape to death while she was writing her *Mrs. Dalloway* as Cunningham imagines. This idea is posed by Mary Joe Hughes, the American critic:

Her death is what links all of the characters together in only one web of events towards life. It is the moment of her death which turns her into something immortal, thus, her work lingers on. Death is seen as an attempt to protect what matters in life, a tribute, a plunge toward the central mystery, and a gesture to others. (Hughes, 2004: 352)

### 3.4 Maturation through Time and Space

#### 3.4.1 Time

Since the Bildungsroman marks the development of the bildung hero whether she/he is an artist or not, time and space intervene as essential aspects of this development. The fictional text cannot stand in the narrative alone; it is based on the structural reciprocity between narrativity and temporality. The narrative time is totally different from the physical time. Heidegger in his book *Being and Time* proposes three levels of Time. The first level is the ordinary representation of time in which the events take place; even though the events take place within time-ness, in the narrative process they differ from the linear time. The second one is the time which is grounded in the historicity (Heidegger, 1985:102). While the third is the time that takes place beyond historicity where the temporality springs forth in the plural unity of future, past and present.

In other words, time no longer takes place in the linearity but in the narrative activity that determines its level (Heidegger, 1985: 465). Heidegger proposes the terms time-ness and temporality as follows "Time-ness is interpreted in terms of the ordinary representation of time; this is because the first measurements of the time of our preoccupation are borrowed from the natural environment" (Heidegger, 1985: 465). Temporality comes with plot to determine the crossing point of time and narrativity, i.e., with the temporality we measure the narrative time (Ricoeur, 1985: 171). According to Hans Meyerhoff, in *Time in Literature*, the novel cannot be written without time because time is the structure on which the novel is being built; it is the milieu of the novel. (Meyerhoff, 1968:3)

As for space since space is the twin of time in the narrative process, it is an essential part that has a great role in the maturation of the character. According to Prince, the space is the place where the temporal narrative events are taking place (Prince, 2003:214). Hence, the narrative process does not occur without space. In the preface of his novel *The Portrait of a Lady*, Henry James pays attention to the space especially the houses. He sees that spaces reflect the real identity of the characters as if they were human beings. Postmodern fiction becomes like architecture and novel is like a building which cannot be seen simultaneously as an angle but a complete whole. If

time has witnessed drastic changes in eliminating the chronological sequence though it is perceivable by the reader, space also changes. It is no longer the part that completes the narrative circle, but it also becomes one of the narrative elements that influence the track of the character and its development (Smitten, 1981:22). The space which embraces the change of the character and its development is an important element in the development of characters. The "spatial form of novel is an alternative to the Bildungsroman. It portrays someone who has already developed, who is largely past changes" (Smitten, 1981: 65).

Actually, critical studies pay a great attention to the types of spaces and propose many of them. What is obviously detected is that the spaces in *The Hours* are distributed under many types of space such as (the domestic, hostile, open, closed, and historical space). The domestic space is the place which is connected with the feeling of safety, in other words, it is the place where the character feels warmth and moves to beautiful memories. Home is one of the domestic space types, which remains in the character's imagination, the imagination that is activated when it finds the proper space (Bachelard, 1994: 15). For Mrs. Woolf, London is considered a domestic space in which she spends the most beautiful times with Bloomsbury group and what separates her is the train, "On the other side is the train. On the other side is London, and all London implies about freedom, about kisses, about the possibilities of art and the sly dark glitter of madness" (Cunningham, 1998: 172). Despite the advices of her husband and her doctors to stay in Richmond, she tries to escape from it. Richmond is seen as a hostile space that limits her freedom. It is the hostile space that she is no longer ready to adapt with and in which her maturation is developed. Consequently it pushes her to commit suicide: "she will return to London. Better to die raving mad in London than evaporate in Richmond" (Cunningham, 1998: 71). London, for Mrs. Woolf, is the open space that is associated with the character's vision and feeling of freedom, just like that feeling she has felt in the garden for some moments with Vanessa and her children.

For Mrs. Brown, her home represents a hostile space where she feels contempt and hatred towards it. It makes her feel estrangement and isolation that are deepened day after day due to her desire to be free from the familial chains: "So now she is Laura Brown. Laura Zielski, the solitary girl, the incessant reader, is gone, and here in her place is Laura Brown" (Cunningham, 1998: 40). In contrast, the hotel when

she goes to commit suicide and the space in Canada where she lives after abandoning her family are considered domestic spaces. The hotel witnesses the decisive point of her maturity.

New York for Mrs. Dalloway is seen as a historical space as well as an open one. The historical space is seen by Clarissa's eyes through her focalization on New York. She describes places and monuments of New York City and its development historically "she appears to be singing, stationed precisely between the twin statues of George Washington, as warrior and politician, both faces destroyed by weather" (Cunningham, 1998: 14). Clarissa sees New York not as a historical space but also as an open space which contributes to Clarissa's maturation. New York City with all its contradictions and complications is the effective factor in her development and her perspective towards life.

Time and space collaborate to shape the character's viewpoint. In fact, the characters are not isolated from the impact of time and space. Both time and space leave traceable effects on the characters and their transformations. Time and space are essential parts in forming the character's consciousness.

### **3.5 The *Hours* as a Postmodernist *Bildungsroman***

As said before in chapter one, postmodernism is a movement which emerged, in a way or another, as a reaction against the systematic mode of thinking that characterized modern life (Bertens, 1997:24). Though postmodernism tries to break down current notions and ideologies, it remains dependent on some aspects of modernism. Similarly, postmodernist fiction as part of postmodernism does not completely depart from the frame of the movement. Along with adding many new notions in postmodernist fiction such as fragmentation, representation of reality, historiographical meta-fiction and intertextuality, postmodernist fiction still uses narrative devices such as focalization and the narrative techniques such as stream of consciousness that is created by modernist novelists such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. What is done by the postmodernist fiction is the sense of uniqueness that was once requested from art (Hutcheon, 2000: 54). The present study reviews below the most significant features of postmodernist fiction as well as the modernist ones that continued to appear in the postmodern fiction as reflected in Cunningham's *The Hours*.

### 3.5.1 Focalization and Bildungsroman

Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* does not present prominent and noticeable events. Rather, it displays descriptions of mental and psychological states. The present study does not focus on the traditional relationships among the characters, which are proposed by Vladimir Propp in his book *Morphology of the Folktale*. Propp views that the function of the character remains constant with others and its act can be seen from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action (Propp, 1968:21). Instead, the study probes into the hidden life of the characters that cannot be seen through the traditional relationships. In *The Hours*, Cunningham's characters feel that there is an impassable abyss and they strive to cross it but their efforts go in vain. Cunningham chooses one single day for his characters to display the fragility and disintegration of their world. They are forced mentally to retreat their virtual world, the world beyond time, which can be seen just in the moments of vision. What is left for them in the age of alienation and complicated relationships is to dream or to choose death as a final resolution to their suffering and unbelongingness.

The spiritual dimness that the three women and Richard share can be seen through this perspective. The character of Virginia Woolf in the novel, named Mrs. Woolf, leads the threads of the novel, and all characters move under her impact. She is irritable, solicitous, odd, anxious, and an outsider in her surrounding; precisely she is not a stereotypical woman. In fact, it is not her choice to be like this. She wants to be an ordinary woman but her illness, which is actually the illness of the whole existential generation that seeks for the meaning of life, cannot offer this opportunity, and deepens her sensation.

Cunningham depicts skilfully Virginia's meditation and point of view towards life and death through the technique of focalization. Mrs. Woolf of *The Hours* reveals her perspective toward her heroine Clarissa and draws the broad lines of her life. In fact, the great challenge that faces

Cunningham is how to orient the threads of novel without leaving gaps in the narrative process. The novel decodes the features of postmodern fiction including the focalization technique that can link what occurs in the minds of the characters and the trivial details that happen daily without being observed.

Cunningham's narrative, the focalization of Woolf's meditations as she wrote, is a convincing marriage of the domestic concerns on a writing day, how they become woven into her fiction, and the ensuing oscillations between confidence and despair about her writing and her sanity. (Young, 2003: 51)

The movement of Mrs. Woolf's heroine will be applied to the other women in the novel (Clarissa Vaughn and Laura Brown). They, in fact, behave and continue their life in Woolf's mind as if there were some sort of telepathy between Mrs. Woolf and the two women. Here, there is internal focalization in Mrs. Woolf's consciousness through the third-person, where Mrs. Woolf is the focalizer while Clarissa and Mrs. Brown are the focalized, of course, through Virginia's heroine:

Virginia stands in the doorway, watching the shifting patterns have loved a woman. Clarissa will have kissed a woman, only as she would watch waves break on a beach. Yes, Clarissa will once. Clarissa will be reaved, deeply lonely, but she will not die. She will be too much in love with life, with London. (Cunningham, 1998: 211)

Consequently, Mrs. Woolf reveals her point of view towards death through the internal focalization that takes actually a great deal of space in the novel. Virginia tries to probe the meaning of death via creating surprising images to make the image of death as somehow concrete rather than abstract. In this way, the reader can apprehend, via imaginary or fictitious approaches, the meaning of death emotionally and mentally. The image of the dead thrush makes her focalize on the essence of death:

The body of the thrush is still there (odd, how the neighborhood cats and dogs are not interested), tiny even for a bird, so utterly unalive, here in the dark, like a lost glove, this little empty handful of death. In the morning, Leonard will scoop bird and grass and roses up with a shovel, and throw them all out. She thinks of how much more space a being occupies in life than it does in death; how much more illusion of size is contained in gestures and movements, in breathing. Dead, we are revealed in our true dimensions, and they are surprisingly modest. (Cunningham, 1998: 165)

Similarly, Clarissa tries, through her internal focalization, to find out the secret of her love for Richard wondering whether this love is a sort of fatalism or it is something which cannot be apprehended by reason. Her affection toward Richard is somehow complicated. It can be explained through the loss that both share, perhaps, both have a mysterious need, which cannot be achieved by them. Therefore, they find their relationship as a sort of spiritual compensation:

This indiscriminate love feels entirely serious to her, as if everything in the world is part of a vast, inscrutable intention and everything in the world has its own secret name, a name that cannot be conveyed in language but it is simply the sight and feel of the thing itself. This determined, abiding fascination is what she thinks of as her soul (an embarrassing, sentimental word, but what else to call it?); the part that might conceivably survive the death of the body. (Cunningham, 1998: 12)

Henry Alley suggests in his study "*Mrs. Dalloway* and Three of its Contemporary Children", the omniscient appears and interferes sometimes to reveal the information that are needed by the reader (Alley, 2006: 402). This interference is not considered a flaw, on the contrary, it reveals the forthcoming events that give the reader the entertainment of discovery as is shown in this quotation in which the omniscient interferes to give hints at the doomed end of Clarissa and Richard.

The name Mrs. Dalloway had been Richard's idea- a conceit tossed off one drunken dormitory night as he assured her that Vaughn was not the proper name for her. She should, he'd said, be named after a great figure in literature, and while she'd argued for Isabel Archer or Anna Karenina, Richard had insisted that Mrs. Dalloway was the singular and obvious choice. (Cunningham, 1998: 10)

Alternately, Cunningham depicts the third woman (Laura Brown) through her internal focalization. Her dilemma as what is summed up in her desire to get rid of the social conventions that suffocate her life, and her experiences of another life, the virtual life that is crystallized in her mind as a result of her reading of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Reading *Mrs. Dalloway* has offered her a psychological and spiritual refuge from the pressure of life and daily routine she suffers from. Abandoning her family, secluding herself in a hotel to practice her supposed freedom, and ending her life just

like Virginia's suicide under the impact of reading *Mrs. Dalloway* can be seen in the light of this psychological and spiritual development and transformation.

It seems, somehow, what she has left her own world and entered the real of the book. Nothing, of course, could be further from Mrs. Dalloway's London than this turquoise hotel room, and yet she imagines that Virginia Woolf herself, the drowned woman, the genius, might in death inhabit a place not unlike this one. (Cunningham, 1998: 150)

In fact, Mrs. Brown's attempt towards freedom and breaking the familial conventions lie in putting herself in her own virtual world. This fact is confirmed by Young who states that: "Laura Brown's flight from her life as mother and wife echoes Clarissa Dalloway's withdrawal from the marital bed, humorously signaled in her preferred bed-time" (Young, 2003: 56).

*The Hours* can be considered as a postmodern *Bildungsroman*, a highly experimental fiction, in which Cunningham uses focalization and other devices for his experimentation on the character formation. Focalization allows the characters to give their points of view about the complicated lives they have. Moreover, focalization allows the characters to move through time and gives space of freedom to express their hidden lives in which they sometimes experience their maturation. Through this device, Cunningham has the ability to fuse the real lives of the characters with the virtual ones.

### **3.5.2 Stream of Consciousness and *Bildungsroman***

Since Cunningham's *The Hours* is an echo of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Cunningham follows the technique of stream of consciousness that is masterfully used by Woolf and he employs this technique in a skilful way. Actually, the novel can be treated as a stream of consciousness novel in which Cunningham uses this technique to save time, showing the inner minds of these three women, combining their lives together so as to convey the details of a single day. In fact, stream of consciousness permits the author to speak freely and show the inward development of the characters. This inward development is also reflected physically. Kumar, in his *Bergson and the Stream of Consciousness Novel*, states the opinion of the French philosopher, Bergson, who states that novelists should have the originality and they faithfully follow reality

adopting the moment of the inward life of things, this is achieved by recording the internal rhythms of thought and experience (Kumar, 1963:20-1).

*The Hours* depends on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* but Cunningham presents his own view and philosophy in his novel. It may parallel the latter novel in literary value. Cunningham recalls Virginia as a character to be a cornerstone that makes all characters develop through her mind. Cunningham starts the novel inserting a quotation attributed to Virginia Woolf in which he tries to prove that the preoccupation of the novelist is how to dig out caves in the minds of his/her characters and grasp the inner thoughts; of course, he achieves this by employing stream of consciousness technique

I have no time to describe my pans. I should say a good deal about The Hours, & my discovery; how I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humor, depth, the idea is that the caves shall connect, & each comes to daylight at the present moment. (Cunningham, 1998: 2)

According to Hermione Lee, the past of the characters pervades both novels (*Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Hours*) and the characters of both novels cover a single day of June by the device of stream of consciousness which is called the caves or the ideas by Virginia Woolf (Lee, 2005: 43).

In the prologue Cunningham recreates deliberately the final moments of Virginia's life portraying the scene of her suicide fictionally and imagining what she is thinking of in the moments of her suicide. They appear to one not as a chain but a stream or a flow (Richter, 1970: 7). Moreover, the prologue also provides the reader with the way to know the deep dilemma that invades the other characters. Tory Young believes that:

the prologue has the opposite effect, just as thoughts of her suicide inform our readings of her life and fiction, it casts a shadow over the rest of *The Hours*, making us fearful of the fragility and despair of many of the characters, especially Laura and Richard Brown. (Young, 2003: 50)

In another part of the episode that deals with Mrs. Woolf, Cunningham recreates the moments in which she is in the process of writing *Mrs. Dalloway*. According to

Young, Cunningham depicts how Mrs. Woolf "writes through dreams....rather than language....and always against a relapse into insanity" (Young, 2003: 53). He draws, through poetic depiction, the process of her creative writing as his fictional character. Her writing becomes an escape from collapsing into vacuums of despair (Young, 2003: 58). While she is in her bed preparing to sleep, the flux of the images and ideas flow over her memory. The ideas and images shift from one to another just like a stream. By this technique, an effect on her development and how she begins to think of suicide as the final resolution to her maturity is given:

It seems, suddenly, that she is not in her bed but in a park; a park impossibly verdant, green beyond green- a Platonic vision of a park...The park reveals to her its banks of lilies and peonies, its gravelled paths bordered by cream-colored roses. A stone maiden, smoothed by weather, stands at the edge of a clear pool and muses into the water. Virginia moves through the park as if impelled by a cushion of air; she is beginning to understand that another park lies beneath this one, a park of the underworld, more marvelous and terrible than this; it is the root from which these lawns and arbors grow. It is the true idea of the park, and it is nothing so simple as beautiful. (Cunningham, 1998: 29-30)

Once again, the stream of consciousness technique occupies a large space in the novel. Clarissa Vaughn's narrative starts in the novel with her clinging to her neighbourhood. Her love of space, history and the details of New York , can be interpreted in the light of the place and people around her. They are like her enjoying momentary things; they roam freely in the streets according to a strict order without leaving a good memory. According to Jean Wyatt, it is a kind of submission to the semiotic fondness (Wyatt, 1986:115-16). All her neighbors are an imitation of her. Nevertheless, she still aspires to self-identity. Her preparation to the party in which Richard will be celebrated for getting a literary award, can be seen as a salvation from the spiritual dimness she lives in and as breaking the ordinary routine that covers her life. In fact, her ideas and thoughts about the setting she lives in come as a stream of consciousness. She believes that she must adapt with her own environment, and lives for the sake of her daughter and her friend Sally.

It seems that Mrs. Brown serves as a link especially between Clarissa Vaughn and her son Richard. Ironically, she is distributed by her commitments as a mother and her desire to be free, and she becomes non-conformist following the urgent need that calls her from inside. Cunningham, in fact, "updates this homely example in Laura Brown. Ironically he also finds Mrs. Brown evasive even though-or perhaps because – he has referred to her as his mother," (Canning, 2003: 55). This opinion casts light on Cunningham's life. Laura Brown, who is pregnant and awaiting a baby, is confused and miserable, her misery stems from her being a mother, devoting herself to her son Richie, and the life she imagines and dreams of. She is taut between her tremendous love for Richie and how to create a perfect home for him and her profound despondency that is deepened day after day (Young, 2003: 55). Therefore, she finds reading an escape from her anxiety. Reading makes her be aware of her hidden desires, thus, she escapes from her home and experiences another life which is totally different:

But now, right now, she is going somewhere (where?) to be alone, to be free of her child, her house, the small party she will give tonight. She has taken her pocketbook, and her copy of *Mrs. Dalloway*...It could, she thinks, be deeply comforting; it might feel so free; to simply go away. To say to them all, I couldn't manage, you had no idea; I didn't want to try anymore. There might, she thinks, be a dreadful beauty in it, like an ice field or a desert in early morning. She could go, as it were, into that other landscape; she could leave them all behind- her child, her husband and kitty, her parents, everybody- in this battered world (it will never be whole again, it will never be quite clean), saying to one another and to anyone who asks, we thought she was all right, we thought her sorrows were ordinary ones. We had no idea. (Cunningham, 1998: 151-152)

Actually, the stream of consciousness technique reveals the real psychological state of Mrs. Brown. She is in between the life that she knows and the unknown life that she thinks a sort of salvation from her suffering. The flux of ideas that comes as a stream in her mind has a prominent effect on the development of her, hence in determining her maturity.

It can be concluded that stream of consciousness is the dominant technique used in *The Hours*. Cunningham portrays skilfully what is in the sub-conscious of the

characters. By using this technique, he opens a window through which we can see the dark side of the characters and their visions and meditations of life. Through this technique, he projects the dark spots that lie deep in our unconsciousness also. In fact, this technique reveals inward development of the characters. Although the novel traces the character's life in few hours, the stream of consciousness technique successfully deconstructs the linear progress and conveys characters' development subconsciously.

### 3.5.3 Intertextuality and Transformation of Texts in *The Hours*

In an interview, Cunningham speaks of the impact *Mrs. Dalloway* made upon him at High School. While trying to impress a girl by speaking admiringly about the poetry of Leonard Cohen the girl replies: "but I wonder if you've ever heard of T. S. Eliot or Virginia Woolf". He heads straight for the library and finds only Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (Young, 2003: 33). Since that time, Cunningham feels under the spell of Virginia Woolf and her fictional world. Admiring Woolf's capacity to find extraordinary and unprecedented beauty in the "outwardly usual", especially with reference to her celebration of London in *Mrs. Dalloway*, he gives a similar kind of blessings to the place he creates in *The Hours*. According to Young, Cunningham has described once *The Hours* (1998) as a riff<sup>3</sup> on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). In other words, *The Hours* is not an imitation or homage but rather an update of *Mrs. Dalloway* (Young, 2003: 38).

However, Cunningham makes Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* a point of departure to write *The Hours*. He creates another fictional world in which he skilfully controls his narrative discourse without falling in the naïve imitation or shallow pastiche. Moreover, he has an ability to orient the events in the right way manipulating the chronological order without losing the logicality or leaving a gap (Young, 2003: 44). Actually, *The Hours* overflows with countless references to Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf's life and her works; it even recounts a single day of her life when she was writing her novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Maria Lindgren Leave worth views *The Hours* as a rewriting, a recycling, or perhaps rather an update not only of events and ideas from *Mrs. Dalloway* but of

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<sup>3</sup> Riff: a short, repeated line of music played by a particular performer (Spears 308).

characters and only of events and ideas from *Mrs. Dalloway* but of characters and relationships as well.

A careful examination of *The Hours* will reveal an obvious postmodernist intertextual relationship that links the two novels. Intertextuality can obviously be seen from the first chapter in both novels. Both of them start with the proposal of buying flowers as a preliminary introduction to begin the narrative discourse. Virginia Woolf opens *Mrs. Dalloway* with the sentence: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself" (Woolf, 1958:5). The same thing is repeatedly mentioned in *The Hours* when Cunningham recreates the moments that Virginia was writing *Mrs Dalloway* after she refuses her husband's request to have breakfast. She goes upstairs stealthily, quietly closes the door of her study room, takes a deep drag of her cigarette, picks up her pen and writes "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself" (Cunningham, 1998: 35). Since all the characters in *The Hours* move according to the characters of Virginia Woolf in the process of her writing of *Mrs. Dalloway*, they are implicitly and allusively inspired by her to repeat what she is writing. In the first paragraph of the section of Mrs. Brown of *The Hours*, we see Mrs. Brown reading the same quote (Cunningham, 1998: 37). Once again, Clarissa Vaughn repeats the scene of buying the flowers for Richard's party .

The other intertextual relationship appears in the comparison between Westminster in *Mrs. Dalloway* and West Village in New York in *The Hours*. The place has a great role in framing the view of both Clarissa Dalloway of *Mrs. Dalloway* and Clarissa Vaughn of *The Hours* towards life. Their meditations upon life stem from their impressions about the friends and people they have encountered in the street of both places. Clarissa Dalloway's love for London and Clarissa Vaughn for New York can be seen in this perspective. The places in which they live formulate their common consciousness about the meaning of life, death and the relationship with other people besides their obsession of the two histories of places (Young, 2003:59). Clarissa Vaughn is motivated by the places and people that crystallized her views toward the meaning of the world. Despite their adherence to the cities where they live, they fear the world that glorifies all material objects without looking at the spiritual side that knocks only in moments of memories and dreams.

In fact, the scene of the party in both novels has a significant role as an event which is conducive to the development of the rest of events. Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs. Dalloway* prepares her house and herself for a party she has organized for that evening. Similarly, the three women in *The Hours* do the same; Virginia prepares a party for her sister Vanessa and her children, Laura makes a cake to celebrate her husband Dan and her son Richie, Clarissa Vaughn for her friend Richard to honour him on the occasion of gaining a literary award. The party has been added by Cunningham to add the things that are not said or mentioned by Woolf. It sheds light on Clarissa of *Mrs. Dalloway* and other characters who rotate around her (Schiff, 2004: 367). These self-reflexive addition and repetition of events and names in both novels can be classified under the syntactic analysis of intertextuality.

Concerning the semantic analysis of intertextuality, it can primarily be found in the roles of characters. Some of the characters in *The Hours* are greatly based on the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Clarissa Dalloway can be Clarissa Vaughn, Laura Brown or Mrs. Woolf herself, and Sally of *Mrs. Dalloway* can be Clarissa Vaughn's friend (Sally) or Laura Brown's friend (Kitty) or perhaps Virginia Woolf's sister (Vanessa). The same can be applied to Clarissa Dalloway of *Mrs. Dalloway* who echoes the character of Clarissa, Mrs. Brown and Woolf's of *The Hours*. All these characters share the spiritual dimness and they are viewed through it. The same similarity can be seen in the role of Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway* and Richard Brown in *The Hours*; both of them are poets suffering from physical and psychological defects. At the end, both commit suicide; of course, this incident can be classified under the pragmatic analysis of intertextuality (Oosterik, 2011:40).

The scene of suicide is similarly echoed in both novels and it is almost identical in the way that the reader should be well acquainted of both novels in order to understand the motivations behind their suicide. Septimus finds that it is impossible for him to live in a world that confines his perplexity and the trauma of having lived in two contradictory worlds. He lives in a struggle between his outward world that he cannot endure, or conform to and his inward world that pulls him back to the past. Consequently, this inner struggle leads him to throw himself out of the window putting an end to his suffering, and joining the unmaterialistic world, which he likes, with his late friend.

There remained only the window, the large Bloomsbury lodging-house window; the tiresome the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out....But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings? Coming down the staircase opposite an old man stopped and stared, at him. Holms was at the door. "I'll give it you!" he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings. (Woolf, 1958: 164)

In *The Hours*, the scene of Richard's suicide is somehow similar to Septimus' with few changes. Septimus flings himself vigorously through the window where the people in the house and on the street witness his suicide. Clarissa visits Richard in the afternoon to help him prepare the party in which he will be honoured for his gaining a literary award. Richard removes all the curtains and puts one of his legs over the windowsill to breathe some cold air. They have a conversation in which Richard recalls his past memories with her when they were young and explains that he no longer wishes to live and their life becomes useless because it lacks the compatibility due to his incompetence to live normally despite her love and devotion. He inches steadily forward and slides gently off the sill of window and no one outside sees him except Clarissa who runs downstairs and there she sits alone with him for a while meditating their relationship. (Cunningham, 1998: 200)

Septimus' act of suicide is explained in the 1920s as a weakness in man himself. Septimus and his peers are viewed as soldiers who lack manly courage and their affliction is viewed as a female malady (Childs, 2000:166). In fact, this view lacks credibility because it raises a problematic question: Why does Septimus put an end to his life if he lacks courage? Courage and cowardice are relative. In fact, both of them are revealed to one according to his/her convictions that are formulated within their subconsciousness. This can be applied to Richard and Virginia in *The Hours*, who do not suffer from the atrocity of war. Instead, they are just like Septimus who reaches to a point that courage is in death which is considered as a means of reducing their sufferings.

In fact, the idea of suicide dominates the atmosphere of *The Hours*. In the prologue, Virginia leaves a note to her husband Leonard telling him that the voices begin invading her again leaving her in a state of no concentration. She adds that she

cannot go on spoiling his life anymore and she cannot live normally with him. Life is too much for her to continue, therefore; she decides to take the hard decision, to commit suicide despite his love and care:

I begin to hear voices, and can't concentrate. So I am doing what seems the best thing to do. You have given me the greatest possible happiness...I don't think two people could have been happier till this terrible disease came. I can't fight any longer, I know that I am spoiling your life, that without me you could work. (Cunningham, 1998: 6)

Similarly, Richard and Virginia in *The Hours* suffer from the voices that invade their minds due to their psychological state, just like Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Though the note that Virginia left to her husband was written, Richard quoted literally a few lines of the note in his conversation with Clarissa. Both Richard and Virginia find that it is too difficult to endure their lives, and death is the best solution to end their suffering and perplexity. Laura Brown attempts to do the same after motivated by reading *Mrs. Dalloway*. This reading becomes a sort of compensation to her despair that she cannot stand any more.

It is worth mentioning that the aforementioned elements are not the only examples of intertextuality of *The Hours* with *Mrs. Dalloway*. The former novel is based entirely on the latter. Among the other examples that prove these intersexual relations are the scenes of kisses exchanged by Clarissa Vaughn with her friend Sally; Laura Brown with her neighbor Kitty; and Virginia Woolf with her sister Vanessa. These recall the kiss exchanged by Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs. Dalloway* with her friend who is also named Sally. Although Clarissa's kiss exchange with Sally is a sort of compensation, Laura Brown's with her neighbor Kitty can be regarded as an escape from the daily routine that she lives in. Actually, the two kisses that are experienced by Clarissa Vaughn with Sally, and Laura Brown with Kitty are, in fact, an implicit echo to the kiss that is exchanged by Virginia with her sister Vanessa. The kiss can be interpreted as a song of farewell to her world and to all that she loves.

In addition to focalization and stream of consciousness, intertextuality can also be regarded as an element of postmodernist bildungsroman. Intertextuality gives way to a kind of fragmentation which is tackled in the context of the bildung heroes' lives and

historiographical meta-fiction. Cunningham digs in the history of certain periods of the previous century to recreate the history of real persons. Actually, he tries, through them, to reconsider the social and cultural concepts of those periods.

Although postmodernist fiction shows little respect for the well-established forms and genres, in the novel so far discussed, it is evident that traditional forms and genres persist. In *The Hours*, a line of character development can be traced through the reflections of the character of Virginia Woolf. Although fragmented and implied, the life story is there, and this life story can be read as a unique Bildungsroman, written in opposition to the traditional 18th and 19th century ones; written in a digressive and intertextual snapshot manner which is perceivable by careful readers.

It can be inferred that in the novel all incidents are skilfully effectively to each other without leaving gaps, but nevertheless the incidents are not chronologically ordered. The novel significantly recalls *Mrs. Dalloway* in names of characters that are developed by using the most important element of postmodern fiction, intertextuality. Moreover, it reveals Virginia's vision toward the essence and secret of life and death which can be applied to other characters who live in different periods. *The Hours* represent a postmodern novel standpoint, and it goes through the different techniques applied in the mentioned novel the researcher concluded that Michael Cunningham has used postmodern narrative to create his own special techniques of narrative within narrative to tell the story of three women, that are all related to each other in one way or another and show their concerns and pains.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ***THE TOBACCO KEEPER AS A POSTMODERIST BILDUNGSROMAN***

#### **4.1 Introduction**

*The Tobacco Keeper* is the masterpiece of Ali Bader that has gained a worldwide fame. It is translated into many languages, and positively received by literary and critical circles. This novel, like his other novels, is both a postmodern and postcolonial fiction especially because of its technical and thematic aspects. *The Tobacco Keeper*, like Cunningham's *The Hours*, is considered a bold attempt in Arabic narrative in general and the Iraqi narrative in particular. Bader wrote it in 2008 and was it was translated into English in 2011. Chronologically Bader's novels are *Papa Sartrein* (2001) translated into English (2009); *Family's Winter* (2002); *The Naked Feast* (2003); *The Road to Moutran Hill* (2004); *Tumult, Women, and Sunken Writer* (2005); *Jerusalem Lamps* (2006); *Running After the Wolves* (2007); *The Tobacco Keeper* (2008) nominated for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) long list; *Kings of the Sands* (2009), also nominated for (IPAF); *Crime, Art, and Baghdad Dictionary* (2010) and eventually *The Professors of Illusion* (2011).

*The Tobacco Keeper* can be divided into two main interrelated axes. The first one is the frame story of the reporter, whereas the second is the story of the musician on whose biography the narrator (reporter) has to write a report. In the first part, that of black writer, or ghost writer, the entire frame is set and Bader justifies the process of writing. This part tells us how a reporter travels to a danger zone to write about crucial subjects, still, his report is attributed to one of the paper's big shot. The local reporter gets a fee for his trouble and nothing else. In fact, Bader's reporter has a double role, the bildung hero in the first part of the novel and the narrator who narrates the story of the subject of focus, the musician, in the second part. He tells his story as a reporter until he is assigned by an American press agency to write about the famous Iraqi musician Kamal Medhat who was kidnapped and killed by an armed group and his body was found later in the River Tigris. During his journey to find the real reason behind the

assassination of the composer, the reporter discovers that Kamal Medhat has lived under three fake names and identities. Medhat is actually Yousef Sami Saleh, of the Qujman family. He is an Iraqi Jew, a famous violinist, who emigrates to Israel in 1950 during Operation Ezra and Nehemiah- that is, after the decision to strip the Jews of their Iraqi nationality and confiscate their property. He had married Farida Reuben, and their son Meir was born in Iraq a year before he had emigrated (Bader, 2011: 60-143)<sup>4</sup>.

Yousef finds life in Tel Aviv unbearable and, in 1953, he escapes to Iran via Moscow, he uses a forged passport in the name of Haidar Salman, a musician from middle-class Shiite family. In Tehran, he marries Tahira, daughter of a wealthy merchant named Ismael al-Tabtabaei, and she gives birth to their son Hussein. In 1958, he returns with his family to Baghdad, participating in the political and musical activities as a communist member. He remains until 1980 when, as an Iranian national, he is expelled to Tehran. His wife dies during the journey. His son Hussein holds in prison for more than three years and upon his release he too departs to Tehran, where he tries in vain to find his father (Bader, 2011: 195-223).

Haidar Salman lives as a refugee in Tehran for about a year. Then, at the end of 1981, he succeeds to escape to Damascus with a forged Iraqi passport which belonged to an Iraqi who dies in an accident in Tehran named Kamal Medhat. Although he remains in Damascus for less than a year, he marries a wealthy Iraqi woman by the name of Nadia al-Umary. Using his forged passport, he returns to Iraq early in 1982. In Baghdad, his wife gives birth to a son, Omar. It is also at this time, in the eighties that Kamal Medhat becomes the most famous composer in the Middle East. From 1991 to 2003, Kamal Medhat lives in Baghdad under the embargo imposed on the country. He witnesses poverty, disease, war and the decline of art. Although he drew completely from public life, he continued to compose (Bader, 2011: 273-294).

On 20th of March 2003, the US launches the third Gulf War to topple Saddam Hussein from power. On 9th April, US forces enter Baghdad and topple the statue of

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<sup>4</sup> The study depends primarily on the translation of Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* issued by Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation, 2011.

Saddam. In the midst of the sectarian warfare underway in Baghdad prior to his death, Kamal Medhat's three sons visit him and reveal the collapse of identity. Meir, the Jew from Iraq who emigrated from Israel to the United States, joined the Marines and returned to Iraq as a US Army officer. Meir is the product of his first persona. Hussein, who, after setting in Tehran, ties himself to his Shia identity and joins the Shia political movement. Omar, a Sunni trying to assert his sub identity in the face of the loss of power in Iraq after 2003, is the outcome of the third persona. Each of them stands by a story that is constructed, fabricated and furnished with narrative and imaginary elements. Each of them lives a life they thought to be true. (Bader, 2011: 294-304)

#### **4.2 *The Tobacco Keeper* as a Postmodern Bildungsroman**

Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* is truly considered an important document that sheds light upon the history of modern Iraq from the Monarchy until the American invasion, and the Iraqi community with all contradictions and transformations in the context of the life stages of the bildung hero. Apparently, the novel has two axes; nevertheless, it is difficult to separate them. In other words, there are two novellas; the story of the reporter and the story of the Jewish violinist who appears in three different identities. However, these three identities are an incarnation of one character. The story of the reporter is, in fact, retold as an introductory story or a frame story through which the main story, story of a violinist, is related.

In *The Tobacco Keeper* as well as in other novels of Ali Bader, especially in *Papa Sartre*, his fictional project is manifested by the epistemological excavation in the Iraqi community from various perspectives. His project is also characterized by a narrative process that depends on well-organized bildung using fantasy as a mode to describe most of scenes. He attempts in *The Tobacco Keeper* to dig out the past in order to strip away the lies and demonstrate the big fallacies that are done through history in making identities within the context of the life stage of the bildung hero.

To know how the development of *The Tobacco Keeper*'s characters is presented, it is necessary to trace how the narrator tackles them. It is common to say that a character is one of the narrative elements that leads the events and organizes the actions. Moreover, the other elements such as the spatial and the temporal are drawn according to her/his actions and itinerary (Yaqteen, 1997:87). Critics propose many kinds of

characters like the central, minor, round, flat, positive, negative, simple and complex. Theoretically, the narrator presents his characters in many ways such as the analysis, acting ways and self-presentation or presentation by other characters (Murtath, 1998: 99). In the analytic way, the narrator describes the external features of a character and reveals her/his feelings and thoughts combining the analysis with environment, time, space and the extension of the social life through the past and future. In the acting way, the features of a character are depicted by other characters who give their opinions and impressions about the character (Najim, 1979: 66-7). Hassan Bahrawi, an Arab critic, proposes three scales of classification of characters: firstly, the models of attractive character such as the handsome guy, beautiful woman and artist. Secondly, the terrifying characters like the oppressing father, feudalist and colonist. Lastly, the character who suffers from psychological symptoms like eccentricity, homosexuality, and complexity...etc. (Bahrawi, 1990: 268)

In *The Tobacco Keeper*, the characters are presented in both ways: analytic and acting. In the first part of the novel, the narrator presents himself in an extended biography and he narrates his life in a chronological order (from his dismissal from the army until his assignment to write about the life of the violinist). Moreover, the narrator reveals the external and internal features of the main character (the musician) through his letters and writings using the analytic way. In the second part of the novel, the narrator uses the acting way in which he depends on the other characters to extract the main features of the central character.

In fact, the function of the narrator in *The Tobacco Keeper* is not restricted to the narration of events; but is extended to an active participation in the events. The narrator is no longer an omniscient one but he has double functions: he narrates the events and interacts with them. On the other hand, Bader's characters usually belong to the intellectual class such as the philosopher in *Papa Sartre* and the musician in *The Tobacco Keeper*. Such characters have the ability to persuade the others and make them do whatever they want. They mostly have a tendency to control others since their intellectual advantage can make them lovable and attractive. Additionally, Bader's novels overflow with minor and transient characters especially in *The Tobacco Keeper* who have neither past nor identity. These flat characters lack the depth and they are inserted only to complete the circle of narrative discourse. (Kamel, 2003:127)

Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* is truly a novel that has the fundamental features of *Künstlerroman*, a subgenre of the *Bildungsroman*. It traces the life of an artist, a musician. It also displays part of the narrator who is, in fact, an artist too. The reporter (the narrator) tells part of his life from his dismissal from military service until his assignment to write a reportage about the musician. Ali Bader, as he does in most of his novels, depends primarily on the documentary style with imaginary detective plot to discuss the issue of identity among other issues. Moreover, the narrators of Bader's novels are always demobilized from the military forces who find themselves idle, trying to find a job, which is usually the field of press (Al-Yasiri, 2009: 33). In his novels, the detective who is assigned in return for money is always outside the narrative game in which he is engaged without having curiosity for what he is involved in. In *The Tobacco Keeper*, the reporter who works like a detective finds himself inside the game, he is no longer the narrator who watches the events outwardly. Here, the narrator discusses and analyses what he sees despite his frequent claims that he is just a reporter.

In the first part of the novel or in the first novella, the narrator tells a part of his life as a reporter describing his work "Ghost-writing: an imaginary paradise or a journey into the unknown?" (Bader, 2011: 19). The reporter goes on telling the rest of his tale as a black writer and how he worked with many media agencies and he was sent to many dangerous zones to write about hot topics. His reports are always attributed to one of the paper's big-shot. His work makes him visit many countries and cities like Ethiopia, Chad, Jordan, Tripoli of Libya, Casablanca, Beirut and Damascus. He writes about the failed coup de tat in Chad and the civil war in Rwanda besides his writing about the Iraqi communists, especially those who fled from the hell of Saddam Hussein to Addis Ababa after the ascension of Mengistu, the president of Ethiopia in the 1980s (Bader, 2011: 22-5).

Bader in telling part of the reporter's life is actually telling part of his own life. As a graduate of the Department of French, Bader is influenced by the phenomenological grotesque launched by the French novelist Allain Robbe Grillet who theorizes it in his book *For a New Novel* 1963 (Al-Yasiri, 2009: 12). The term means tackling part of someone's life in an odd and grotesque way. Grillet's writing style has been described as either realist or phenomenological: a theory of pure surface. Methodical, geometric, and repetitive descriptions of objects replace the psychology and

interiority of the characters. Such a style objectifies the human being and looks for describing his/her possessions, for instance, instead of his/her entity (Grillet, 1992: 30). This new fictional trend appears in Grillet's *Dans Le Labyrinthe (In the Labyrinth)* (1959) and *Djinn* (1981). In his novels Bader depicts part of his narrator's life. Being a black writer, the reporter realizes well that he has no identity; he is a shadow of someone else. There is always a conflict between being a black writer and his real desire to be free. The feeling of being without identity becomes a nightmare that makes him worthless, comparing himself with one of the characters of the poetic trilogy *The Tobacco Shop* of the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (Bader, 2011: 21). The poetic trilogy that he heard about once from another reporter working with him, will appear again in the second part of the novel. In fact, the structure of the novel is based on Pessoa's poetic trilogy.

For me the distinction between the tobacconist and the ghost writer is clear. Regarding the tobacconist, as Fernando Pessoa has said, two creatures co-exist in the soul of each one of us. The first is real, appearing in our visions and dreams, while the second is false, appearing in our external images, discourses, actions and writings. The ghost writer, in contrast, is a kind of negation, an abstraction. He represents a form of colonial discourse that is based on appropriation and rejection. (Bader, 2011: 22)

The trilogy is considered the greatest poetic work Pessoa wrote in the guise of his three main “heteronyms”—Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos, and Ricardo Reis—whose biographies give them different writing styles and points of view. Pessoa creates three poets, each one has a different name and identity. These poets represent Pessoa's different stages of thoughts. These three masks that he creates are, in fact, the masks of the Portuguese society that suffers from contradictions and divisions. Each character is born and dies in ambiguous circumstances; this is not a death in the real sense of the word. Rather, it is a kind of disappearance until further notice, the character dies to be incarnated in another one. (Pessoa, 2006: 4)

The feeling of disintegration and loss of identity awakens inside the narrator as a sort of rebellion against the one who scatters his identity. Moreover, this feeling makes him come closer to the issues of his country which he used to avoid before. The point of departure that draws a new track in his development is the occupation of Baghdad by

US forces and toppling of Saddam's regime which, in fact, represents a real drastic change in his life as a reporter (Bader, 2011: 30). Actually, there was a sense of scattered identity that obsessed all Iraqis in the reign of Saddam. Saddam tried to force them to follow his ideology; he oppressed all other thoughts, ideologies and doctrines. In other words, Iraq was under totalitarianism in which there is only one political party and one leader that had full power and control over the people. In fact, the scattered identity had always been there since the establishment of the modern Iraqi state in the 1920s but it culminated in Saddam's rise to power. (Al- Yasiri, 2009: 163)

After the collapse of Saddam's regime, the reporter, like other Iraqis tries to find out his real identity. Unfortunately, the Iraqi community finds itself involved in sub-identities that lead it to a sectarian conflict. For the secular reporter, the sectarian identity has never made any appeal. What preoccupies him exactly is finding his identity as an independent writer. He is no longer the follower or the shadow of others. Instead, he dusts off the image of identity deprivation that accompanied him for long. His development starts with his work as a black writer which doubled his identity crisis as it dispossessed his identity: "The ghost writer was always ground down by his role. The ghost writer represented total absence and existed on another unconnected plane, living an empty life in an absolute vacuum" (Bader, 2011: 77). The point of departure toward his maturation is manifested by his decision not to be a shadow of others but to achieve his real identity by writing a book about the musician under his name, not to be attributed to another one.

I have written many reports under other people's names, but this time, I want the book to be mine. Then I began, I do not know how, to draw an analytical comparison between two images that obsessed my imagination at the time: the image of the tobacco-keeper-or the tobacco keeper, as I called him-as presented in Pessoa's poem, and that of the ghost writer. (Bader, 2011:76)

By comparing the two images, the image of the black writer that accompanied him long and the image of the tobacco-keeper, the reporter finds that the latter is unique in being enriched by the other two personalities (the keeper of flocks and the protected man) while the black writer is always governed by his role. In fact, the image of the ghost writer is one aspect of colonization. In the age of post-colonialism, the image of the traditional colonizer is replaced by many other forms, one of them is ghost writing.

The reporter does not display his own predicament of identity dispossession but he also displays a predicament of the whole generation that finds itself bewildered in front of the identity issue (AL- Yasiri, 2009: 63). For instance, in section four which is entitled The Imperial City and the Emerald Bars, the narrator describes the big gap between the two different cultures in the green zone that is controlled by the American forces. The narrator, during his stay in the green zone, compares the colonizers with the colonized. He takes the Iraqi translators who work with the American forces as a way of comparison. They are mostly young people, recent university graduates and after the collapse of the state in 2003, they could not find jobs. All they could do is to work as interpreters. Those translators, influenced by Western literature, are mostly well dressed, very civilized and highly Europeanised. They were far more sophisticated than the American soldiers and officers who treat them with contempt (Bader, 2011: 77). The struggle arises from the cultural misunderstanding between the colonizers and colonized:

There is always some misunderstanding. The translators, who are mostly graduates of English or American literature, think the American soldiers and officers will have some knowledge of literature. But when they discover that those Americans are illiterate in every sense, it leads to friction. The Americans, for their part, believe everyone is ignorant or illiterate, and are then shocked to find that these people know more about their own culture than they do. While the Iraqi, who used to think Americans would know who Walt Whitman and John Steinbeck were, now realize they are only a bunch of ignoramuses whose knowledge is limited to porn magazines and sports news. That is how the conflict starts. (Bade, 2011: 78)

Once again, the reporter gives a contradictory image each side has to other: the American soldiers, who completely ignore the cultural traditions of the country they are in, have a wrong image about the Iraqi women who work with them, while the latter have the same. The Americans look at them as whores whereas these women think, at the beginning of their work, that the Americans are liberal and cultured, this image is mainly drawn from the American movies:

Iraqi women have misconceptions about Americans, based on Hollywood movies. They start out thinking an American will be liberal and

cultured and will therefore respect women. But he sees her only a whore. The Americans treat the Iraqi women who work here just like whores. (Bader,2011: 78)

Definitely, Ali Bader, by inserting the narrator as a bildung character, marks a turning point in the Iraqi narrative process. He tries to trim the narrative styles and avoid the narrative techniques that characterize the Iraqi narrative, which deepen the huge gap between the author and reader. The connection is almost cut off due to extravagance of complicated and bewildering styles used by the author. Moreover, the authors over burden their works with metaphysical and philosophical abstractions that make their works beyond the reader's perception (Thamer, 1975: 292).

Ali Bader uses two methods in presenting his bildung hero of *The Tobacco Keeper*: description and presentation which mean describing the external/internal features of the character in the former (Ibrahim, 1993: 87) and presenting the character and introducing him/her either directly or indirectly in the latter (Bourneuf, 1991:158). With regard to bildung hero of *The Tobacco Keeper*, he is presented by the narrator and by other characters that is to say indirectly (Najim, 1979:98). In addition to these two methods, Bader presents the musician through letters that include monologues occurring inside the musician.

#### **4.2.1 The Keeper of Flock: The Universal Identity**

In fact, the external and internal description introduced by the novelist via the narrator is so important in the development of the musician's character. The musician's character is presented primarily by the narrator who is assigned to find out the reasons behind his murder. During his pursuit, he meets other characters especially the character of Kakeh Hameh, the mysterious character that accompanied the musician for a long time. The narrator depends on Kakeh Hameh to know the secret life of the musician. Hence, the character of the musician is presented via the narrator, another character and the letters that the narrator finds. All these contribute to describing the physical and internal dimensions of the musician's character. For instance, the narrator describes the musician.

He was tall, very thin man with long hair and a light beard. He wore plastic-rimmed glasses and dressed elegantly. His love affairs were many and his emotions mysterious. His encyclopedic interests included modern art, poetry, literature and politics. He had a deep belief in metaphysics but had indeterminate political views. His readings in philosophy were wide-ranging, if selective. (Bader, 2011: 5)

This description which is given by the narrator offers a sketchy portrait of the musician but surprisingly the book that the narrator finds in his home is considered the main key for knowing and entering the world of the musician and his bildung transformation. The book is a poetic collection entitled *The Tobacco Shop* by the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa in which he creates three different characters but they are, at the same time, reflections of one character. The character of Jewish musician or what is called by the narrator the Keeper of Flock is a metropolitan character.

The Jewish musician, Yousef Sami, is just like the first character of Pessoa, Alberto Caeiro, the Keeper of Flock, that Pessoa assumes for himself in *The Tobacco Shop*. Sami is innocent as Caeiro; he grasps things with his intuition but never questions anything. The musician, like his counterpart Caeiro, accepts the world quietly, accepts it for what it is, far from any occult philosophy. His life has no hidden philosophy; he seems a wide-eyed child among the infinite formations of nature. There is little doubt that Yousef Sami's character stands in stark contrast to his two subsequent personae: Haider Salman, the Shiite and Kamal Medhat, the Sunni. While the second character is connected with symbolic forms like Richard Reis in *The Tobacco Shop* and the third is attached to the sensual (like Álvaro de Campos), the character of Yousef Sami believed in nothing. Such is the first persona of the musician, the one that carries the name of Yousef Sami Saleh whose death certificate is signed in 1955, the year Haider Salman's persona was born (Bader, 2011: 95).

The mutual letters between Yousef Sami and his first Jewish wife, Farida Reuben, show that Yousef was born in the Al-Torah quarter of Baghdad on 3 November 1926 belonging to a Jewish educated family. Despite their poverty, all members of the family used to read books, newspapers and magazines. Their small house was full of manuscripts and huge tomes (Bader, 2011: 98). His father was influenced by the Communist Movement and he was called by the people of his neighbourhood 'Comrade'

because of his great attachment to it and his support for the left. His leftist sympathies were not restricted to Iraqis, but included all people of the world. This internationalist Jew felt himself united with workers everywhere (Bader, 2011:101). In fact, the minorities always try to shield themselves with a wide-range identity instead of their racial or religious identity. This is due to their need to surpass the barrier of identity marginalization.

Al Khayoun, an Iraqi historian, mentions that many of the Jews joined the Iraqi Communist Party and one of the Iraqi communists, Yehoda Sidqia was executed in 1949 along with his comrades: Salman Yousef who was known as Fahad (Christian), Hussein Al-Shibibi known as Hazim (Shia Muslim) and Zaki Baseem known as Sarim (Sunni Muslim) (Al Khayoun). Yousef's mother, on the other hand, was fond of music especially concertos and symphonies. She used to take the young Yousef to listen to them. Yousef completes his study in music as violinist at the Iraqi Music Conservatory. Nevertheless, the greatest and most important turning point in his life was the scholarship he received to study music in Moscow, with the aid of a wealthy Baghdadi Jew. In such an enlightened environment, Yousef was brought up and his communal mind started forming. According to Al-Aibi, an Iraqi critic, the novel depicts part of Iraqi modern history of 1940s that was characterized by the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence (Al-Aibi, 2011: 152).

In fact, *künstlerroman* can be applied to Yousef's character since it traces the development of a young artist reaching to maturation. Yousef is an artist who finds his universal identity via music from the early period of his life. This leads him to think of how he can continue to live in the stifling community (the ghetto). How he can develop and grow in a society that encased him like a hard shell, impenetrable skin. First, there was the thick layer of family. Then there were the barriers created by the Jewish community and finally there was the fortress built by Muslim community around the Jewish community. According to Al-Aibi, the Iraqi novelist is aware of the Iraqi community mosaic which is based on diversity and variety. It is a long history in which Muslims, Christians, Kurds, Turkmen, Jews coexist. Coexistence always rearranges itself in order to encompass all under the umbrella of the homeland (Al-Aibi, 2011: 144). Nevertheless, the turning point that changes the course of his life once and for all

is his family's move out of the small ghetto to Al-Rashid Street in Hassan Pasha district which is inhabited by multi-ethnic, religious people, Muslims and Christians.

Yousef moved from the small ghetto to the wide world outside, leaving the anxieties of the closed Jewish neighborhood behind him. He broke through its thick skin and reached for the sun. It was not easy for him at the beginning, for it was an existential test in the full sense of the word, a test he would remember all his life. He would often try to imagine, with fear in his heart, what it would have been like if he had stayed his whole life in the claustrophobic atmosphere of a ghetto (Bader, 2011: 113).

Moving out of the neighborhood represents a significant leap in Yousef's life. On the one hand, he leaves the ghetto as a fully formed human being. On the other hand, he leaves his childhood behind him and is on the threshold of manhood. Although the Jewish neighborhood has given him a sense of security, it has also instilled the fear of the outside world in his heart. The new environment removes his fear of the outside world. He starts to walk proudly and steadily without being regarded as a cowardly Jew. With the pass of time, he feels that he is part of the new community and not just a passing visitor. This is an extremely significant development in his life (Bader, 2011: 114). Ali Al-fawaz believes that the digging out in the bildung hero's narrative identity reveals the specific details of the hidden part in the history of his community. (Al-fawaz, 2012: 113)

In fact, two incidents have formed his maturation: the family's move towards diversity and the incident of looting that happened after the riots of 1941, in which there was a fever of revenge upon the Jews due to the expansion of Jewish immigration from Europe to Palestine. In fact, Al-Farhoud (looting) was a conspiracy plotted by the Zionist gangs to force the Iraqi Jews to leave Iraq due to the Nazi propaganda and the uprising of 1941 led by some Iraqi officers who were supported by the Nazi Germany (Al-Khayoun, 2003: 141). Historically this incident occurred when Yousef was living in the ghetto and it dug out deeply in his consciousness making him afraid of the fury of hordes who normally came out in the absence of state, because of the revolutions and the external occupation. It is worth noting that the relationship between the Iraqi governments and the people has always been a relation of mutual mistrust since the Ottoman era. (Al-Wardi, 2006: 301)

The incident changed the life of everyone in Baghdad. It can be described as a real turning point in the history of this society, being the first attack of its kind against its own citizens, and opening the door to civil conflict. (Bader, 2011: 117)

Despite this terrifying incident, the atmosphere of Yousef's family new home offers him a chance to assimilate in the community via music; he is no longer forced to put the Jew's mask. He refuses to wear a particular uniform or identity. He wants to be in harmony with music only because music has no identity, no religion. When he is playing the violin in the Orchestra, he regards himself a deep-rooted artist in this country refuse into be classified according to his sub-identity which really suffocates him. (Bader, 2011: 139)

Being a Baghdadi citizen, Yousef realizes well that it is his destiny to be an Iraqi and one of the artists who establishes Iraqi art that will be destroyed under the alter of recently formed identities. Ironically, his dreams clash with the struggle of identities that has been formed after the Second World War II. It is also the time for the formation of modern Arab countries and Israel. He feels that his entity is threatened by this strife.

Yousef's life was steeped in the identity conflicts of the Middle East. The present, he felt, was dominated by the spectre of war and civil strife. He thought that identities spelled the end of the world. He felt suffocated and almost dead, for the country was like a ship sinking slowly while his fears spiraled. The country was plagued by successive defeats and being torn to pieces. It was being preyed upon by all-consuming ideologies and dominated by chaos and the total absence of rationality and ethics. His own existence was under constant threat. (Bader, 2011:140)

With the collapse of his dream, Yousef, his wife and their son Meir are forced to leave Iraq to Israel without taking any of their possessions. Traveling to Israel is not his objective. Although traveling in itself is fairly easy, leaving Iraq seems to him to be entering a completely alien universe. Undisputedly, the Iraqi Jews, unlike the other Jews in the world, are deeply rooted in their mother country; they refuse Balfour Declaration in which they are promised to have Palestine as an alternative homeland. Instead, they cling to Iraq as their original home (Al-Khayoun, 2003: 139). In Israel, he finds out that it is impossible to live there. They consider them as second-class citizens and they spray

them with DDT to prevent them from carrying their Iraqi germs into the Promise Land. Briefly, Yousef and his wife lack the simplest components of life and suffer from complete absence of beauty that he tastes in Baghdad. He feels that in Israel, time completely stopped and life is tedious, monotonous and unchangeable. He recalls his old past days in Baghdad, the days that were engraved in his consciousness and relived in present. In fact, his return and his love of music are totally incomprehensible to others. He belongs to a different world from the real one and has avocation that is alien to his environment. Al-Khayoun mentions that Sameer Naqash, an Iraqi Jewish writer insists on writing in Arabic instead of Hebrew justifying that it is the sole language he loves that confirms his organic being (Al-Khayoun, 2003: 109).

Leaving Israel to find a way to enter Iraq marks the end of the first stage of his life. The first stage of his life is so important in his transformation as a bildung hero because it conveys the bildung hero's early childhood, adolescence, up to his maturity. In fact, the importance of this stage lies in determining the course of his life, his vehement love for Baghdad and music respectively. The dual love that accompanies him for long draws the broad lines of his coming life, hence, his ceaseless quest to find ways to reach Iraq can be interpreted as a sense of belonging to the land he loves and to the music which emerges there. Consequently, the first stage of his life does not end with being a Jewish artist but it paves the way to the appearance of the second stage of the artist in another persona, the Shiite persona of the artist, which is tackled in the coming section.

#### **4.2.2 The Protected Man in the Tobacconist's Shop**

A new stage of Yousef's life starts, but this time he is born in Haider Salman. Yousef Sami is naturally required to impersonate and embody this new persona that has erased the old one and its history. However, it is totally different from his previous one. The spirit of the artist which refuses a certain mode of identity makes him leap the barrier of religion and race.

If the character of Yousef, the Jew, represents the marginalized identity that finds compensation in music as an outlet for him and a way of self-achievement in Iraqi community, Haidar Salman, the Shiite character finds himself in spiritual and occult rituals and ceremonies. This character (Haidar Salman) has close affinities with the

second persona in Pessoa's work ,Recardo Reis, which is assumed by the composer Yousef Sami. The second character feels that his spiritual life is fixed, and that real happiness is impossible to achieve. He also believes in fate and destiny, and in the existence of an overarching power which, despite everything, ignores his freedom (Bader, 2011: 150). In fact, the Shiite character staunchly believes that there is an inevitable redeemer who sooner or later appears and fills the earth with justice. (Makki, 2004:150-51)

Yousef, with the aid of a member of the Israeli Communist Party Rakah, manages to travel to Moscow to play there. In Moscow, the mysterious character, comrade Kakeh Hameh, arranges for him to get an Iraqi fake passport in the name of Haidar Salman Ali (Bader, 2011: 147-49). Kakeh Hameh introduces him to an Iraqi merchant called Ismael Al-Tabtabaei, a wealthy merchant who trades between Tehran and Baghdad.

Al-Tabtabaei is known for his great sympathy for the left. Kakeh Hameh provides him with a fabricated tale about his life to tell to the merchant. Haidar told Al-Tabtabaei that he is the son of a merchant at Al-Isterbadi market in Al-Kadhimeya and he angers his family by studying music in Moscow instead of medicine (Bader, 2011: 151). With the patronage of Al-Tabtabaei, the Shiite wealthy merchant and with marrying his daughter Tahira, Haidar becomes protected. Haidar and his wife go to Baghdad where they have their son Hussein. In Baghdad, he starts his activities as a musician and befriended a lot of poets and artists. He witnesses the turmoil of hordes in the revolution led by the military officers in 1958, the revolution that changed the monarchy in favor of the republic.

His complete identification with that character seemed to me almost 'diabolical', for it showed that he had discovered himself almost totally and completely. Through constant training and continued creativity, he was no longer playing a part but had become the new persona. (Bader, 2011: 170)

Haidar Salman, the second persona represents the Shiite protest; Haidar, despite his Communist background, finds himself under the impact of rebellion and protest image embodied by Shiism. No wonder that he welcomes the revolution, the great coup d' état that would establish the republic of joy in Baghdad. The mingling of the

historical protest and rebellion with the Communist mode is the significant development of the second character to get maturation. Taha Hussein, the Arab renowned writer states that the image of protest is always associated with Shiite character and it obviously appears in Shiite's poetry . Though he hails the revolution whose leaders propose him to be its musician, he fears it because it naturally focuses its entire attention on the masses; the revolution of the mob that recalls the terrible memories of the Farhoud, the looting of 1941, besides, his music is not understood by the mob:

It is clear that Haidar Salman felt considerable hostility towards the mob, the masses and the populace in general. His aversion was perhaps born out of the public's inability to understand his music. He had always felt something of a rift between him and the masses. But this hostility grew after the Farhoud, which proved to him that the masses were the prime enemy of everything beautiful. Those who opposed beauty, according to him, stood against all that was life. (Bader, 2011: 172)

For him, revolution means the change that must come from the inside of ourselves as a need to spread beauty, love and spirituality which music is able to reveal. Unfortunately, that revolution opens the door for the coming massacres of 1963 and after in 1968 for the way to the ascension of Saddam Hussein to power. Under Saddam's reign, Iraq lived in militarization and crises that made the whole country a big jail. In 1980, Iraq-Iranian war broke out and Saddam ordered to expel all Iranian subjects and confiscate all their properties. Haidar, his wife and thousands of families were removed by force from their homes and compelled to settle in strange lands. The irony is that most of these refugees could hardly locate Iran on the map. The authorities took them by trucks where they were thrown on the borders while their son Hussein was taken to a camp. Before they passed the last point of the Iraqi borders, his wife Tahira died due to her illness and fatigue (Bader,2011: 211). Anderson, who met some Iraqi exiled people in Tehran, reports a story told by an Iraqi abductee woman in whom she describes how the Iraqi authorities gathered them and carried them by trucks towards the Iranian borders in the no-man's land. They walked for three consecutive days and many girls were raped by gangs until Iranian military vehicles saved them (Anderson, 2008: 62-3). Haidar, with the aid of other abductees, buries his wife before they reach the Iranian lands. Here, he realizes that he is no more than a number in Iraq or other oriental

countries. One must acclimatize with the irrational state of the country. Hence, the notion of the third character starts to be formulated (Bader, 2011: 212-13). In April 1980, the Iraqi regime expelled about 400,000 thousands of Iraqis who did not have the official papers that the Ottoman authorities had issued when they ruled Iraq before the British occupation in 1917. In fact, those abductees were Iraqis but unfortunately, they did not take Ottoman documents in order not to be taken as soldiers in the wars of the Ottoman Empire (Sluglett, 1981: 337-38).

In Iran, he realizes that life, as he knew it, is made up of actors performing roles. Few months earlier, he was the Iraqi composer Haidar Salman. Now things are different; the old play is over and he has to find himself a new performance. He is about to enter a new world, a new life. After the expulsion, he writes the following letter to Farida, his Jewish wife:

We must not forget ourselves entirely, even if we surrender to a role that we've invented, even when it is incompatible with our personalities, because we have chosen to play that role. But I see that others, instead of playing their roles, are played by them. I wish I could find myself another role and stop playing myself. We often imagine that we control the game, unaware that it actually controls us. We often imagine that we uphold values contrary to those we were raised to uphold. But in truth we are only surrendering to them. (Bader, 2011: 216)

The Iran that he has known well once disappears without a trace, replaced by a new Iran in a religious mode (Bader, 2011: 219). As a secular artist who belongs to the left, Haidar Salman finds that it is difficult to live in such a strict environment in which the secular ideas are not allowed. Anderson, an American writer, confirms that all the aspects of the civilian life have vanished in Iran whose new name becomes The Islamic Republic of Iran (Anderson, 2008: 54). Hence, he starts to find a way to return to Iraq. Again, the salvation comes from the left; an Iranian Communist organization has given him the passport of a man who has died in a car accident a few days earlier. The passport given to Haidar Salman is in the name of Kamal Methad Hassan, an Iraqi merchant who marries a woman from Mosul called Nadia Al-Umari. She has married him a year earlier and is now living in Damascus. She has been the widow of a Syrian who was killed in the confrontations between the Islamists and the state. As soon as he

reads his new name and sees his photograph, date and place of birth in the passport, he feels that the persona of Haidar Salman has vanished without a trace. Suddenly he feels so alienated from it that it seems to have been imposed on him. He has a far greater sense of identification with the new character of Kamal Medhat (Bader, 2011: 231). In the novel, both the nation and the bildung hero transform.

#### **4.2.3 *The Tobacco Keeper: End of the Artist's Journey***

The musician enters Damascus with the new identity under the name of Kamal Medhat, the Sunni persona; this is his third character, the personality that corresponds to Álvaro de Campos from Pessoa's *The Tobacco Shop*. Kamal Medhat's character is just like the third character of Pessoa, lives in the world of pleasure and smoke. Briefly, he is a sensual character. Though he does not believe in any metaphysics, he thinks that there is a divine instinct that plans his destiny and chooses him to be a leader; yet, in fact, he derives his strength and existence from the previous characters. On his arrival in Damascus, Medhat is suspected by the Syrian authorities as he brings with him an amount of opium, nevertheless; they release him due to lack of evidences (Bader, 2011: 233-36). Later, he meets Nadia Al-Umari, the wife of the real Kamal Medhat who falls in love with him. He tells her that he is no more than Haidar Salman (Bader, 2011: 250).

The turning point is his return to Baghdad in the early 1980s where he becomes a member of the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra with the help of other musicians. He and Nadia have a boy (Umar) who is sent later to his aunt in Egypt. Kamal sees the atrocities of the Iraqi-Iranian war that bring to his mind the shadows of the images of looting mobs, revolutions and military leaders that he and the previous characters fear (Bader, 2011: 266). In the Iraqi-Iranian war that is waged by Saddam, more than two millions have been killed, and various terrible weapons, including chemical ones were used. This is expressed in Bader's novel in the following lines:

He shivered to think of a country that held so many closely guarded secrets. A new obsession loomed in the air, a new romanticized notion to blow away minds and thoughts. A deep sense of defeat and malice predominated. Political confrontations abounded, guided only by the unquestioning glorification of nihilism, rebellion and irrationality. The regime exalted the mysterious powers of instincts and blood. Saddam Hussein himself was part of

the legacy of nihilism...Pushed by the West, it rolled with insane speed. It went from one battle to another and from one invasion to the next, to establish the empire of malice and republic of the mob. (Bader, 2011: 286)

Ironically, the collective mind that moves most of Iraqis finds its way to his mind. It is assumed that everyone is usually susceptible to the environment that he lives in. Iraq with all potentialities becomes in favor of the dictator and his useless adventures. Baghdad turns into a Spartan society and the Iraqi citizen becomes no more than a soldier. He is violent, pompous, impulsive and coarse, military uniforms are objects of pride. The dictator's media depicts the struggle between Iraq and Iran as being just the Persian prejudice against Arabs. The regime manages via media to impose its ideology on art and on most of Iraqi people (Sluglett, 1981: 242, 43). Kamal Medhat finds himself unconsciously under the influence of the regime's media. Kamal is one of the musicians who participate in playing the Martyr Symphony along with the musicians of the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra. More than anyone else, Kamal is aware of the noble and pure spirit of the martyr within him. He believes, like many Iraqis, that Iraq is the martyr--the victim that stays alone. Kamal feels alone just like Iraq that is left alone and betrayed by the Arab countries. He expresses his ideas in the following lines:

The dominant romantic idea was that Iraq acquired its identity from its tragic fate as a country located at the extreme edge of the map, on the one hand, and as a country deprived of access to the sea, on the other. According to nationalist notions, Iraq the savior was itself Iraq the victim. Iraq was, in fact, being punished for its heroic, prophetic role, for it was a nation with a prophetic mission existing outside human calculations and values. Saddam would come out in his khaki suit, screaming out loud that poor Iraq was surrounded by enemies. Iraq was like Joseph among his brothers. But poor Joseph, who submitted and eventually won the hearts of his father, mother and brother, was very different from Iraq, which lashed out with all its might (Bader, 2011: 287) Nadia dies during the bombarding of Allies Forces in the Second Gulf War in 1991. He carries her to the grave and after burial; he stays at her grave crying bitterly. Under the sanctions imposed on Iraq, the state of destitution and loss of hope prevails over most Iraqis. The image of the Arab nation is no longer there; now it is the age of

the American nation, the new drive towards the Tocquevillean<sup>5</sup> dream of democracy and human rights. Sluglett sees that the state of poverty due to the international sanctions and cruelty of the dictator make all Iraqis aspire to salvation even though it comes from the devil's hand (Sluglett, 1981:385).

With the US invasion, a new page of Iraq history is opened. The invasion uncovers the deep struggle of complicated identities, the struggle that is culminated in the sectarian war. In fact, the return of the bildung hero's sons represents the dilemma of identities; Meir comes back with the US forces bearing ideas of democracy, prosperity and change; it is a dreamy image that is designed and fabricated according to the model of the West. Hussein returns from Tehran with the Islamic Shiite movement, feeling happy to be back after a forced exile and believing in Shiite Islam as a solution for the Islamic nation. Omar comes from Egypt bearing measureless anger and spite at the Sunni's loss of power.

Unquestionably, each one of his sons reflects a certain phase of his life; hence, the image of his sons reflects the predicament of the scattered identity of modern Iraq (Bader, 2011: 301-3). Al-Aibi sees that the novel's importance lies in uncovering the forbidden sectarianism that is mostly ignored (Al-Aibi, 2011: 145). This covered and unspoken sectarian division comes to refute all claims of nationalistic ideology which propagate some beliefs of uniformity and unity. Bader describes this division of grand superimposed grand narratives into several little narratives for each Iraqi social, religious and ethnic group:

Although people in general tried to downplay the significance of the division, they tacitly reinforced it. Kamal, who thought that the country had a single story, a single narrative and as a result a single identity, was now shocked to find three conflicting and contradictory narratives. Each faction wrote from the others. He suddenly found that the Shia had a narrative, the Sunnis had a

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<sup>5</sup> Tocquevillean: ascribed to the philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville who calls for democracy of America during the independence war in his book *Democracy in America*

narrative and the Kurds had a narrative. These were not complementary, but were contradictory narratives that confronted each other. (Bader, 2011: 304)

Kamal Medhat, as a musician, realizes well that his dream of Iraq which includes all identities is just a utopian dream which never exists but in his imagination. Iraq used to expel its sons from paradise of Eden. He alone is the true representative of the outsider, the marginalized and the exiled, opposing all forms of power and rejecting all ideologies. He remembers Tahira's death and Nadia's as well. He is obsessed with the idea that they wanted to die. As observed in *The Hours*, also in this novel characters are obsessed with the idea of death seeing it as a kind of freedom. The death wish is a real fact that cannot be ignored, for it comes from within the human soul and not from without. The mystical idea that dominates his mind is waiting for death; death is what he longs for as a resolution to his problematic issue. He thinks that death invites him to join Tahira and Nadia as he expresses in his final letter that is sent via his son Meir:

Death will be here soon. I'm not long for this life. It's true that I'll resist at the beginning, but I'll surrender to it with love in the end. I burn for the final moment. My ecstasy will be indescribable, a moment of orgasmic pleasure. I talked to you last time about the tobacco keeper, didn't I? Today I'm thinking, why can't death be the tobacco keeper? I don't regard death as awful, but see him as an elegant gentleman. I will embrace him and call him brother. (Bader, 2011: 305)

Actually, what Kamal is waiting for has been fulfilled; he is killed by an armed group and his body is found near Tigris River in Baghdad as it is mentioned by a local newspaper. In fact, Bader does not cast light on the reasons of his murder and leaves many debatable questions: Who kills him? His sons or the identities that he impersonates? The answers have been ramified. One may argue that his sons participate in his murder in order to obliterate their origin. The most logical interpretation is that his real identity is the main reason behind his murder. Under the chaotic conditions and absence of law, it was planned by many parts to kill him in order to obliterate the history of a certain religious group whose role in building modern Iraqis obviously eminent. At that time, the sectarian and ethnic parties try to expand at the expense of the other. Ironically, no one buries him except the reporter narrator who is totally bewildered in which cemetery he must bury him, Shiite, Sunni or Jewish. Finally, the

narrator realizes that the musician does not live under any sectarian or religious name but under the name of Iraq.

Like Mrs. Woolf in *The Hours*, Kamal Medhat feels that his journey will be culminated in death. He realizes that the abyss which looms large between his dream and reality has not been completely crossed. The virtual world that he lives in reaches its end with the arrival of his three sons who incarnate the real world that he refuses to accept for a long time. Both Mrs. Woolf and Medhat realize from the early stage of their virtual life that a dramatic death is waiting for them. As artists, both of them cannot cope with the real life that they live in; instead, they replace it with a virtual one in which they find their compensation. If Mrs. Woolf chooses death as a solution to her spiritual crisis or a means of immortality, Medhat does not intend to choose death, rather he feels that death looms nearby.

The inception of death as an idea that is planted in both characters' minds can be easily traced in two spectacular scenes in both novels. The visit of Vanessa's children and their discussion about burying the dead bird gives Mrs. Woolf an incentive to terminate her life in order not to destroy her perfect virtual life that is deformed by her real one. Moreover, the children themselves create a sense of lack of maternity. Similarly, the visit of Medhat's three sons gives him the feeling that death is so close to him. He hopes that his sons are like him, but he is shocked to find out that each of them bears a very different ideology. This means that the virtual life he creates is collapsing. As a result, he realizes that death is the only way to vitalize his virtual life. He feels that death is a kind of protest against the fragmentation of the national identity.

### **4.3 Maturation through Time and Space**

#### **4.3.1 Time**

This section tackles the importance of space and time in the development of the characters. As far as time is concerned, its vertical level applies to *The Tobacco Keeper* whereas its horizontal one applies to *The Hours*. The vertical level is the second according to Gerard Genette who divided them into two types as is shown in the previous chapter. Salah Fadhil, the Arab critic, gives a simple explanation to the vertical level:

The vertical level is concerned with the slowness and speed of time whereas the difference between the story of time and the time of narrative discourse does not only scatter the arrangement of events over the past, present and future, it also leads to another point (rhythm) of the speed and slowness of the narrative. (Fadhil, 1992: 302)

According to Genette, the vertical level contains four techniques: pause, scene, summary and ellipsis (Genette, 1981:102). Deconstructing conventional time sequence and by employing these four techniques self reflexively, the novelist can form the particular rhythm of his own narrative work.

The first technique is pause, which is considered one of the basic narrative moves in the novel. It refers to the extension of the discourse time at the expense of a complete stopping on the part of the story time (Yaqteen, 1997: 144). Just like it is used in *Tristram Shandy*, the pause is usually connected with description that demands breaking the linearity of time. Besides the descriptive pause, researchers add the informative pause in which the narrator gives information to the character (Al-Hamdani, 1989:76). *The Tobacco Keeper* overflows with informative and descriptive pauses because of tackling the conflict and falseness of identities in the Iraqi history, and casting light on development of the characters. In fact, both pauses reveal some aspects in the bildung hero and narrator's development on equal ground. The pause comes to interrupt the linearity of time in order to allow the character to discuss his development self-reflexively as the novelist breaks the linearity of the events sequence in an attempt to make the postmodern bildung hero Yousef Sami expose the influence of his family's move to another neighborhood: "Did Yousef consider the move to the Hassan Pasha neighborhood a significant change in his life? Certainly. Did it represent a departure from the terror that had dominated his life for so long? Certainly". (Bader, 2011: 121)

Scene is another technique used for the development of character. It is simply the state of compatibility of the discourse time with the time of story via the dialogue and both times are usually relatively slow (Todorov, 1977:79). In other words, the compatibility occurs when the narrator is temporarily absent in order to enable the characters to argue (Ibrahim, 1993: 118). In fact, the dialogue in *The Tobacco Keeper* has a significant role in showing the development of the bildung hero. The novel overflows with lots of dialogues like the dialogue between the musician and his three

wives. These dialogues have mainly contributed to his development, hence, have oriented his compass toward maturity.

Summary, the third technique, is the indirect narration in which the time of the events extends to occupy the largest temporal proportion of the novel (Ricardou16). It differs from the scene in not presenting the occurrence of facts chronologically. Rather, it covers large and unlimited phases of the story that extend to days, months and years in few lines or paragraphs (Todorov, 1977 48). There are two types of summary, the intensive and the floating. The intensive summary covers a specific long period which the narrator mentions quickly while with the floating, the narrator does not specify the period (Kassim, 1984: 80). *The Tobacco Keeper* presents an intensive summary to the life of the narrator (the reporter) and to the life of the musician respectively. In fact, summary does not convey directly the development of the bildung heroes but gives hints to this development. In the brief biography of the bildung hero that the narrator presents, the summary gives hints to the bildung hero's development. The narrator paves the way to the maturity of the musician through the summary that he gives to depict the musician's character in the beginning of the novel:

Kamal Medhat's entire life therefore proves without a shred of doubt that the notion of an essential 'identity' is false. His life demonstrates the possibility of exchanging identities through a series of narrative games. An identity turns into a story that one can inhabit and impersonate. In this way the artist laughs tongue-in-cheek at the deadly struggle of identities through a game of pseudonyms, fake personalities and false masks. (Bader, 2011:7)

The fourth technique is ellipsis in which the narrator disregards a period in the story without referring to its events (Al-Marzouqi, 1986: 89). Ellipsis is the speediest move in the narrative that is used to accelerate the events (Ricardou, 1977: 206). Genette divides ellipsis into two types: the explicit and the implicit. In the explicit ellipsis, the narrator refers to the ellipsis of time in brief phrases like (after two years or months.....etc.) and without referring to the events. The implicit is the unspoken ellipsis in the narrative discourse that is concluded by the reader via the chronological order or the gaps in the narrative (Genette, 1981: 117-119). In *The Tobacco Keeper*, ellipsis comes to show the speedy transition of characters' development in order to reduce the tedious repetition of events. The ellipsis can be seen with the narrator and the musician.

With the narrator, the ellipsis appears when he finds the toppling of Saddam by the US invasion of Baghdad a precious chance to prove his identity as a reporter. At the same time, he starts to see Baghdad from a different standpoint:

I remained like this until 2003. The occupation of Baghdad by the Marines and the toppling of Saddam's regime represented a real sea change in my life as reporter. From that moment on, that Middle Eastern city became the focus for reporters, correspondents and documentary-makers from around the world; not just because of the war, but because of a real transformation in international politics that, on the one hand, reasserted imperialist discourse and, on the other, represented an opportunity for change throughout the Middle East (Bader, 2011: 30).

#### **4.3.2. Space**

Like the types of space that are detected in *The Hours*, *The Tobacco Keeper* exposes various kinds of space that transform the main characters. A careful review of *The Tobacco Keeper* reveals that the dominant types are the domestic, hostile, open, closed and historical. The first type is the domestic space in which the characters feel safety where it contains their sweet memories (Bachelard, 1994: 16). In *The Tobacco Keeper*, the narrator considers Bab Touma in Damascus a domestic space because it reminds him of his home in Al-Karrada in Baghdad; his love for this space is a significant turning point in his decision to accept the task in Baghdad: "I was in love with Bab Touma. My time there reminded me of some lost moments of my life in Baghdad because of the similarities between this neighborhood and A-Karradah" (Bader, 2011: 33). In fact, the development of the bildung hero, the musician, stems primarily from his love for the space that is deeply rooted in his mind and heart. Iraq, particularly, Baghdad is the decisive space that makes him impersonate multiple identities. The narrator confirms the love of the bildung hero towards his city: "All he wanted was to return to Iraq, and for him returning to Iraq meant no more than going back to the place where he used to play music in front of the families of Baghdad" (Bader, 2011: 158).

On the contrary, the hostile one is the space which the characters vehemently abhor. The forms of this kind are usually prison, deserted place, exile and alienation

(Halsa, 1981: 26). Ironically, the musician sees that all places outside Iraq are hostile spaces for him; he hates the places that he immigrates to such as Israel, Damascus, Tehran and Moscow. If Baghdad is considered a domestic space for him, it is a hostile space for the journalist due to the war. The narrator describes it as "It turned into the most violent and dangerous place in the world" (Bader, 2011 30).

In fact, the open space is usually associated with domestic space. This place is also connected with the character's vision of feeling of freedom. The open space allows the character stay away from pressures; hence, it influences the character's decision. The forms of the open space are streets, cafés, taverns, cities, gardens and rivers; the space is usually characterized by generality and vastness (Al-Ani, 1994: 206). Al-Rasheed Street where the bildung hero's home is located is an open space in which his first maturation occurs. The River Tigris also represents an open space in which he experiences the change that accompanies puberty. In one of his letters to Farida, Yousef has pointed out how: "Swimming in the river had erased the humiliating fear that had always dominated his life in Al-Torah. He felt then as though an earthquake had pushed him into action, forcing him to jump and leap in. Fear had vanished completely from his heart because he had been strong enough to overcome it". (Bader, 2011: 122)

Unlike the open space, the closed space is similar to the hostile space in which the character feels restrained and confined (Al-Ani, 1994: 207). The camp in Israel and in Iran where Yousef Sami is kept by force is a closed space that urges him to reach to the point of maturation.

At the camp in Israel, time had come to a complete standstill. Life was monotonous and unchanging. He realizes that truth was granted to no one and that the Promised Land had been promised long ago. Although he felt hesitant and giddy, and was full of sorrow and conflict, the whole world seemed to urge him to leave. (Bader, 2011: 144-45)

The fourth space that is detected in *The Tobacco Keeper* is the historical one which comes along with time. In other words, this kind of space is characterized by being rooted in time and its vitality and importance stem from this mingling, for this

reason, some critics call it spatiotemporal. The historical space is recalled because it is associated with a past period or represents a sign in the context of time; hence, the place becomes a historical character (Saeed, 1979: 30). Baghdad and Tehran represent the real historical space that develops along with time. The development casts its shadows of development on the characters. Al-Rasheed Street, the main street in Baghdad where Yousef lived, represents the face of Baghdad in 1940s and 1950s, the image of the virgin, pure city that is stuck in his mind for a long time. "Yousef had been urged to find inspiration in the morning splendor of Al-Rashid Street, the city squares with their insane congestion and the noise produced by the black leather carriages with their golden lamps" (Bader, 2011:110). In contrast, Baghdad's image in 1980s is lifeless despite the modern aspects; it is no longer a pure city but a massive city which lacks life and spirit. The image motivates his thought to take another path.

However, Baghdad has another face. Its face under the embargo grinds all Iraqis except the tyrant and his followers. There are many images of Baghdad: The image of Baghdad that devours her sons, the image of a city in which a wave of people running towards a free meal offered in some square or park, the image of crowd of men and women in tatters, starving and barefoot who wait hopelessly for what the state offers. These images fill him with a sense of death, the death that he awaits for a long time. In one of the mutual letters between him and his wife Farida, he writes: Life is cold and empty. Baghdad is a world enveloped by mystery. The streets are filthy, the shops are empty, and the faces are pale, sickly and desperate. Classical music halls have turned into popular haunts for vulgar songs (Bader, 2011: 294).

Time and space intermingle and collaborate to shape the character of the bildung hero. His personality is defined by the relations he keeps with the space and time. The concept of time which flows in linearity could leave traceable effects on his character only in close relation with the space. Time and space manage to shape his personality, mentality and identity. Both time and space would have a zero significance without the collaboration with each other.

#### **4.4 *The Tobacco Keeper* as a Postmodernist Fiction**

As in *The Hours* where three main postmodernism features are traced, focalization, stream of consciousness and intertextuality, *The Tobacco Keeper* has also postmodernist elements.

##### **4.4.1. Focalization**

Both novels tackle three different postmodern characters who are actually reflections of one signifier. *The Tobacco Keeper* depends on the narrator in telling the story which starts from the bildung hero's death. The narrator, with the aid of other characters and the letters that he finds, presents lives of these three characters.

In *The Tobacco Keeper*, the external and internal focalizations are manifested by the narrator and the bildung hero. The narrator focalizes externally on the cultural distinctions between the colonizers and the colonized in arguing both views of the Americans and the translators who work with them (Bader, 2011: 78). On the other hand, the internal focalization is clearly demonstrated in the narrator's point of view when he laments his predicament as being a black writer; he believes that his work is a sort of colonization, though it is done by his absolute contentment. Thus, the novel has two parallel development patterns: one for the bildung hero and the other for Iraq. For the narrator, colonization is imposed by a global, inescapable, complicated order; however, it supplies his life needs and dispossesses his entity. In fact, the narrator's focalization is a reflection of his feeling of loss of identity that he seeks to prove. Through focalization, the narrator tries to practice an elevated consciousness against the feeling of identity crisis caused by the colonizers (Al-Fawaz, 2012:55). This focalization is really associated with the narrator's development through which his maturation is determined in writing the report under his name and not under the alias as he used to do (Bader, 2011: 22).

Bader succeeds in depicting the musician's dilemma of being involved in another world, the world that is not down to earth, it is far away from the demagogic taste of kitschy art that the mob values. During his study of music in Moscow, the conductor, who teaches him, advises him to find artistic inspiration from his own people and

nowhere else. The musician focalizes on how to create something palpable, something that draws its power from the music of the universe. Al-Fawaz sees that Bader's *bildung* heroes try to focalize on their consciousness as phenomenological facets via focalization to express their existence (Al-Fawaz, 2012: 127). In fact, his maturation is firstly formed with his focalization on the worlds of beauty and humanity. Music, as he sees, is the only language that people speak, the only ritual that leads them to God:.

This was faith, no doubt, it was a belief that reconciled the different religious inside him. Judaism, which he had absorbed as a child, Christianity, which had seeped into his soul through classical music, and Islam, which became part and parcel of his inner self after his marriage to Tahira. God was One, although He appeared in various texts. (Bader, 2011: 193)

Through the narrator, Bader discusses identity politics in relation to the viewpoint of the minorities that the musician focalizes on. The musician as a member of a minority, the Jewish community, feels that his voice is not hearable although he is impersonating the identity of majority. However, his feeling of superiority stems from being a musician and intellectual as well. He finds himself cursed of belonging unwillingly to this minority. His hatred of the mob arises from the mob's tendency to glorify the dominance of race and despise the others. The mob reveals the potential destructive power in turmoil times. The musician focalizes internally through letters that he sends to his wife or via the narrator who speaks in his tongue. Al-Yasiri observes that Bader ascribes the atrocities the community witnesses to the ignorant masses, without mentioning the background of their ignorance (Al-Yasiri, 2009: 122). The following citation supports Al-Yasiri's view:

The people are dangerous, very dangerous, because they represent the disappearance of rational behavior. The people are against critical thinking. In fact, their thoughts are completely different from mine. Their ideas and movements are driven by pure chance. They do not think, but only flare up and become wild. They combine the most contradictory tendencies and represent the dissolution of the particular into the universal. One word is enough to transform the people into a bull in a china shop. (Bader, 2011: 201)

He focalizes on these issues without leaving gaps in the narrative process. Through focalization, the *bildung* hero and the narrator manage to delve deeper in the

scattered identities that are marginalized by the conflict of sub identities. He and the narrator touch upon these issues skillfully due to focalization which enables them to tackle the issues in an attempt to make the readers think deeply about such issues which are covered by the consecutive governments on purpose

#### **4.4.2 Stream of Consciousness**

One of the modern features that still persist in postmodern fiction and Bader uses in his novel is the stream of consciousness technique. Though *The Tobacco Keeper* conveys a wide range of modern Iraqi history, Bader manages via this technique to fill the gaps in the chronological narrative. This technique can be found in the flux of thoughts and ideas that occurs in the musician's mind. In fact, the stream of consciousness is not limited to saving time but also it permits the bildung hero to speak freely and shows the character's development inwardly.

Music has the great role in the young Yousef's development, hence; it makes him get out of the conventions of his own local confinement and directs him towards a homeland which accommodates everyone regardless to his affiliation. Yousef, in his quest to mix the classical music with the popular one, in fact, tries to draw the mob towards a more tolerable world, a world that accepts diversity. Al-Aibi views that the musician interacts with music of the West and tries to copulate it with the domestic one. This may elevate the mob towards worlds which are full of beauty, forgiveness and tolerance (Al-Aibi, 2011: 129). The stream of these ideas and thoughts come in his mind as a flux of images that leaps spontaneously to his mind recalling Alberto Caeiro's image of music which is similar to his. He sees music as expressing nothing and everything at the same time, patterns not ideas, sounds emanating from the essence of existence and not from existence itself.

contemplate it with no fixed ideas; to create a body that did not fade because music does not fade; to create ethereal, eternal feelings, because it is only feelings that cannot disappear; to create music that was like a leap into the unknown, music that was elevated and spiritual. (Bader, 2011: 112)

The stream of consciousness technique is also used by Bader in the novel to show the musician's prospective view of the coming events. The internal monologue

that occurs in Kamal Medhat's mind reveals how complicated is the formation of identity. The blind racial and religious intolerance enhances the societal division that inevitably leads to the civil war and this is exactly what he perceives. In fact, the consecutive corrupt regimes, in an attempt to stay in power, enhance the societal division (Al- Aibi, 2011: 151). This view is obviously manifested by the bildung hero through the flux of ideas in the following lines:

Kamal Medhat played the music as he looked at the garden. He saw the trees with their huge trunks and their long branches towering tall and magnificent. The lush green color emphasized the will to life, while wars emphasized the wills of their individual perpetrators. Wars were the conflict of different wills, embodying destruction and death. (Bader, 2011: 254-55)

To sum up, the technique of stream of consciousness causes textual fragmentation and it has a great role in manifesting the ambiguous aspects of the bildung hero's mind. Through this technique, Bader manages to express the dark spots of his characters' minds revealing how their development has occurred intrinsically. The flux of ideas that occurs inside the characters especially the musician has contributed to his development and maturity.

#### **4.4.3 Intertextuality in *The Tobacco Keeper*: The Scattered Identity**

In fact, Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper*, like Cunningham's *The Hours*, is entirely based on another literary work. Cunningham makes *Mrs. Dalloway* a point of departure in his work and recalls some characters of *Mrs. Dalloway* and involves them in *The Hours*. Similarly, Bader manages to project the characters of the poetic trilogy which is written by the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa in *The Tobacco Shop*, (1882-1935). Actually, Bader is fascinated by the idea of intertextuality so he tries to project other literary works on his own works as he has previously demonstrated in *Papa Sartre* (2001) and *Jerusalem's Lamps* (2006). According to Hussein Kinani, an Arab literary critic, *The Tobacco Keeper*, like most of Bader's postmodernist works, depends primarily on other literary works. Yet, it is the first Arab novel that invests the life of a western poet and projects his work on it. Moreover, it is characterized by the complicated narrative building and the presentation that gives an interesting reading

Pessoa is described as one of the most controversial poets in the twentieth century (Bloom, 1994: 485).

Bader, in his quest for ways to express the predicament of Iraqi identity, invests the transformation of three characters in *The Tobacco Shop*. Likewise, he makes his characters' developments follow the track of Pessoa's characters, in fact; he wants to represent the three phases of development in Pessoa's own life. In an interview with *Arabic Literature in English* magazine, Bader states that he is fascinated with Pessoa's heteronyms in tackling the transmutation of characters. Bader admires Pessoa's ability to cultivate many personas from one character. He finds Pessoa's work a magnificent projection of the sectarian conflict that broke out in 2006 as it is a projection of the struggles of minorities. The conflict depends primarily on the false feeling of identities. Skillfully, Bader avoids being another replica of Pessoa's work and he grants his work with different characters rather than heteronyms; in other words, the heteronyms tackle the phase that the poet creates imaginatively. Contrastingly, Bader asserts that his characters:

were not false names but “other names”; they thought differently, they had different religious and political views, different aesthetic sensibilities, different social temperaments. But finally they are one, like me, like you, like the bildung hero of the novel (Bader, 2011: 76).

Naturally, the narrative identity offers an “ideal substitute for the predicament of personal identity due to the pressure and oppression practiced by the totalitarian and dictatorial regimes in solving the self or sub-identity with one total mode” (Al-Yasiri, 2009:118). Hence, Bader finds out that the metafictional game of identity via intertextuality is the best way to draw attention onto the minority issues.

In the opening of *The Tobacco Keeper*, Bader inserts an epigraph quoted from Pessoa's *Tobacco Shop* to remind the reader that his work is entirely based on Pessoa's work. This epigraph is the main gate to enter the world of the musician oscillating in identities, besides giving the intertextuality:

Eat your chocolate, little girl;

Eat your chocolate!

Believe me, there are no metaphysics in the world  
beyond chocolate.

Believe me, all the religions in the world do not  
teach more than the sweetshop.

Eat, dirty girl, eat! (Pessoa, 2006 : 15)

Contextually, the relationships of syntactic and semantic intertextuality are demonstrated in the musician and his transformations. In each transmutation of identity that the musician has, Bader cites an introductory epigraph extracted from Pessoa's work to introduce his characters and their developments. Pessoa divides his work into three sections; each one tackles a different character. In fact, the three characters impersonate one character that shifts his state according to the state and environment in which he lives. In the chapter that deals with Yousef Sami, the Jewish musician, Bader depends primarily on the first persona Alberto Caeiro in Pessoa's work to tackle his first persona. According to Harold Bloom, Pessoa manages to create multi voices in order to express transmuted self; the first persona Pessoa assumed is Alberto Caeiro (Bloom, 1994: 487). Caeiro is far from any metaphysical complexity and out of relying on any precise religious or occult philosophy; he accepts the world as it is, encompassing all mankind. Religion, race, and sect but means created by man himself to kill all that is beautiful and elevated (Bloom, 1994: 486): I believe in the world like I believe in a marigold, because I see it. But I do not think about it. I have no philosophy, only feelings. There is metaphysics enough in not thinking about anything. (Pessoa, 2006 17)

Bader, while presenting Yousef Sami, compares him with Pessoa's first persona Alberto Caeiro. He views that both bildung heroes share nearly the same standpoint in their outlook to the world. Both of them grab the essence of the world through intuition and perception, not through reason. Yousef, like Caeiro, is out of any particular philosophy or religious agenda; he sees the world as a universal preoccupation . And this is obviously stated in the following lines:

Was he talking about Alberto Caeiro, the keeper of flocks, the first of the characters that Pessoa had assumed for himself in *Tobacco Shop*? For Yousef Sami Saleh was as innocent as Caeiro; he contemplated things with his eyes and not with his mind. Wasn't Caeiro just the same? Furthermore, Yousef didn't come up with any great ideas when he gazed at the objects around him. His view of things was profound but neutral. He captured things with his feeling but never questioned anything. This great musician, like the poet Pessoa, accepted the world quietly and serenely, accepted it for what it was, far from any metaphysical complexity. His life had no hidden agenda. (Bader, 2011: 95-96)

Ironically, the character of Álvaro de Campos, the third assumed personality of Pessoa, writes Caeiro's biography in the section that tackles him. The same intertextual relationship can be detected with Yousef Sami in *The Tobacco Keeper*; the third persona Kamal Medhat writes in Iraqi Music Encyclopaedia Sami's biography as one of Iraqi music pioneers:

It was strange that the character of Alberto Caeiro, who was born in Lisbon in 1889 and died of tuberculosis in 1915 after publishing his collection of poems *The Keeper of Flocks*, should have his biography written by Álvaro de Campos, the third assumed personality of Pessoa. When I later investigated the life of the Iraqi composer Yousef Sami Saleh, I discovered that his biography had been written by none other than Kamal Medhat. (Bader, 2011: 96)

Concerning the second persona, Haidar Salman, that embodied the second stage of Yousef Sami's life, Bader projects the second persona of Pessoa's named Ricardo Reis on Salman. Ricardo Reis is a poet who is protected by the first character, Alberto Caeiro. He has a date of birth and lifestyle very different from the other two. The protected believes in the Greek gods even though he lives as a Christian in Europe. He believes in fate, destiny and occult life. He feels that his happiness is too difficult to achieve; his happiness may exist in the other life due to his belief in the existence of Supreme power. (Bloom, 1994: 487)

Bader quotes lines from *The Tobacco Shop* recited by Ricardo Reis as an introductory epigraph to Haider Salman; hence, a keyword of Bader's second persona. "Don't plot your destiny, for you are not future. Between the cup you empty and the

same cup refilled, who knows whether your fortune. Won't interpose the abyss? (Pessoa, 2006:114). Virtually, Reis' in *The Tobacco Shop* and Salman in *The Tobacco Keeper* share common features; Salman, as his counterpart, is protected by his kinsman Ismael Al-Tabtabaei. The ideas of both protected men lead them towards a kind of Epicurean existence and compel them to avoid pain at any cost. Both characters try to avoid emotional endings despite their wisdom and attachment to the signs and symbols.

This character has close affinity with the second persona assumed by the composer, that of Haidar Salman. After his escape from Israel to Moscow, he immigrated to Tehran with the help of the Russian musician Sergei Oistrakh and the Iraqi communist Kakeh Hameh, who lived in Moscow. The fake passport he carried gave him more than just a name. It gave him a new history and a date of birth that preceded that of the first character by two years. In other words, he was now born in Al- Kazemeya in Baghdad in 1924, just as the character of the protected man in *Tobacco Shop* was born nine months before the first character. And he was a Shia (Bader, 2011: 151).

In tackling the third persona, Kamal Medhat, the Sunni character, Bader invests the third persona Álvaro de Campos assumed by Pessoa in *The Tobacco Shop*. In order to enter to the world of Kamal Medhat, Bader opens Methat's chapter with lines extracted from *The Tobacco Shop* describing Campos' persona to project them on Medhat. "Hey, I know him: it's Esteves, who is without metaphysics. (The Owner of The Tobacco Shop came to the door) As if by divine instinct" (Pessoa, 2006:18). In fact, Bader takes the title of his novel from these lines that describe Álvaro de Campos. Moreover, Bader makes an approach to compare his third bildung hero with Pessoa's third persona. Campos is a sensual character obsessed with gratifying the senses of taste and touch, he wishes to live in a stupor off the previous characters; the character that flies in a world of smoke, pleasure and sex (Bloom, 1994: 487).

Though Campos' character is drastically different from the previous characters, the shadow of the two characters is there hovering on him. Medhat's character is like the former one; he lives in a state of inactivity by indulging in smoking, pleasure and sex. Though he depends on the two previous characters, he is more solid than the other two. He is torn between his sense of greatness and his utter emptiness. Hence, his character is generally described with absurdity and lack of balance (Bader, 2011: 234).

The semantic level of intertextuality can also be applied to the three sons who, in fact, represent the three phases of transmutation that Pessoa assumed in *The Tobacco Shop*. Each one of the sons represents, in a way or another, the intellectual and psychological state of the character that belongs biologically to him. Meir, the first son, represents the metropolitan image of his father Yousef Sami, the Jew character. Meir is Alberto Caeiro, the first character of Pessoa's *The Tobacco Shop*; Hussein is Ricardo Reis while Omar is Álvaro de Campos. Meir's role is the keeper of flocks, who makes himself master of Ricardo Reis (Hussein) believing in the democratic future that will turn Iraq into a Middle Eastern paradise just like Japan and Germany. As for Hussein who returns recently from Iran, he believes that Shiite philosophy is a philosophy of history, or historical determinism. Islam is the perfect system for mankind and the waited promised Imam is the savior and reformer who will apply the absolute justice. Contrastively, Álvaro de Campos (Omar) who leaves for the east (Egypt in this case) and returns laden with the image of the tyrannical, patriotic Arab Sunni Muslim who wishes to write the history of his identity by recalling the Sunni's ousting from power:

Kamal Methad remembers Pessoa's poem. His three sons are also the three characters of the poem. Meir was born of the character of Yousef Sami Saleh, the keeper of flocks in *The Tobacco Shop*; Hussein was the offspring of Haidar Salman, the protected man; Omar came from Kamal Medhat, the tobacco keeper. They are his three names and his three cases of impersonation. He realizes that each one of them is a faithful reflection of his own ego. Through their characters he discovers the essential answer to the problem of identity each one of them was a facet of his personality, a single entity that is split and multiple at the same time. They are a three dimensional Cubist painting of a single face (Bader, 2011: 303).

*The Tobacco Keeper* is truly a postmodern novel that invests many features of postmodern fiction especially intertextuality by which Bader manages to tackle the lost identity of minorities via duplicating the identities. Bader, in his quest to depict this complicated issue, finds out that Pessoa's work is the perfect way to project its characters on his. Virtually, *The Tobacco Keeper* touches the most important issue that preoccupied the Iraqi community since the establishment of the Iraqi State in 1921. It, just like Cunningham's *The Hours*, tackles the impersonation of three phases, three identities of the same persona through projecting them on other texts. In both novels,

the past and the present are two faces of one coin; the past, with all its aspects, repeats itself in new phases.

It can be inferred that *The Tobacco Keeper* represents a significant example of postmodernist *Bildungsroman* since it deals with the transformation of the bildung hero. Besides focalization, stream of consciousness and intertextuality that are mentioned above, *The Tobacco Keeper* manifests some other less remarkable features such as fragmentation which is tackled implicitly in the context of the bildung hero and narrator's maturity. The novel is considered a historiographical meta-fiction which is presented in the context of the bildung hero's life too. In this novel, Bader tries to decentralize the fake concepts that accompanied Iraqi history for a long time. In his attempt to strip off the fabricated history of Iraq, Bader creates an imaginary journey of the artist in all his metamorphoses to rewrite the Iraqi history from a new perspective.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *WATERLAND AS A POSTMODERN BILDUNGSROMAN*

#### 5. 1 Introduction

In his postmodern novel *Waterland*, Graham Swift narrates the metafictional journey of Tom Crick who has worked as a history teacher in Greenwich, London, after he returned from the war in the year 1947 and married his childhood friend Mary. Tom's career ends when his wife steals a baby and the crime is made public through the local paper. However, there is an earlier change in Tom's career. He leaves the official course of the syllabus and narrates personal stories upon one of his student's, Price's, underestimating remarks on history, claiming it to be a fairy-tale of the past events that are unnecessary and unrelated to the present and future. Also the headmaster of the school, Lewis Scott, forcibly convinces Tom into an early retirement and adds that he plans to close the department of history as "an unavoidable reduction" (Swift, 2010: 29). Obviously the headmaster, himself a physics and chemistry teacher, perceives history as a useless area of study. When he admits his distaste for history, he implies that history has no "practical relevance to today's real world" (Swift, 2010: 29), reflecting the pragmatism of the structuralist approach and its inadequacy to make connections.

Lewis' attitude resembles, as Southgate puts, to the empiricism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, according to which "historians accept their own exclusion from any confrontation with issues that are contemporary or of practical importance" (Southgate, 2009:11). Thus, history is merely "an anodyne theoretical construction of no practical consequence, concerned only with the recital of banalities" (Southgate, 2009:12). Southgate also states that history "as a modern 'science'" "seemed to deny the validity of just those qualities and characteristics that are most prized in the humanities, including the expression of subjective experience, imagination, feeling, and a sense of wonder" (Southgate, 2009:12-3). Although Tom knows that Lewis is not pleased with his new teaching method, he continues to do what he thinks is true. By challenging the grand narratives, which connote objectivity and empiricism as

well as lack of connection between the past and present, Tom revolutionarily follows “the direction that history, both in theory and in practice, is now taking; a direction that leads toward a redefinition of the subject that embraces heart as well as head, feeling as well as reason, color as well as grey (or black and white)” (Southgate, 2009: 13). Lewis represents authority and its overwhelming influence that demands submission. He is “defending stability at all costs” (Irish, 1998: 924), while Tom “tends to undermine attempts to totalize”. (Irish, 1998: 925)

The dominance of authority is also noted in the relationship between the religion and society. As the objectivity of history is questioned, the objectivity of religion is also undermined and religion is seen as a tool to impose an authorized meaning on others:

One of the Bible's ideological functions, then, is to ensure obedience, presumably to God but in reality to the various secular and religious authorities who assume the privilege of interpreting it. The willingness with which people default that interpretation to others is the principle danger of such texts. (Rubinson, 2000: 166)

While Lewis represents positivist and formalist authority and thus escapes reality, Mary escapes reality by taking refuge in the assumed objectivity of religion. She steals a baby from the street with an excuse that she believes will justify her: “God told me. God...” (Rubinson, 2000: 268). However, Tom outlines the post-modern stance to God, who is no longer a centre, a useful voice of the real: “We’ve grown up now, and we don’t need him anymore, our Father in Heaven. God’s for simple, backward people in God-forsaken places” (Rubinson, 2000: 268). The “Father in Heaven” image connotes God as an authority who watches people from above and demands obedience. However, God has lost its reliability as authority and objectivity are demolished by postmodernism. As the area of knowledge and reality is limited under the circumstances of a commanding God, religion is no longer a reliable determinant of *Existenz*<sup>6</sup>.

Externalizing a post-structural essence, Tom’s perception of history is something that is outside formal the order, or more than the order has to offer, which eludes “a

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<sup>6</sup> A German term having a different meaning from its English equivalent “existence.” It was brought to prominence by Karl Jaspers. Existenz is authentic being or the genuine self. Existenz and freedom are always interchangeable. Existenz is the ground for being, for freedom of thought, and for action.

structural invasion that failed to recognize its [history's] movement, spontaneity, and internal dynamism" (Foucault, 2002: 224). Realizing this, Tom ceases teaching the structural grand narrative of history to his class, and instead, starts narrating stories. The grand narrative fails to connect the past to the here and now and to the future – hence Price's objection to history: he wants a future on which he believes the past has no effect (Foucault, 2002:145). However, history is not only about the past; history happens in the here and now as well, so that past, present, and future events are intrinsically connected: "It's a curious thing, Price, but the more you try to dissect events, the more you lose hold of them – the more they seem to have occurred largely in people's imagination" (Foucault, 2002:144).

## **5.2 Waterland as a Postmodern Bildungsroman**

The postmodern opposition to the grand narratives is also related to the grand narrative's assumption that the modern discourse of reality is constructed on a system of idealism that actually generates only a self-proclaimed objectivity. As Marais observes through John Fowles' postmodern *Bildungsroman*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the postmodern "concern is thus with the epistemology of literary forms, which because steeped in specific understandings of reality, do not simply describe that reality constatively but predispose readers to see it in certain ways – manipulating, misleading, and even lying to them" (Marais, 2014: 253). Postmodernism presents the ultimate subjectivity of reality which can be better traced through personal stories than general history. As Tom says in the novel,

remember that for each bildung hero who once stepped on to the stage of so-called historical events, there were thousands, millions, who never entered the theatre – who never knew that the show was running – who got on with the donkey-work of coping with reality. (Marais, 2014: 46)

Moreover, the individual is more likely to change rather than develop into perfection, because perfection does not define cyclical Existent. Just as history is a never-ending cycle, the story of an individual indicates a lifelong process, too. Thus, Tom does not evolve into a perfect individual. His problems are still existent at the end of the novel. In a postmodern setting, "the individual is pre-sent not as the expression of a coherent self, but as the central problem of the story. For post human subjects, these

are stories about learning what it means to be human” (Jones, 2011: 446). Appropriate to the postmodern reality, his story presents awareness and change that are not a final conclusion at the end of the novel since Tom’s story is still developing just as time and history develop. Tom explains this to his students as being “realistic”: “I taught you that by forever attempting to explain we may come, not to an Explanation, but to knowledge of the limits of our power to explain” (Jones, 2011: 113). So, Tom’s bildung is not toward an ultimate truth or ideal self. In fact, “Crick’s reality refuses to satisfy our longing for purpose and looms instead as an inescapable ontological ‘something’ which is also a meta-physical or semiological ‘nothing’” (Decoste, 2002: 381).

The development represents “bildung not as the achievement of ‘inner culture’—or the individual’s realization of an ideal self through the cultivation of private subjectivity—but as a collective process that contributes to the development of humanity through the act of imagining an ideal, democratic nation” (Gannon, 2014: 373). Of course idealism, if understood as perfection, is not a substantive element of reality. Apparently, “an ideal nation” refers to the “democratic” state of a society where the mind is free from an “imperfect” (in the sense that it lacks the paradigmatic connection of the past to the present), structural reality. Tom Crick’s resolution to renounce history as a history teacher signifies that he wants to change the order, at least, by his individual effort in the school. Although his students, and especially Price, confront Tom’s understanding of the confluence of the past and present, in the end they protest against the headmaster’s decision to dismiss Tom. During the farewell speech, Price, much to Tom’s surprise, cries loudly: “No cuts! Keep Crick!” (Gannon, 2014: 332). It is possible to say that Tom’s revolution has a social aspect. But then, it is to have a social aspect because what he deals with is not personal. Tom discusses concepts such as history and reality which necessarily concern the community. As a result, his reflections on the issue of *Existent* address the public audience rather than being mere personal insights.

Similarly, linearity is as unrealistic as perfection. The past is not past for the human mind; it associates the past with the present and the future, and thus, overcomes the traditional notion of time and makes it an overwhelming entity instead. The novel conjugates the past and present in a new historicist sense by fragmenting the narration with Tom’s ancestral stories: “Since Waterland is built of such repeated digressions,

they become the pattern, and each digression becomes something to decode, modifying a reader's response and undermining the possibility of a master narrative" (Irish, 1994: 926). The fragmented storyline not only keeps the suspense but also creates a complex structure. Moreover, such fragmentation and complexity serve to the postmodern sense of cyclical *Existenz*, which does not have a closure: "throughout the novel closure is avoided through the many digressions, which themselves are interrupted rather than closed. "Such untidiness both opens narrative possibility and upsets story order" (Irish, 1994:928). Accordingly, neither the ending of the novel where Dick drowns himself, nor Tom's present state where he is left job-less and his wife is institutionalized, offers a final conclusion. In the first case, he feels "obscurity" and what he notices lastly is "a motor-cycle" (Swift, 2010: 355). Like the postmodern bildung heroes of *The Hours* and *The Tobacco Keeper*, Tom's personal story in the present ends ambiguously but it still reflects change: "Crick doesn't know what to say" (Swift, 2010: 333) for he is surprised by Price's reaction, which shows that Tom has changed his students as well as himself. He, just like the characters of the other two selected novels, is obsessed with the idea of death as a way to freedom. From this point of view, like the others', Tom's development is a complex one. With regard to a postmodern character, it involves not only personal but also social drives. For this reason, Tom's development is traced through the stories of characters he chooses to narrate. By learning about other characters through Tom's comments, the reader is at the same time informed about Tom and his conception of reality.

Being a senior history teacher, Tom realizes that what he teaches as history is just another form of constructed narrative. The narration of the past, be it general history or personal stories, is ultimately a discourse. While history is perceived as an objective account of events, it is nothing more than a perspective on the events: "That is, the illusory 'wholeness' and 'completeness' of narrative creates the illusion that the subjective, random, or ideological choices of the historian of what to include seem natural, whole, and inviolate" (Berlatsky, 2006: 257). So it is no doubt that history is a subjective narration of the past. While Tom's outstanding student, Price, calls history a fairy-tale of past events for the reason that "what matters is the here and now. Not the past. The here and now – and the future" (Berlatsky, 2006: 14). Tom's perspective on history as a fairy-tale is based on its constructed composition of the past in a subjective

manner that claims to be objective, and points out that reality can be different and many sided than what the history book offers:

So we closed our textbooks. Put aside the French Revolution. So we said goodbye to that old and hackneyed fairy-tale with its Rights of Man, liberty caps, cockades, tricolours, not to mention hissing guillotines, and its quaint notion that it had bestowed on the world a New Beginning. (Swift, 2010: 14)

Thus, Tom tells his story. “Children, be curious. People die when curiosity goes. People have to find out, people have to know. How can there be any true revolution till we know what we’re made of?” (Swift, 2010: 20). Post-modern existential accomplishment, which Tom calls “revolution,” depends on the quality of knowledge. If knowledge is limited to what we are told is reality, it is not possible to have an existential revolution: “What every world-builder, what every revolutionary wants a monopoly in: Reality. So shall we get back to the syllabus?” (Swift, 2010: 22). Tom, who says he “is no longer sure what’s real and what isn’t” (Swift, 2010: 47), realizes that history as a series of events listed in the syllabus represents only the monopolist reality of the grand narrative. He bypasses this fake reality by prioritizing his own narrative over the grand narratives. After all, storytelling is a tradition of the Crick family, and it has an important function: “How did the Cricks outwit reality? By telling stories” (Swift, 2010: 25). While the trauma of tragic events drags most people to forget the tragedy rather than face and accept it, storytelling is a form of reconciliation between the past and the present in order to construct a sustainable reality.

History has no end, but the beginning of history is as unknown as the end: “Why why why has become like a siren wailing in our heads and a further question begins to loom: when – where – how do we stop asking why? How far back?” (Swift, 2010: 112). But asking questions is still better than forgetfulness (Swift, 2010: 113). Accordingly, the floating dead body on the river where Tom’s father Henry is employed as a lock-keeper functions as a starting point for the revelation of ancestral and personal stories of Tom. The dead body of Freddie Parr is a set point from where the before and after is traced.

### 5.3 History and Reality through *Bildungsroman*

Back to childhood, there lies a story revolving around sexuality that affects the future of Tom and his family. In a summer day of 1940, Tom, his brother Dick, his friends Freddie Parr, Peter Baine, Terry Coe, and the girls Mary and Shirley, sit on the banks of the Hockwell Lode (Swift, 2010: 183). Tom and Mary are thirteen years old at that time, like all the others except Dick, who is a seventeen-year-old “potato head.” As curiosity “simmer” naturally, they arrange a swimming competition whose winner can see Mary’s private parts. Dick is surprisingly the winner, but the other boys play a joke on Mary and finally Freddie puts an eel into Mary’s pants. Mary and Tom grow intimate when the two travel to school together. Their relationship gains a sexual aspect upon Mary’s implacable curiosity, and she gets pregnant in 1942, at the age of fifteen. When Dick learns about her pregnancy, he assumes it is Freddie Parr’s misdeed; so he kills him. Mary gets a crude abortion, which is the cause of her lifelong infertility.

When they get married in 1947, both of them know that they cannot have children. They also do not adopt a child, because it “is not the real thing” (Swift, 2010: 132). At the core, reality is “an empty vessel” (Swift, 2010: 46) whose meaning is infinitely deferred, while the emptiness is constantly filled with meaning. Thus, history is ascribed with a subjective meaning whose substance is fluid and changes according to the present day conditions of the interpreter. Coherence is a vital element of reality, for it prevents past incidents from a loss of meaning. However, the coherence of the stories is subjective. “In *Waterland*, the reader is faced with a story that both promises and undermines coherency” (Irish, 1998: 928) since it undermines the coherency of the grand narrative, and at the same time, structures a subjective but personally coherent story out of the past. That is why reality is a continuous and cyclical entity where, as Foucault states, one cannot decode past events and “discourses [...] without discovering the profound continuity that links them, and leads them to the point at which we can grasp them” (Foucault, 2002:221). Mary manages to uphold her *Existenz* to a certain degree by trying to forget the past, but her forgetfulness leads to a failure to accept and forgive the reality of not being able to have a child. It is understood that she forgets instead of forgiving the past, so that when the nostalgia of the past, which is the inevitable result of a circular movement of reality, strikes her around thirty years later,

she is literally defeated by it. As Cooper suggests, *Waterland* portrays “the past as evanescent but everywhere inscribed” (Cooper, 1996:374). Mary cannot maintain the meaning of her *Existenz* against the harsh face of reality which is “everywhere inscribed.” Instead of creating a story out of her past and the here and now, she creates an illusionary reality which she calls “a miracle”: “God came down to Safe ways and left her a gift, a free product” (Cooper, 1996:309). Not being able to handle and control reality but rather attributing her forgetfulness to God, Mary fails her *Existenz* and ends up in a mental institution.

Likewise, Dick fails to sustain his *Existenz* when he is faced with the reality of being a child of incest. Dick – potato head – is the rotten product of Helen and her father Ernest Atkinson, who engage in a love relationship until Helen marries Henry Crick. Ironically, Ernest wants a child from Helen, who will later be the “Saviour of the World” (Cooper, 1996:228). The Saviour of the World turns out to be a potato head, because there is no world to be saved: “this world which we like to believe is sane and real is, in truth, absurd and fantastic” (Swift, 2010:234). The savior of an absurd world can only be a retard. In this sense, Dick symbolizes the falsity and delusion of the constructed reality of History as the grand narrative, which fails in the last analysis. “Where narrative is said to explain the inexplicable, Dick is presented as the failure of explanation” (Berlatsky, 2006: 282). Accordingly, Dick drowns himself in the river Ouse. The novel ends with the symbolism of the death of the “Saviour of the World,” in other words, the defeat of history and traditional narrative in the form of a progressive and linear account of reality. The three novels selected for this study end with death.

One of the greatest postmodern fears is the end of the world, which Tom’s student Price frequently points to: “The only important thing about history is that history has reached the stage where it might be coming to an end” (Berlatsky, 2006: 157). However, Tom believes that history proves otherwise. Progress succeeds regress, and regress succeeds progress in a constant flow. So, there is no end of history at the point where it is anticipated to end. What happens is that the cycle of progress and regress begins once more: “How it repeats itself, how it goes back on itself, no matter how we try to straighten it out. How it twists and turns. How it goes in circles and brings us back to the same place” (Swift, 2010:146).

Tom outwits reality, but he does not fall into the trap of sticking to the past or present while telling his stories. He is aware that reality is circular; it has no definite beginning or end so that one cannot attach one's *Existenz* to a certain level of it only and exclude oneself from other parts, nor does it progress forward. As the exploration of the past is unending, the formation of the individual does not end either: "self-mastery is never final, but rather always tenuous, because the self, in its incompleteness, is constantly becoming otherwise than it is and was" (Marais, 2014: 245). To sustain his *Existenz*, Tom outwits reality by constructing a reality of his own that is based on the circularity of life and the presence of the past in the here and now, which he explains in the metaphor of "the reclamation of land":

There's this thing called progress. But it doesn't progress, it doesn't go anywhere. Because as progress progresses the world can slip away. It's progress if you can stop the world slipping away. My humble model for progress is the reclamation of land. Which is repeatedly, never-endingly, retrieving what is lost. A dogged, vigilant business. A dull yet valuable business. A hard, in glorious business. But you shouldn't go mistaking the reclamation of land for the building of empires. (Marais, 2014: 334)

In short, sustaining *Existenz* within a postmodern atmosphere pertains to the fictionalization of fiction, which Tom observes by narrating his story instead of history, with the awareness that reality is not solid and that meaning is added. To explain it in Foucault's words,

It [archaeology] is nothing more than a rewriting: that is, in the preserved form of exteriority, a regulated transformation of what has already been written. It is not a return to the innermost secret of the origin; it is the systematic description of a discourse-object (Foucault, 2002:156).

The development of Tom suggests a revolution for its capacity and ability to make paradigmatic connections between personal and impersonal, and past and present events, as well as for its ability to deconstruct the notion of progress. He accepts the past (in the sense of regress) and anticipates its return for the essentiality of *Existenz*: "Be brave, be brave. We're going to restore – We're going to return. Back. To go forward" (Foucault, 2002:311). Accordingly, the end of the novel revolves to its

beginning and to the past, to the year when Freddie Parr is killed and Dick commits suicide.



## CONCLUSION

This dissertation has traced and analysed the employment of the *Bildungsroman* concept in three postmodernist novels by Michael Cunningham, Ali Bader and Graham Swift. The dissertation has also instigated how each of them exploits personal life to explore different psychological, spiritual, existential and cultural problems.

Although it is commonly asserted that *Bildungsroman* and its forms were invented and used in the earlier stages of the development of the novel are not valid in the postmodern age, there are some examples which refute this common belief. Cunningham's *The Hours*, Ali Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* and Graham Swift's *Waterland* are exceptions for this view since these novels include many aspects that make them *Bildungsroman* although they do not follow exactly the tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These postmodern novels are written in such a careful and skilful manner that it requires a careful reading to find out the developmental line of the bildung hero

It has been concluded that the novels discussed in this dissertation are not only good examples of the postmodern *Bildungsroman*, but are also *Künstlerroman*, sub-genre of *Bildungsroman* which deals with the development of the artist from immaturity in his art to maturity. Here, *The Hours* exposes the intricate and complex character of the artist as a writer, although this task is too difficult for the novelist to try and far more difficult for the reader to grasp. It needs an extraordinary writer to depict the mental and psychological workings that move inside the character of the artist. Also in the context of *The Hours*, it has been concluded that the *Bildungsroman* is manifested through Cunningham's skill in tackling a historical and literary figure, Virginia Woolf, and recapturing her while writing a literary work, *Mrs. Dalloway*, to create a bildung hero living in the postmodern age, who embodies fragments of both the writer and the bildung hero she created, namely Cunningham's Clarissa Vaughn. Such a complex relation and careful recreation on the part of the writer (the sender) requires a complex reading on the part of the reader (the receiver). It has been deduced that postmodernist fiction is not intended for passive readers but to an active reader who participates in the totality of the message just like the example of the reader incarnated in Laura Brown in *The Hours*. In brief, Cunningham moves through history to shape a postmodern bildung

hero: he digs in the past through fictional characters to reach at a bildung hero living in the second millennium but is deep rooted in history and fiction at the same time.

In Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper*, the reader may not find it difficult to trace the elements of a *Bildungsroman*. In this novel, the writer uses some less intricate and less complex techniques than those used by Cunningham. He simply traces the life of one man through three different stages; in each stage this man has a different name and identity. It has been surmised that still, the chronological line of development makes the novel a typical example of *Bildungsroman*, or *Künstlerroman* to be more precise, since the bildung hero embodied in three names and identities is an artist.

Bader's *The Tobacco Keeper* casts light on the collective mind, history and culture through the personal life of the postmodern bildung hero who has no finalized characterization. It has been concluded that the novel which is apparently registering the details of a person who lived in a stormy age is actually recording major events and pivotal moments in the social, political and economic history of the entire nation

The last novel selected for this study Swift's *Waterland* depicts existent as a revolution that is attained only when the bildung hero overthrows the structuralist form of history and reality. It has been derived from the novel that the structuralist approach fails to notice the cyclical nature of history, which provides a paradigmatic aspect of reality. In this sense, the re-narration of the past and the present with the ability to make connections and to observe that history is fluid instead of progressive. This is how the postmodern individual forms his Existent and how the bildung hero evolves.

To conclude, in addition to being postmodern *Bildungsroman*, the novels tackled in this study share some other elements. All three novels employ the epistolary technique in the example of letters among the characters. They use history in an artistic and fictionalized way so they are historiographic meta-fictions, and they themselves historicize the social, political and cultural reality of the nations they belong to.

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