

## History and aesthetics of the new Arabic novel

### The novel "The Nights of Isis Copia" Waciny Laredj model

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#### Introduction:

The Arabic novel, especially the historical novel, has overcome the barrier of expressing reality through the exploitation of history. Where has the various boundaries between types of discourse blurred, and with it the principle of differentiation between types of human knowledge? The narration has become a comprehensive discourse for the various fields and knowledge, so the relationship of narration to history is one of the topics that have sparked a wide debate between intellectuals and literary critics. Narrative critics assert the obligatory history of the novel, even though the novelist is not a historian; However, the need for narration for history was required by developments on all levels, especially the requirements of the modern novel.

#### Research problem:

This study came as an attempt to answer the problems: the new Arabic novel and its relationship to history? Then we will try to take another step forward in touching other aspects of the historical narrative text by studying the novel "Isis Copia" by the Algerian novelist Waceni Al-Araj. And knowing the extent of the openness of the new Arab novelist discourse on history ?, and the position of the historical figure evoked in the novel between the facts of history and the narrative of fiction? Because it did not remain captive to its limited geographical space, it went beyond it to be a historical symbol.

#### Research importance:

The importance of the research lies in the study of the novel, which contains a large portion of the manuscript texts that the novelist found and employed in his narrative text, and revealing aspects that were absent or silent during the last period of the writer and human life, "May Ziada", and the injustice that befell her family and friends Especially the educated group Those who used to frequent her literary salons, and her suffering in "Al-Asfouriya" Hospital, and her pain from the cruelty of society against her.

#### Research aims:

The research aims to shed light on the new Arabic novel in general and the historical novel in particular, and to highlight the place of history and the aesthetics of fiction in the contemporary narrative discourse.

#### Research Methodology:

Through this study, the descriptive and analytical historical method was applied based on the extrapolation of the historical texts (manuscripts) that Waciny Al-Araj related to the writer and critical writer "May Ziada" to reach the manifestations of history in the new Arab novelist discourse. And criticism, analysis, and disclosure of new historical events and their lighting.

**Research axes:**

In order for this study to achieve its desired goal, we formulated methodological axes, which we wanted to accommodate the rationale of the topic, so we singled out three axes: In the first axis we dealt with the concept of the novel in language and idiom, and in the second axis the emergence and development of the novel and the relationship of the latter to history and reality, and then the emergence of the historical novel. The third axis we have devoted to the applied aspect through our study of the novel “The Nights of Isis Copia: Three Hundred Nights and One Night in the Hell of a Sparrow,” and the attempt to uncover some historical events that were hidden or silent about them that emerged after Wassini Al-A'raj arrived in the manuscripts of May Ziada.

First: The concept of the novel in language and convention:

1- The linguistic concept of the novel:

The term novel is introduced in Arabic literature as it denotes a type of prose art, but the word appears in linguistic dictionaries without its conventional connotation recognized in the field of contemporary criticism. This is because "the novel was not used in the ancient Arabic language with that connotation, although it had other connotations that might be related from near or far to that new connotation." It came in the tongue of the Arabs: “I watered the people, I watered them if I drew to them, and it is said from where I irrigated you; that is, from where you watered.

**2-Idiomatic concept of the novel:**

The concept of the novel in the modern era has taken new forms, in its idiomatic aspect, as it is generally an art of long fictional prose art that depicts some kind of facts and events, and deals with some exciting and strange adventures; It is a world of diverse human cultures, and expands to include various purposes through its basic elements: narration, description and dialogue. The novel is a literary form that is very popular with the reading public, and it is very easy to recognize its form, even by the average reader, but it is difficult for critics to find a specific concept or a comprehensive definition of the art of the novel; The reason is due to the multiplicity of his trends and the development of his methods over the course of different eras. Therefore, the directions of the novel are said, and each type has its own: the trends of the modern novel, the classic ..

**Second: the novel and history:**

The Arabic novel developed and was able to impose its creative peculiarity at the levels of aesthetic and narrative formation. “Through some experiments, I worked to look at reality by dealing with it by investing in history, and I tried thus to present a new picture of reality.” literature; As the critics of narration assert the obligation of “history in the novel, although the novelist is not a historian,” the need for narration for history has been demanded by developments on all levels, especially the requirements of the modern novel.

1- The emergence of the Western novel:

The early beginnings of this art go back to the Greek era, as is the case with all other arts, and in this era it came full of wonders and oddities, wrapped in many fictitious and superstitious matters, and the narrative form goes back to its first origin in the Middle Ages when it was initially confined to a direct formula for narrating news It is required that it be real and recent, and at the same time about important and interesting personalities, that is, it combined at that

time between heroic touches that approach the myth and the modern press, with the news it contains that actually occurred. This novel is called the primitive novel.

The modern novel has met with great demand and special attention by the reading audience, due to the aesthetic values and cognitive issues it has with philosophical roots based on the intellectual document of the writer who prepares the first reader for his creative work. And it has turned into "an extensive record of the psychological, social, anthropological and aesthetic echoes that this story can contain," and it meets the needs of the human community. The novel is based on a special relationship between the reader and the writer, which allows it more comprehensive possibilities in terms of direct and personal integration into the psychological experience that usually takes place in an atmosphere that tends to be alone and alone. Most of the various and varied topics multiply today in the novel, as it is the only artistic form capable of understanding these topics and posing all the problems that occupy the novelist. Because "the novel was not subject to the specifications of theatrical representation in front of the audience, or even the oral reading that we find in poetry, so it was able to avoid the restrictions imposed on both theater and poetry" thanks to the flexibility of its form and the diversity of its themes.

## **2- The emergence of the Arabic novel:**

Scholars and writers of the history of literature unanimously agree that the Arab novel appeared in the sixties of the last century, during this period it underwent major transformations, and had a special place in Arab creativity, and continued to impose its presence and dominance on the Arab literary and cultural arena, to the point of considering it the office of the Arabs in the twenty-first century. The Arabic novel, in the early stages of its inception, imitated the Western novel in style, structure, and even a theme. Mimicry and imitation thereafter "; We find this evident in many works that were translations of Western novels. But it was necessary to draw a course of its own and to "be an art with no precedent or inherited traditions. The Arab reality is the main motivation for writing the novel or the one whose story is called for, ... it is narrated and not transmitted, that is, an art whose imaginary allows the unseen to say," The different, or say what is not allowed to be said, is an art that illuminates and anticipates and practices, implicitly, criticism without being criticism, philosophizing life without being a philosophy, and revisiting history, our history, without being history, "and if we go back to the genesis of the novel among the Arabs, We find that there are those who attributed its appearance to the influence of Western literature, and that it first appeared in the "beginning of the nineteenth century in the form of novels transmitted from European literature, then simulated some of its forms and artistic forms." The path of growth and development to the extent that writers comprehend it in form and content, and direct their attention to what serves their reality and monitor what is appropriate for the conditions of their environment. Perhaps the novel "Zainab" by Muhammad Hussein Haykal is the first Arab novel experience that fulfills the characteristics of the Western novel, represented in the French fictional effect on its romance and poetry.

## **3-Investing the novel into history:**

The novel is that ancient, modern art, ancient in its appearance, modern in its construction and development of its components and themes. The issue of the emergence of the Arabic novel has aroused the interest of Arab criticism of the novelist. And some of them had a moderate position or chose not to go into this issue and took a neutral position. Scholars and writers of the history of literature agree that the Arabic novel appeared in the sixties of the last century. Its presence

and hegemony in the Arab literary and cultural arena, to the point of considering it the office of the Arabs in the twenty-first century.

The novel is generally divided into major genres: social, commercial, historical, police, psychological, political, propaganda and folkloric fiction. This does not mean that there are no other genres, but these are the main features of fictional art. The historical novel is concerned with recording the actual events of history.

#### **4-Realistic and Historical:**

The Arabic novel developed and was able to impose its creative peculiarity at the levels of aesthetic and narrative formation. "Through some experiments, I worked to look at reality by dealing with it by investing in history, and thus tried to present a new picture of reality," which means that the narration represents history, which is an effective document of history. Reliance on it to find out what is social and realistic; The novelist goes back to history, "measuring from him a specific thing needed by the context of the fictional text he writes," where "what suits the expression of his question is deducted from it." With this varying return, "history in the novel remains an impermeable subject for its narration at all times." The narration has become a comprehensive speech for all these fields and knowledge. And the relationship of narration with history is one of the topics that sparked a wide debate between intellectuals and literary critics. As the critics of narration assert the obligation of "history in the novel, although the novelist is not a historian," the need for narration for history has been demanded by developments on all levels, especially the requirements of the modern novel; Which means that "the art of the modern narrative in its formation as a fictional world has its own rules and techniques and distinguishes it as a novelist." The new Arab novel has taken to its subject the reality that has become "fragmented. It is not presented to us as an external, integrated and outward world of the self, but it has become seen through a vision. The self, its position, and awareness of its various manifestations, "which allows the novelist to create a novel," telling stories in which we live events and suffer their reality. A novel that responds to our memory and our history and what this memory abounds in and this history entails.

Third: The aesthetic of the historical narrative in the novel "Mai Layali Isis Copia" Waciny Laredj's use of the history of this woman-writer in his creative work is not intended to rewrite this history with its literal events and facts, this is not the work of the novelist. Rather, re-reading this history and reality according to a different vision and position, and at the same time according to the vision that is consistent with the spirit and peculiarities of fictional writing, so this overlap between linguistic and historical to add a new text, real or imagined. To chart the distinguished new narrative path, and highlight the role of history in linking the past with the present and building the future for societies.

The aesthetic of the historical novel does not lie in the style of the novelist and the artistic characteristics of the novel, as well as in the narration of historical facts only, but also in showing and revealing the hidden side that is silent and re-lighting it, as the novelist did not have absolute freedom in choosing and writing his topic, being in front of recounting historical facts that she hoped It has documents and manuscripts that did not exist before, and in a fictional form that combines fictional and aesthetic discourse. The novel "The Nights of Isis Copia" goes further in its technical analysis of the age's serious problems, especially ethical ones. The "Mai" generation chose modernity, but it refused Paying for it is likelihood. Lutfi Al-Sayed, Taha

Hussein, Al-Rafi'i, Al-Akkad, Gibran, Shawqi, Mutran, Al-Rihani, and others, the intellectual structure of the twenties' society to the fifties, but left it suspended within an impossible modernity shaped by the religious system and conservative thought, and the novel was able to reveal many events and issues During an era in which the writer did not express him nor literature a picture of him.

The injustice, plunder, abuse, and treachery that Mai lived, as well as the challenge to her mentality from the people closest to her and from society, was only reflected on her psychological and physical health, so her cousin and her husband's greed for her wealth after her parents died. He made him throw her in the madhouse in "Al-Asfouriya" city in Lebanon, "It all started when they drove me out of my house before four o'clock in the afternoon and drove me to my place on the train ..." The suffering begins, with Mai riding on the tragic new journey that connects her. To the gates of the "Al Asfouriyeh" hospital, she says: "Your life is not crazy. My people threw me here with wrongfulness and revenge. Every night I slaughter with a quilt knife, but no one hears me."

Mai was treated in a cruel and brutal manner that reached the point of being beaten by her cousin. She says: "I got dizzy when Joseph hit me on the head, dragged me by my hair, and threw me in the hands of the doctor and the nurse. Everyone was clinging to an exhausted body, he could not even defend About himself ... I was in a void similar to the dizziness of death. Was the one between their iron hands she was "Mai", the writer adored by dozens of men ... In fact, I felt as if they were wolves that were preying on me in front of everyone and no one moving his hand, "and the condition increased." The Egyptian lunatic "was forced into entering the" Al-Asfouriya "hospital, which became her prison and cemetery at the same time; When she was suffering from physical, verbal and psychological injustice and violence, where she says: "I screamed until I got dizzy, the pain was especially severe because feeding from the nose ... from the intensity of the screaming, I did not notice the pain until when the syringe needle touched the bone," and the injustice was not confined to the walls of the bird. Not only, but its extension into society and public opinion, which is what we can see through the pleading of Mai's lawyer: "What happened to Mai is the biggest crime against women and against the mind, how do you not care about this Lebanese genius? How is Mai imprisoned between the walls of the madhouse, and no Lebanese public opinion erupts, and this news remains a hidden secret, ... Save May, and make every effort. Forbidden to deal with complete femininity, ingenuity and genius with this treatment that Mai was treated with?"

And May's stories continue to reveal, not only about her personal history, but also about those called friends and their injustice, treachery and ingratitude ..., the most prominent men and pioneers of the cultural and literary renaissance at that stage who used to attend the literary salon of Mai show - as was narrated in the novel - That he was not a love for culture and literature, but rather a love for Mai's beauty and a greed for her, and she writes in her manuscript about her shock in them: "My heart was oppressed by the army of friends there... What I read from the statements of Akkad, Taha Hussein, his peace Musa cut my heart and divided it into two halves, and made me I think about all that has passed and I wonder what modernity, and what intellectual committed, when you see your friend who shares the worries of the world, forgets you, but penetrates a rusty knife in you? What pain and shook "Mai" in herself is the betrayal of loved ones and friends from among her culture.

With the manuscripts of the writer, critic and poet "Mai" found, Wasini the Araj was able to form fertile fictional material with its paradoxes, surprises and transformations. He presented the events of his novel "The Nights of Isis Copia" with several techniques that combine together to form a coherent novel that reflects the writer's ingenuity and courage. In a dialectical relationship that makes history a primary material for fiction, and makes the novel a literary testimony to a specific historical stage. Reopening the "Mai" case with new data revealed a different picture, and blatant testimony against an oppressive, domineering, and arrogant male society that claimed modernity, the educated elite was a cover for it.

Waciny Al-Araj drew a new path for the historical novel and put his mark on it, by reviving and resurrecting some issues that history did not do justice to and remained hidden and mysterious, based on documents and manuscripts that he sought hard to find, and revealed what history tried to hide in a narrative discourse that combines the aesthetic of the narration and the facts Silent history.

### **Conclusion:**

The new Arabic novel interacted with history as a material for narration, and this interaction produced narrative experiences that contributed to the development of developments affecting language, style and various artistic techniques, and this new shift in the course of the novel, especially the historical novel, contributed to giving a concept that is different to history. The latter did not remain that distant past. The connection with it has been severed for some time, and it has not remained an object of nostalgia or a lesson. And he can provide a reading of the ego and the other different from previous readings, and reveal facts that were missing. The novelist, Wacene Al-Araj, was able, through "The Nights of Isis Copia: Three Hundred and One Nights in the Hell of a Sparrow," and with his linguistic ability, tools, mechanisms and experience, and based on history, and the manuscripts he found, he found an artistic and imaginative work, in which the reader is both artistic and aesthetic. Those historical facts with new data. Seeking fairness to "Mai Ziada" creatively.

The Arab novelist represents the civilized vision of society and the nation, and he used the historical event as an inspiring and explosive tributary to the narrative event. What was found in the life of writer May Ziadeh, a rebellious novelist, oscillating between documentation and fiction, given that the novel is based on everything that is hot and bloody in May's memoirs: in her love spheres in particular, and her attempt to transcend the foundations of Eastern society; So she paid the price of her leadership, freedom, and her departure from the circle of the ordinary, to be a long title for a bitter story that Wacene Al-Araj tells about the last chapter of her life, especially during the period that she lived in the "Asfour" mental hospital in Lebanon. Waciny Laredj's use of the history of this woman-writer in his creative work is not intended to rewrite this history with its literal events and facts, this is not the work of the novelist. Rather, re-reading this history and reality according to a different vision and position imposed by those manuscripts that he discovered, and at the same time according to the vision that is consistent with the spirit and peculiarities of fictional writing, so this overlap between linguistic and historical to add a new text, real or imagined. To chart the distinguished new narrative path and highlight the role of history in linking the past with the present and building the future for societies.

**Recommendations:**

- The need to pay attention to the new Arabic novel, which was open to history and intertwined with the point of identification, as it has been confirmed through the historical novel that the narration represents history and that it is an effective document of history that can be relied upon to find out what is social and realistic.

In part, the novel "Isis Copia" can be a socio-cultural model; Because it highlights the issue of an Eastern society that claims to be emancipated but refuses to break its internal obstacles.

- The reader should be aware that the historical events of the novel, in which history and imagination are mixed, are not just an inspiring and explosive tributary of the novel event, and that the fictional character is not just a shadow of the historical personality, but rather a new entity; Hence, the space for movement is wide for the writer to make his change in the text and its margins, by erasing, adding and changing, and the historical novel may reveal new events and developments that were not mentioned by history or silent about them or missed by historians and did not deal with writers in their works for a different period or periods of history.

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