

*Narrating History as a Novelist:
The Novel " A Homeland Suspended " by Sabah Mudarig Naro as a Sample*

سرد التاريخ روائيا:

رواية وطن مع وقف التنفيذ للكاتبة صباح مدرق نارو نموذجاً

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ملخص:

تهدف من وراء هذا البحث مسألة نص روائي ضمّن في بنيته خطاباً غير أدبي متمثلاً في الخطاب التاريخي، لمعرفة خصوصية هذا التوظيف من ناحية، وكذا بغية الوقوف على بعض تقنيات توظيف التاريخ في الرواية، متبعين في ذلك المنهج الوصفي التحليلي كإجراء منهجي، منطلقين من أسئلة نسعى من خلالها رصد الخطاب التاريخي وهو يلج عوالم الرواية بطريقة فنية، حيث يتبنى الروائي العمل الأدبي ذو الخلفية التاريخية لكنه يبقى وفياً لدوافع الخيال الفني. إن من بين أهم النتائج المتوصل إليها أن التاريخ يفقد صرامته أمام سلطة الرواية كفن خيالي بالدرجة الأولى ويصبح جزءاً من بنائها.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

رواية جزائرية، مرجعية، تاريخ، تحولات، تخييل.

Abstract :

Through this research, we aim to enter the worlds of Algerian women's writing to question a fictional text that included in its structure a non-literary discourse represented in the historical discourse, to know the specificity of this employment on the one hand, as well as to stand on some techniques of employing history in the novel, following the descriptive-analytical method as a systematic procedure, starting from questions through which we aim to monitor the historical discourse as it enters the worlds of the novel in an artistic way, the novelist adapts the proposition of grounding a fictional work in historical background while remaining faithful to the motivations of artistic imagination, one of the key insights is that history, in the presence of the novel's imaginative power, surrenders its strictness and merges into the very fabric of its fictional architecture.

Keywords:

Algerian novel; Changes; Fiction; History; Reference.

1. Introduction:

This paper seeks to explore a significant reference point that informs fictional art in particular and literature in general: the engagement with history as a source of creative and technical inspiration. The analysis emphasizes the use of historical material to articulate ideas and perspectives often tied to contemporary issues that warrant artistic examination. This approach sheds light on the overlooked and obscure aspects of history, including the lives of marginalized groups and intermediaries, and revisits their stories through a narrative lens. The practice of drawing on history in fiction is neither intended to merely replicate historical accounts nor to incorporate non-literary discourses uncritically. Instead, it seeks to craft a vision rooted in innovative artistic proposals. This method involves experimenting with new narrative techniques that resonate with the multifaceted developments of modern life—political, social, cultural, and intellectual. From an artistic standpoint, the poetics of the novel arise from a dynamic interplay of rhetorical elements that enrich and diversify the narrative, producing works that engage with various dimensions of human knowledge. Contemporary fiction, through such deliberate effort, does not aim to rewrite history in the manner of historiography, which prioritizes documentation. Rather, it moves beyond nostalgia, avoiding any longing for a past era or didactic purposes of moralizing through historical restoration. This study thus examines how authors engage with history within a fictional framework. What narrative techniques are employed? How does fiction based on historical contexts balance historical fidelity with the demands of artistic imagination? These questions guide the investigation into the ways contemporary narratives reimagine and recontextualize history to create works that transcend traditional historical and literary boundaries.

2. History and novel:

The novel resorts to history to adopt the experimental approach of the novelist's practice. It is a model that signifies its modernity and aims to give it uniqueness and specificity within a modernist approach to writing, invoked by the new transformations in the history of Arab society. Critics have traced this new direction in writing to the 1967 defeat, which led to the novel in general "... began, since the late sixties, to look at 'reality' by engaging with it through the use of 'history.' It thus tried to present a 'new' image of reality, considering its roots in time." (Yaktin, 2005, p. 12).

The novelist meets the historian in relying on historical material, but they differ in how they deal with this material and the aim each seeks through their engagement with history. From the novelist's perspective, returning to history is not about valuing, sanctifying, or longing for it; rather, it comes through a creative consciousness where different cultures blend, making history a framework for events that reveal the concerns and issues occupying the novelist's mind. This reinforces the idea that history: " at the same time, it is a step backward that revisits the self and the other. It is a moment that suggests action and ways to overcome the dissonance the self experiences in its relationship with the world." (tahri, 2004, p. 21)

While the historian focuses on the official, presenting events from his own perspective, where his singular viewpoint dominates his writings, the novelist, on the contrary, does not merely narrate historical events. Instead, he evokes them and re-explores them to uncover their dark corners and points of tension, thus seeking to address them and repair their fractures, establishing new relationships with them. History "is only history when it is within its own field and system for which it was created. But when it leaves this field for the realm of the novel, its original truth, which until recently seemed fixed..." (laredj, 2005, p. 10)

3. The self, the other, and the narrator of history:

"Hell is—other people" in the words of the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre; everybody who looks at this phrase recognises the cruelty of the image that the self has built about this other. This image was created by the self throughout the colonial period, namely. It is undeniable that the Arabic novel expressed it at some point in its history, when novelists worked on this dichotomy, highlighting what the self suffered against this selfish other, arrogant coloniser who used the guise of civilisation to take the self's hand in development and urbanisation. With a racial basis characterised by a terrible inferior image of the nomadic, clown, backward self, and other impressions and epithets that do not belong to civilisation or humanity, which they claim in any way.

As a result, Arab novelists have long grappled with the struggle between self and other, which is reflected in many of their fictional works. Many novelists have avoided discussing this struggle because it leads to hate and violence speeches, such as Yemeni novelist Ali al-Muqri's *The Handsome Jew*, Said Khatibi's *Forty Years Waiting for Isabel*, and Waciny Laredj's *The Book of the Prince: The Paths of the Gates of Iron*. Among these creative works dealing with the tension between self and other under colonial conditions, the author Sabah Medergenarou produced *Suspended Homeland*.

In this novel, an experiment in the use of history is observed, which was borrowed from history by the French colonizer, who was abused in World War I by the German Nazis. The author presented a distinctive colonial family through the character Estefan who lost his father and uncle in the First World War. Despite this, his grandfather's colonial-craving mentality prepares this grandchild to follow the ancestral tradition and become a military leader that the family and France are proud of "Greatness, the pride and self-esteem that abound in the pages of France's glorious history. No one in my narrow memory can match France in its greatness and pride except a character." (Sabah, 2019, p. 28) But it seems that Estefan, who adored music, remained hesitant about this, which would bring him to war for these slogans that kill man and humanity.

Through these memoirs by Estefan, the narrator portrayed the colonial ideology of France from the family itself. His grandfather traveled a lot for these battles and wars and saw it as a sacred work that had to be done. She also highlighted a different spirit filled with apparent sadness for the boy suffering from loss and dispersion. After death took those closest to him, he found himself in the face of his grandfather's repeated absence over the days. He does not seem to fill the void except to turn to music, to do a narrative of simple and important internal details at the same time. It is about family, love, proximity, agreement and the lost warmth this distance leaves for settlement expansionist reasons the colonial mind thinks of an invasion the world despite these sad feelings, Estefan finds himself involved in his grandfather's arrangements.

These arrangements keep him out of the circle of art and music to which he escapes to satisfy his emotional void, and finds himself in front of an inevitable and predetermined order, "Now you alone have the reins of all things. As you know, there is no one left to paint the glories of our family and with it the glories of France but you and you have to prove that you are worthy of the trust that France and its people put in you." (Sabah, 2019, pp. 30-31) On this basis, the grandfather sees with his colonial mentality that art is merely trivialities. Rather, the glories of the family and the honor of France were placed on the shoulders of this young man, whose future was planned in advance and without him having any opinion. Should he reject or accept? This is how the narrator transported us through the narration game and its intertwining threads from a station to a station that monitors the life of this colonial family, depicting how the French colonial other thinks, and how the occupation of many countries is a sacred honour that adds power to France, even if it is on the

expense of all these countries they occupy, all in the name of France, which bears the banner of democracy, brotherhood and freedom.

These are the words that France is hailing about adding other lands to its body and sovereignty over the remains of colonized people, This fake democracy has enabled the French colonialists to view the land of Algeria as a French private property, as part of its territory, and nothing between them except the Mediterranean, like Paris, which is bifurcated by the Seine. And even more so, through the memoirs of the grandfather of Estefan, he says in his description of Algeria. Their view of it is as a beautiful woman "It's a city that makes you wander at first sight, like a playful witch, infuse your emotions with crafty skill, and penetrate the corners of your heart with great cunning." (Sabah, 2019, p. 134)

This is the stereotypical image that the other was represented in the West about the charming East from their point of view, where this East was portrayed as a seductive woman, rather a world of a thousand and one nights full of wonders and oddities "Western discourse invades the East through masculinity, symbolizing the normal relationship between a man and a woman." (Hammoud, 2013, p. 21) This enshrines Algeria's mythical vision, especially as it is the gateway to the strange East.

This incredible picture affected immensely the French people, so Algeria became the Promised Land "Here it is waving me a few metres away with its rolling blocks from above like a fairy princess's hair ripples, entertaining the tones of the breeze caressing his tresses with a cuddle." (Sabah, 2019, p. 135) And it does not stop there, but the description is exaggerated in a way that leads to a wonderful and stranger imagination, a spot that is not like the rest of the world and its people are never like anyone.

"There was something strange about this city, its people were all strange. It is as if I landed in a place where the land is different from the land we know and its inhabitants are people other than those we are familiar with." (Sabah, 2019, p. 151) This impression by Estefan is based on what his grandfather used to tell about this land, as well as in the writings of French travellers describing the land of Algeria and its people in particular. He also developed this image from their belief that they were the savors, civilized people whom God loved and made them distinct from the rest of the people.

4. Algerian self/mujahid/colonizer:

The self also attends a war he never imagined, wondering about the usefulness of his presence in the fighting ranks and in the midst of these bloody battles, and before that he was blessed in his land flaunting his sheep safe in his village, for what to fight for and for whom to fight and who to fight? All are questions crowded into Mohammed's head in a moment when the fire of the Second World War was raging, leaving only an enormous amount of unending pain

"What is happening today is not a natural death; it is a crazy, savage death that came to test all its innovative methods on our exhausted corpses. It attacks as a predatory monster, pressing his jaws to life brutally and ruffling its pulse wherever it feels it." (Sabah, 2019, p. 53) It is the war against the Germans that Algerians took part in without consent. Where they had no choice in front of the destructive colonial machine and France put them right at the top of the ranks in front of death. Mohammed, a conscript of France, compulsorily tells us small details and precise particles as he fights many grinding battles to tell of the atrocity of death and the absence of human and human value in the face of mankind's ambitions for material purposes.

Even if it underestimates the dreams of simple people, it does not matter how much more than the purpose for which war takes place. I called the narrator to Mohammed's tales of monologue because he would simply express his deep feelings and buried thoughts history of the period of French occupation, and every moment of the war against Germany as Muhammad lived in different places and with different names as well even if they are invalid and baseless.

This is French colonialism and its way of exploiting people. Here is Mohamed meeting Uncle Jalloul, who became his war guide and how to get rid of this terrifying and oppressed nightmare called France. All the dialogues of rebellion and politics took place between them, including political parties and awareness-raising associations, and how France confronts this cultural consciousness with intrigue, cunning and narrowing "I was involved in the North African star party. We tried our best to hear the voice of the national cause to international forums, but there is no hope for internal conflicts of colonial harassment" (Sabah, 2019, p. 114) The narrator has been able to penetrate the worlds of simple people and ordinary people, dive into their everyday details and give us even the smallest details going on somewhere and at some point under the pressure of a destructive war machine, transporting according to scene technology. When the scene of Uncle Jalloul's murder is transmitted, the receiver finds himself in front of cinematic footage. As if you were watching what was happening before your eyes, add to that the strong and sincere

emotion Muhammad showed towards Uncle Jalloul as the greed of humanity brought them together at a miserable historical moment. This was the case with the Algerian colonial self, who was ridiculed by France, which came to attend and teach him a lesson in democracy by exploiting it and introducing mazes in which he had no involvement at all.

The events in question continue to be remembered by Mohamed, who tells us in detail about the events of May 8, 1945, since they began in the form of a peaceful march, prepared for them in advance and licensed by the French authorities.

"We formed a mosaic of whales of all sorts of society, because all sorts of people were looking for change..." (Sabah, 2019, p. 242) Until it went off course and the French enemy's false killing machine started, the police shot and killed Mohamed Al-Hafaf. and also took the initiative of killing Bouzid Cough to continue killing with unusual barbarism to the point of filling the crime scene with thousands of dead in the blood of the beaten free, But it didn't stop. What France did was very shameful about a people who wanted freedom, and it did the most abuse. In contrast, the Algerian people did not fall into the vestibule of fear, but were motivated to stand up to France. It was the 1954 revolution and subsequent war achievements until independence in 1962.

5. Meeting between the self and the other:

In this work, the author relied on the technique of alternating narratives between two well-known narrators: Stefan of France, who recounts his grandfather's memoirs and what happened to him in Algiers when he visited and settled there until he was killed. and Mohamed Mujahid of Algeria, who resisted the French colonialist until he won, and Fatima appears at the end of the narrative to conclude the events of the novel. That this separate rotation evolves and continues according to the escalation and diversity of events until they meet on the pages of the novel, the fictional trick adopted by the author is to get the character Fatima to act as a sociable to Mrs. Melanie François, the grandmother of Estefan, the French officer, this was a novelist who supported an idea and an event that would have happened in some way. And that's where the victory is for the self over the other one whose fate was like his grandfather. Where he died by suicide with a gunshot wound from a gunman with his hand signifying, in a sense, weakness, shame and defeat, on the other hand, a fate was not taken into account for someone who was forced to follow the slogans of France influenced by the ideas of his military family. leaving his dreams, his music and her sweetness to kill humanity in a grotesque way, which in any case - that is, the accident - highlights the hidden side of these ordinary and simple soldiers. And

also those who had different dreams in a different reality and on a land that would be enshrined by means of genuine democracy, not based on death and greed.

6. Fictional techniques when using history:

When a novelist chooses to draw on history, their goal is not to recount events as they appear in books or documents. Rather, they seek to recreate the past in literary form—that is, to turn facts into raw material for constructing a vibrant fictional world, in which people suffer, rejoice, change, and shape their own destinies. In this context, the writer employs a variety of techniques, including:

6.1. Rotation Technique:

From the beginning of the narrative, the reader notices that the narrator uses reminders taking turns telling us about historical events. The first character is Mohammed, who is from Batna province, who tells us his story since he was conscripted into the French army against German Nazism, and how he was a simple man serving the earth until he found himself in a confrontation where he had absolutely no involvement. And on land that he had never set foot in before, and there was no link between him and the land to go to war. The historical narrative follows from the narrator Mohamed, who was chosen by the author to represent the Algerian nation in its war against French colonialism. and his endless arrogance against a defenceless people who wanted freedom and suppressed it in various ways, This is what we can see when it speaks of the dangers in the history of Algeria from the beginning of the French occupation of Algerian territory to the necessity of armed struggle and the bombing of the November 1954 revolution.

The author also mentioned many well-known historical figures who had a long tradition of changing the history of Algeria (Al-Arabi Bin Mahidi, Mustafa Ben Boulaid, Masali El Haj, Bouzid Sa'al, Mubarak Al-Mili, el Amir Abdelkader...), but somehow wanted to make Mohamed, Jalloul, Hussain and Fatima the imagined characters are starring, as if they wanted to give space to those forgotten who are not mentioned in history. They were particularly influential in those transformations during the Second World War, especially the events of the 8 of May 1945, which witnessed the villainy of France, which was promised but not honest.

It was all in the words of the narrator Muhammad, who told us many historical events documented in the history books, but in an imaginative artistic way. and the same is said of the second French narrator Francois, who comes from a military family with achievements in many countries with which they fought wars on behalf of France, in spite of this, however, it has resorted to breaking the lineage of time according to narrative techniques such as anticipation, retrieval, deletion, etc. All of

this is not an aberration of what the author wanted in her work of art, which seeks to take stock of the history of the Algerian struggle against the French colonialist..., as a result, I have also entered into the psychological worlds of soldiers waging war, swallowing the cruelty of death, and then history forgetting them. Even if it wants to talk about the Algerian revolution, the defeat of France against Germany, the events of 8 May 1945, and the revolution of 1954, it does not prevent it from adopting that. Why didn't the author pick underwhelmed but feminine characters? For example, Fatima, Cousin Jalloul, had a modest presence while talking about women's struggle, and she mentioned some events in which she was truly a hero. But this never prevented Muhammad from intervening to defend her in front of Muammar Officer Estefan François, who committed suicide in his home and was left mired in blood in symbolism as long as I mentioned it in the words of Estefan, namely, the usefulness of this injustice, which afflicts humanity only with material justification, He met a fate approaching that of his grandfather, the senior military officer, who committed suicide with a bullet from his personal rifle and also at his desk when Paris fell into the hands of the German Nazis.

7. Caring for the marginalized and the absent:

In this creative work, the author took care of ordinary people who had never been mentioned in history, and dived into their personal lives in all its details. This is what she stated at the beginning of the novel that she did not write this work for prominent personalities or well-known warlords who drew and planned. They are all ordinary characters not mentioned in the records of official history, and even the French Estefan whom the novel portrayed from the inside as not satisfied with giving up his homeland, musicals and music, he was forced to be a warrior for his family and the glory of France. On the other hand, he deliberately mentioned well-known historical figures, whether Algerian or French, but only in name, and a little bit of an act that is a servant of the imagined character. This eminent intent by recounting the shooting of demonstrators at the events of 8 May 1945, in which Mohammed Al-Hafaf was killed and considered the first person to be martyred in those events, but the official history presents us with another name that the little boy memorizes before the big one, and his name is associated with that massacre, which is Bouzid Saal, which is an explicit indication that "The novelist is not inclined to official history, because this history was written by the rulers and the powerful, at a time when other views were absent or distorted, and therefore it is the history of one party. Novelist heads, In most cases, to the absent history, the other, not to rewrite history but to present facts..." (Sabah, 2019, pp. 129-130) On this basis, this novel

celebrates the absentees and the marginalized in official history, giving them the opportunity to express their views freely.

8. Abbreviation and allusion technique:

The author resorts to this technique frequently in the folds of the novel and does not hesitate not to elaborate on those historical events that have become an integral part of the narrative, where it is often difficult to distinguish between historical and fictional, where there has been some kind of identification between the two discourses, which is, of course, due to the predominance of the narrative element over factual history , and perhaps it is also due to a democratization directed by the author when she was given ample space for the narrator to recount imaginary events that deviate from the authority in her craftsmanship, while at the same time bringing it into contact with her and integrating it, without any doubt referring to the magic of the tale (Fiction) which narrates fiction and the decline of history (reality) in the face of the aesthetic of fictional discourse.

- From the French Revolution to the French colonization of Algeria
- The fall of Paris at the hands of German Nazism.
- World War I.
- Meeting of coalition forces and composition of the United Nations Council
- Establishment of the Arab League in March.
- Discovery of the Roman city of Setif.
- Armistice between Germany and France.
- Conditions for the establishment of parties and the Association of Muslim Scholars.
- France's victory over Germany.
- Celebration of the centenary of the occupation of Algeria.

In this particular part, the novelist refers to major historical events- real and significant. Had she dwelled on them in detail, she might have become a historian, filling volumes with their unfolding. But the narrative technique she devised allowed her to distill these events, mentioning them briefly and effectively, without excessive elaboration.

9. Respect the original text verbatim and place it in parentheses:

In her novel, the author borrows historical texts and brings them between two script marks without prejudice to the original text. To cite historical texts transmitted in the history books, the dialogue between grandfather and grandson Estefan convinced him of the need for loyalty to France and the need to be a courageous and strong warlord who did not fear difficulties. He should always take the initiative and not be compassionate toward enemies, and in order for the author to support this idea, she resorted to a historical narrative structure and put it between two duplicates to show that the text belongs to Stéphane Ghazil, the French historian: "History also defines our duties. We must arm ourselves with a wimm power to be masters and forever." (Sabah, 2019, p. 49) This is also an indication that history is written by the victor on the one hand, and that historians' pens are servants of the great colonial project and intertwine all the methods that elevate France, on the other.

Elsewhere, the author indicates that the French colonial thinking is the civilizational mission that France has taken upon itself. It has made it see Algeria and its people as a backward and uncivilized land, in the name of the democracy they achieved through their revolution; they had to take the hand of this barbaric and anarchic Algerian outside the circle of barbarism that engulfs them towards urbanization. This citation comes as a confession from one of the French thinkers described by the author as the oldest French thinker of the 20th century Alexis de Tocqueville: "A Muslim in North Africa was not civilised, only has an imperfect civilisation and enjoys backwardness. But instead of making it civilised, it made it more miserable and more barbaric than it was before it recognised us." (Sabah, 2019, p. 289) Speaking of the methods adopted by the French authority in Algeria to obscure identity and question the Islamic beliefs of the Algerian individual. These Christian missionary campaigns were also numerous, including the use of French women to influence Algerian women in all respects and pour their poisoned thoughts into their minds.

The monks are not the only ones charged with preaching and leading christianization campaigns, they included evangelizers and nuns who were specially designed to win over Algerian women and influence them as members of the Algerian family. They try to Christianize them because the French authorities realize that Christianity is necessarily a woman's conversion to Christianity, the author mentioned one of the European women who had practiced proselytizing through education in Algeria: Mrs. Los Alex, mentioned by Algerian historian Aboul Kacem Saadallah: "After the 1940 (about 1846), Alex set up an institute or a small school to teach French and Arabic Muslim girls, after she went to visit homes and contact

mothers." (Sabah, 2019, p. 442)

In order to summarize the history of these missionary campaigns historically, the novelist was given access to the issue in an artistic narrative manner while talking about the usefulness of the revolution against those who came to promote Algerians. When she wanted to cite this from the history books, she put the historical story between the two without making any change. "You, Mr. Minister, are not ignorant... that the greatest impact in Africa is the influence of women as in Europe. If you assign to our civilization 100,000 Algerian girls from different classes of society..." (Sabah, 2019, p. 295) According to this proposal, it became evident that the education of Algerian women was intended to infiltrate the Algerian family from within and serve the colonizers' endeavours to control and remain in Algeria forever.

10. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

At the end of this research, which deals with the historical authority of the Algerian novel in particular, it concluded that:

- History relinquishes its strictness, steadfastness, and reliability in the face of the fictional speech of the novel and becomes an obedient servant of its aesthetic.

- The author used history in the third millennium precisely to recall France's crimes, which until now had refused to recognize them. She resorted to many techniques in that employment, most notably martyrdom, insinuation and, in some cases, reliance on the narrative structure of the historical text without any change as a way of martyrdom or recognition.

- This work came to pay tribute to the marginalised, minorities and ordinary people, as the author made them true heroes even though history did not mention them by name, but rather deliberately made the presence of historically known names a modest and ordinary presence without detailing what they historically offered.

- This work of fiction was based on the presentation of the self and the other and how they looked different from each other, and the author also resorted to diving inside to express their thoughts, hopes and dreams before they were recruited.

11. CONCLUSION:

This study adopted, across its pages, the presence of a non-literary genre represented in history through this research, which was based primarily on the idea of the return of the Algerian novelist Sabah Madrak Naru towards employing history to create her imaginary world on its ruins, while history has abandoned its rigor and truths, which appear to the ordinary reader as sacred and untouchable material, on the one hand, and history, on the other hand, is considered to belong to another field and system that controls its development, this excessive sanctity soon becomes fragile and relative when it enters the novel, because it becomes a malleable material in the hands of the novelist who reshapes it with the techniques and artistic skills of the novel that he possesses.

12. Recommendations:

- In particular, attention should be paid to women's fictional discourse with regard to new innovations characterized by experimentation and the introduction of new ones in dealing with most subjects, which are no longer confined to the issue of masculinity and femininity.

- The need to expand the field of research within the self and the other dichotomy, especially in this particular millennium, in order to learn more about the attitudes of novelists in raising this issue.

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