

## The Contemporary Novel Achievement: Current Transformations and Cultural Changes

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### Abstract:

The contemporary novel has emerged as one of the foremost arts that explores social, political, and even religious phenomena. It is a genre of progress that has entered the realm of renewal, and has become vastly dissimilar from classic narratives, defiantly rejecting traditional forms. It has challenged the three taboos of religion, politics, and sexuality, and presented issues of nation, society, and identity. Novelists have crafted cohesive systems that explore the observable world; allowing the reader to make their own understanding. Based on the above, we will try to present a reading of contemporary novel achievement and current transformations, and how these texts have changed the reality.

**Keywords:** novel, contemporary, systems, society, transformation.

### Introduction:

The novel is a creative and artistic formation of life, building an organic structure that aligns with the spirit of life itself. This shaping is based on developing events that are depicted deep within the perspective of each novelist, through a narrative structure that is structured with specific goals. Modern Arabic literature began as a literary genre in the late 18th century influenced by French and European novel production. Undoubtedly, contemporary novels are not the same as classical novels. Instead, they have evolved and rebelled against techniques. Novelists have adopted different artistic approaches to the previous conventional ones, and have developed contemporary narrative technologies that were not commonly used before. The final literary achievement has become a unique cultural achievement, while critics and scholars have presented the most important achievements accomplished by contemporary narrative texts in terms of both its artistic and reference aspects. Through this, it is possible to access the specificity of the emotional and aesthetic structure, and to observe the movement of critical intellectuals, which marked the second half of the twentieth century. This movement reflected a clear orientation towards new literary ideas and theories, and this endeavor came through a tendency to liberate from ideological critical discourse and seek methodological and procedural mechanisms that respond to the requirements of new stylistic forms. Thus, the joints of the critical movement crystallized with the phenomena of modernity that were established among intellectuals and critics. The critical reading of the novel has

evolved from an aesthetic taste to a multi-cultural treasure trove. It could be said that the Western modernist critique with all its aesthetic and intellectual potentialities has not unlocked the codes of the contemporary novel. However, through cultural criticism, the critic managed to clarify many mysterious intellectual issues. The methodological system was liberated from the circle of tradition, and cultural studies and cultural criticism expanded beyond fixed frameworks to disclose dominant ideologies through breaking the conventional mold and employing various historical, social, ideological, and political sciences. Thus, cultural criticism emerged, seeking to reveal the underlying patterns hidden beneath words and behind aesthetics to make the pattern the basic axis of the literary text. Criticism has worked on cultural studies that have shattered the centrality of texts and brought the neglected literary discourse back into focus. This leads us to the most important issue raised by the contemporary novel :

- How did the contemporary literary achievement take form and content in the novel?
- How are present-day novels connected to the social and national contexts in which they are written?
- To what extent did this artistic endeavor contribute to uncovering and addressing the most crucial concealed issues?
- How effective have cultural studies and cultural criticism been in uncovering the crucial themes explored in contemporary literature?

### **1- The Arab Novel and Shifts of Critical Questions :**

Contemporary Arabic literary criticism experienced a fruitful period, beginning in the 1970s. This was the most important qualitative leap in how Arabic novels were approached, due to the changes that went beyond both critical realism and socialism, which were once characterized by "a trustworthy vision of the world, a direct alignment with external realities, and a linearity in the narrative and events." The Arab novel took on a new coloration marked by a bleak trend, as it began to question all of the facts and certainties which had formed the historical consciousness of the Arab individual. This questioning was influenced by the defeat of 1967 and exposed the fragility of ideologies which Arab intellectuals had relied on to eradicate the backwardness that had taken hold of their society - such as socialism and Arab nationalism - towards a brighter future<sup>1</sup>. Towards the end of the 1960s, a group of novelists sought to weave a distinct fabric of new characteristics that revealed their interaction with societal change. This was their first step away from the familiar and traditional.

Dr. Mohammed Berrada, in his book "Questions of the Novel, Questions of Criticism," argues that the new Arab novel, with its diverse artistic composition,

<sup>1</sup> Ahmed Al-Jarati: Modern Literary Theory in Contemporary Novel Criticism, Naya Publishers for Studies, Publishing, and Distribution, Beirut, Lebanon, Hamra Street, 1st edition, 2014, p. 151.

"affirms that reality is not an absolute given from the outset, nor is it homogeneous or one-dimensional, thus, it is impossible to claim the ability to depict reality in one particular way. It is multiple and bound up in the dialectics of societal evolution." As a result, the novelist must change their tools, language, and vision in order to turn the novel into a tool for knowledge and critique that contributes to shifting the ideological centrality of dominant classes that have striven to persuade society of the unity of faith, class, and ideology<sup>2</sup>. This means that they responded to the political and intellectual stage, leading to the reconstruction and recycling of traditional heritage to be in accordance with the depth of questions posed by the present.

The novel distinguished itself greatly in terms of intellectual, social, and aesthetic character. It differed from the classical novel in its orientations, and even in the way it presented issues that conform to the era and the means of addressing them. Along with this, there are a series of aesthetic and artistic matters involved, which reveal with special clarity the main lines that contributed to this development. Criticism played a role in changing the form of the novel. Criticism had an effect on differences, diversity of visions and concepts, and opened up a dialogical approach, making it possible to demonstrate the richness of knowledge<sup>3</sup>. However, this did not mean that it had opened up to wide-ranging creative abuse as criticism scrutinizes texts and their interweaving elements, depth, and strength of fabric.

The new consciousness in the methodological perspective of critics and scholars has led to the reading of narrative texts through the methods presented in literary criticism. This is due to the development of criticism, thanks to the flourishing of linguistic knowledge. This development has made literary writing and narrative texts more abundant. Literary criticism is developing at a rapid pace. We are living in distinctive historical moments that witness the explosion of critical theory. This explosion is almost a fact, not a figure of speech. Its fragments may extend or shorten, depending on the intellectual alignment between knowledge production and influential minds<sup>4</sup>. Criticism is a process linked to the writer and the critic because a critical creativity is a discourse that reveals a double connection between two worlds, namely the world of the author and the world of the receiving analyser.

Contemporary novels emerged as a literary genre influenced by European thinking. Artists of this cultural framework aimed to reveal the truth of reality and the relationship between humans and their society. Humans move in time, which is translated into social relationships. The novel emerged as a modern literary genre in Arabic literature, and Egypt was a pioneer in this field. Egypt was able to recognise this new art and alerted to the need to create something like it in Egypt and the Arab world. From the perspective of writers, the vision and concept of the narrative work changed. Technical features known as events, characters, artistic structure, time, and

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<sup>2</sup> Mohamed Bradah: Questions of the Novel, Questions of Criticism, Al-Rabita Publishing House, Casablanca 1996, 1st edition, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Nesrine Atia: The Presence of Cultural Patterns in Algerian Fiction, Novels of Bachir Moufti as a Model, Al-Mothaqaf Publishing House, Batna, Algeria, 1st edition, 2022, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Abdessalem Mseddi : Literature and Criticism Discourse, Al-Kutub Al-Jadeeda Al-Mutahidah Publishing House, 1st edition, March, spring, 2004, pp. 9-10.

place, were shattered<sup>5</sup>. According to Abd al-Malik Murtād, the new novel rebelled against the rules, denied all origins, rejected all values, and aesthetics that were prevalent in the writing of the novel, which became known as traditional. Therefore, The novel is no longer in the usual form, but it has become another text that differs from the traditional one, " and the first beginnings of this new art appeared with the beginning of the conflict between the influence of ancient Arabic literature and the influence of modern European literature, that conflict that took the form of a clear phenomenon on the literary life in the Arab world. And it was not a normal quiet conflict, as the researchers explained, but it took the form of a heated battle and a cruel struggle between the two literatures "<sup>6</sup>.

Arab social consciousness emerged as a tangible problem in the novel through the available structures in the languages, characters, actions, and relationships. The shape of the relationship between the novel and the reality it reflects refers to the end of colonial relationships and the collapse of the ideology that supported them. This pushed social awareness towards a new form that does not see the world in an imagined stillness but sees it as a constantly changing field that human beings reveal and reveal themselves through. At the same time, this ambiguity makes the novel deal with the reality of its movement and with the complexity of this motion<sup>7</sup>. The novel's interest in all relationships and event details distinguished it and made it one of the literary genres that dealt with the social changes that society faced. If we were to look for the effects of these political and military stages and their reflections on the novel, it was all to understand the consciousness of the novelist himself. This is based on the overall characteristics and dimensions of life. We can say that the contemporary novel differed in its treatment of topics and stages from other literary genres because it does not reflect what is happening at the moment, such as the story and poetry. The writer before writing a narrative text needs time to form and crystallise the idea first.

## **2- The dialectic of self and other in creative fiction:**

The novelist went beyond the perspective established by the dominant colonial view, which was manufactured in a historical context of war, destruction, and devastation that befell peoples. The novel came to transcend previous epochs with a new perspective that believes our crisis has no solution other than surpassing the narrow view that sees Western modernity through the dichotomy of self and other. We must practice our identity and differences in a way that rearranges the relationship with ourselves and the other.<sup>8</sup> This gives the reader a wider scope for interpretation by raising many questions because literary texts occupy a distinct space

<sup>5</sup> Abd al-Malik Murtād : In the Theory of the Novel, A Study in Narrative Techniques, Alami Al-Maaref, Kuwait, 1st edition, 1998, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Abd Al-Muhsin Taha Badr: The Development of Modern Arabic Fiction in Egypt, Al-Maaref Publishing House, Cairo, 1st edition, 1963, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Abd al-Wahhab Bushleha: The Discourse of Modernity in Maghreb Fiction, Al-Ihsaa Literary Club, 1st edition, 2011, p. B.

<sup>8</sup> Majida Hammoud: Complaints of the Self and the Other, Aalem Al-Ma'arifa Journal, Kuwait, Issue 398, March 2013, p. 17.

within the creative and aesthetic vision of history, creativity, and self. Accordingly, the driving impetus in the Arab novel is history, the self, and the other.<sup>9</sup>

here is now a consensus among those interested in contemporary cultural systems in general and literary fields in particular that historical fields can provide us with what the present may not.<sup>10</sup> If the movements of history, with its triumphs, collapses, and awakenings, can make the new fictional world different and diverse from the traditional fictional world that only found justification for separating self and other through the essential argument based on binary opposites, such as spirit/matter, good/evil, east/west, then the attempt to reconsider and reread by some novelists, who take a critical and examining position of history and society, lead them to review the historical and societal facts behind the Arab cultural project in Arab countries. The intellectual and artistic ambition of novelists aims to reveal a vision and interpretation of self and other and to emphasize their human and civilizational implications. Thus, the novel presents the authoritarian aspect of the self. The novelist represents another self and another history. The novel, related to self and other, is inseparable from history and its retrieval of meaning. The cultural model is different from the official and documented culture. Therefore, the reconsideration of the human and social is the reconsideration of history, and it should be surrounded by a new vision of its centrality as a party in the conflict of self and other. Consequently, the philosophy and worldview of novelists are determined on the basis of a dismantling level of negation and rejection that historical self exercised on itself through excluding any human criteria for the depth of the problem. Therefore, self-awareness, in particular, and awareness of the other, is essential for our knowledge of the human aspects of the silenced issue.<sup>11</sup>

Contemporary literary texts seek to examine society and its phenomena from within the culture of history and its texts, in order to establish an identity of the self. It combines awareness of historical realities with awareness of present realities; realities and instinctive collapses, in order to reach the formation of cognitive awareness that might not necessarily be contained in the realm of thought, reason, and logic but might shift a lot towards artistic awareness, narrative pleasure, and the pleasure of reception, without neglecting the essence of narrative. The essence of narrative is originally in rearranging what is happening now. Some of these belong to documented and stable texts for general readers and intellectuals, while others remain formal. As for others, they have grown fond of the fascination and pleasure of invading the reader into the horror of viewing and suffering.<sup>12</sup> The other takes on multiple forms as an anti-self in terms of language, belief, race, tradition, cultural and class status. But the most striking paradox is dealing with the other as a foreigner who is often reduced to the West, with whom the Arab self has fought successive

<sup>9</sup> Rachid Boudjedra: *The Battle of the Alley*, National Book Foundation, Algeria, 1986, p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> Hussain Najmi: *Poetry of Imaginative Space and Identity in Arabic Fiction*, Arab Cultural Center, 1st edition, 2000, p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> Abd al-Wahhab Bushleha: *Historical Writing Strategy: Contemporary Writings, Arts and Sciences, Imagination and Humanities Magazine*, issue 61, volume 16, October 2006, pp. 123-124.

<sup>12</sup> Bashir Būyajrah Muḥammad : *The Self and the Other, Identity Bets in the Algerian Literary System*, Tafaitil Publishers, 2nd edition, 2013, pp. 114-115.

wars and conflicts to protect its identity from erasure and disintegration. It appears that the self, whether it is neutral or belonging to a bloc, assumes the existence of a potential enemy that constantly threatens its entity and identity. Therefore, it preserves its elements and gains, and, from the other perspective, it should be cautious of the other as a stranger and different, in order to avoid any danger that may emanate from it.<sup>13</sup>

The relationship between the self and the other has always been characterized by contradiction and difference, particularly in terms of how one person perceives another person. This perception can be summarized as a duality between the tense East, which is associated with degradation, ignorance, and violence, and the eager West, which values civilization, science, and tolerance. The Arab novelists have portrayed the way in which the self views the other, and vice versa, in a series of fictional texts known by critics and researchers as conflict novels or cultural confrontation novels.<sup>14</sup> These novels have become some of the most significant works that embody social issues.

### **3- Contemporary Arabic Novel and Cultural Studies:**

Many studies and research have dealt with the Arabic novel from a critical, analytical, and questioning perspective, but without conducting a deep study of it as a cultural text and a functional social and rhetorical practice. The diversity of contemporary Arabic novels, with their various investigations and multiple orientations, enables us to uncover new experiences where the writing of the novel intersects with the anthropological and philosophical aspects. « This is manifested by the abundance of textual, cultural, and symbolic intertexts that constitute the fabric of the novel. The novelist accomplishes this in order to compose a narrative that can provide a different understanding not only of society and humanity but also of the stages that shape the society and its values at different levels. The function of the novel is to immerse oneself in it, reveal its hidden aspects, and restore the meanings, patterns, or social categories or cultural practices that have been marginalized for various reasons within a framework known as the margin.<sup>15</sup> »

The issue of narrative themes appears to be of utmost importance; at the same time, it embodies a spiritual pleasure that manifests in the individual's thirst for the abstract idea and therefore for absolute beauty. Thus, his research becomes an investment, and his explorations into the underlying aspects of things in the essence of things. The new novel, in the sense circulated by critical studies, is based on rejecting all the components upon which the classical novel is based. Therefore, our question arises about the issue of identity, as a project opposing the components of the new novel, as it is in the West, especially in how its structure appears in our Arab

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<sup>13</sup> Mohamed Dahi: *The Image of Self and Other in Narrative*, Arab Narrative Series, Vision Publishing House, 1st edition, 2013, pp. 12-13.

<sup>14</sup> Sidi Mohamed Ben Malek: *The Discourse between Imagination and Fantasy in Algerian Fiction*, Mim Publishing House, 1st edition, 2016, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Idris El-Khadrawi: *Arabic Fiction and Post-Colonial Questions*, Vision Publishing and Distribution, Cairo, 1st edition, 2012, p. 35.

regions<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the various authors with their different intellectual and aesthetic orientations and their tendencies in modern writing cannot abandon the fundamental components of the Arabic novel, nor even their dreamy human project towards a better future, which has become a necessary condition for the refined artistic writing of contemporary Arab literature.

The new novel emerged with new awareness, due to socio-cultural changes. It derived its artistic and intellectual structures from narrative worlds that are surprising, perplexing, contemplative, and shocking. It aimed to highlight the political dimension, which represents the focal point for the current period that the Arab world is going through in particular. Therefore, the new novel poses many unanswered questions; it is also concerned with diagnosing the cultural and social issues with a strong sense of the rapid movement of life. Furthermore, it is based on artistic, philosophical, fantastic, and ideological dimensions in the novel to present its worlds. It also concerns itself with the entity, identity, self-actualization issues, and focuses its attention on the intellectual elite issues<sup>17</sup>. The novel's openness to various forms of writing extends across vast spaces, from realistic historical writing to documentary to imaginative allegorical and even autobiographical poetry. As a result of this openness, multiple imaginative systems intersect within the novel, accumulating. The novels are still in the process of generating their forms, their worlds, and developing their identities and essence. They are still in search of methodological approaches for their study and to reveal their systems<sup>18</sup>.

Writing is no longer merely a mirror that reflects the social reality, copying and recording it, as it used to be in traditional narrative texts. Although daily details are its basic material, writing does not settle for copying and recording, but instead, it digs into other places and paths to capture the strange in our reality and existence and question our cosmic and mental and social endeavors. Some critics have observed that the novel derives its value from its ability to build a profound vision of the questions faced by humans throughout their existence. As if the novel can only be a special type of research, doubt, concern, and rethinking of many aspects of our lives, beliefs, and assumptions, in a way that blends narrative imagination with philosophical contemplation<sup>19</sup>.

The contemporary novelist has resorted to blending partial historical images of the nation's events with contemporary images of what he is experiencing, in order to arrive at a vision of what might be happening today in our contemporary times of disasters, crises and painful events, or to inferred facts from historical events. The reader of contemporary texts may discover that the mythology used by the novelist appears to be deeply rooted in the history of this nation and what it has experienced

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<sup>16</sup> Belhia El-Tahar: *New Arabic Fiction from Mythology to Postmodernity, Roots of Arab Storytelling*, Rawafed Cultural Publishers, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st edition, 2017, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> Iman Maliki: *Worlds of Modern and Contemporary Algerian Feminist Fiction, Between Tradition and Renewal*, Alfa Documents, Constantine – Algeria, 1st edition, 2002, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Khamsa Alloui: *The Fantastic in Algerian Fiction*, Enlightenment House – Algeria, 1st edition, 2013, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Hassan El Mouden: *Fiction and Textual Analysis, Readings from a Psychoanalytic Perspective*, Al-Aman Publishing House, Rabat, 1st edition, 2009, pp. 124-125.

and is experiencing, and he draws upon it whenever the opportunity arises. Thus, the contemporary novelist has come to understand the history of his nation and, with the skill of a capable creator, has turned it into narrative texts that come with a certain level of beauty and creativity that speak about reality, but with deep mythology<sup>20</sup>. Consequently, Arabic fiction has succeeded in consolidating its infrastructure into a particular language, or has succeeded in generating a literary series that is unique to it, in another language. This structure, which has been formed over successive eras, has established the novel as an independent literary genre that is based on its own history and reproduces it in various forms, in addition to a self-referential element that turns the novelist into a solitary writer, and another element that evades narrative gender. The novelistic genre provides the most accurate equivalent of Arab daily life. If Arab life is characterized by confusion and turmoil, which is the first possibility, then the narrative discourse that corresponds to it is more compatible with other cognitive types, which in their pretended certitude are far from the narrative implication and multiple interpretations that accompany it. Especially that the June War and its aftermath gave the major traditional ideologies the shape of the story, implying the novelistic narrative with an epistemic dimension, as if the Arabic novel was the only literary genre that is immune to history<sup>21</sup>.

Given the broadening concept of culture and its openness to almost everything, the field of cultural studies/cultural criticism performs its function through borrowing from various branches of knowledge, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics, literary criticism, art theory, philosophy, political sciences, communication sciences, and others. Cultural studies are not a system, but a collective term for various ongoing and different mental attempts that focus on numerous issues and consist of different and multiple theoretical frameworks. The goal of cultural studies in creative texts is to tackle topics related to cultural practices and their relation to power, and its main objective is the understanding of culture in all its complex and intricate forms, and analyzing the social and political context<sup>22</sup>. Cultural criticism is one of the most influential critical trends in reading literary and cultural discourses in the postmodern era. Building on its intellectual assumptions and ideological propositions, this criticism seeks to hold structural texts as cultural events and then examine their technical dimensions and implicit contextual factors, which appear to be intertwined with the cultural settings and historical circumstances that produced them<sup>23</sup>. Literature entered the era of socio-cultural context, which adopts a special approach to texts and crosscutting discourses with a tangible culture as an umbrella (Marxist/constructive/post-constructive), all of which share their view of cultural criticism and cultural studies, as represented or non-represented discourse structures of orientations. They appear to be ideological, producing central or

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<sup>20</sup> Belhia El-Tahar: *New Arabic Fiction from Mythology to Postmodernity*, op. cit, pp. 186-187.

<sup>21</sup> Faisal Darraj: *Fiction and Interpretation of History, Narrative Theory and Arabic Fiction*, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, Morocco, 1st edition, 2004, p. 157.

<sup>22</sup> Hifnawi Ba'li: *Introduction to Comparative Cultural Criticism Theory*, Ikhtilef Publications, Algeria, 1st edition, 2007, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Youssef Alimat: *The Cultural Pattern, A Cultural Reading of Ancient Arabic Poetry Patterns*, Modern Book World – Irbid, 1st edition, 2009, p. 165.

marginal social relationships and powers that appear simple in their style, but are complex in their methodologies and theories.

The concept of cultural studies stands out as a phenomenon that distinguishes itself between the traditions of research and theories in the fields of anthropology, social history, linguistics, and literary studies, making cultural criticism a diverse, overlapping, and intersecting field<sup>24</sup>. Critic Megan al-Ruwaili confirms this assertion and notes that cultural criticism is a type of criticism that has been practiced by many cultures, including Arabic culture, both in the past and more recently. However, the development of this field of activity and research is almost monopolized by Western culture, which currently represents the main reference point for understanding its characteristics and stages of development. As such, it also represents a primary influencing factor in the development of this type of research activity in other cultures. Although that type of criticism developed in Western culture, it did not crystallize into a distinctive movement with clear features, but rather remained a floating activity incorporating different types of observations, ideas, and theories<sup>25</sup>.

The post-awakening period intermingles with the post-modern era in the arena of image and modern media culture. When we use terms such as post-modernism, post-structuralism, or post-globalization, we are referring to a moral shift in the term itself, rather than a shift away from it. The post-modern era, like post-structuralism, both seek to modify the direction of the term from its earlier all-encompassing and categorical state to a more humane position by entering into a mosaic platform that accepts differences and deviations, grasping what it has to offer, and correcting the drawbacks of the post-modern and post-structuralist experiences. Following their individualistic and absolute correctness, they changed by opening themselves to the world surrounding them, thus undergoing a transformation to the "post-period," so to say<sup>26</sup>. The post-modern wave delves deeper into the idea of the end of the vision of history fueled by the idea of progress and reason, revealing a new development in the realm of cultural and aesthetic text devices. The post-modern waves were formed on the basis of suspicion of objective knowledge and scientific truth, "touching on the importance of not having a single certainty about its possibility and applicability to human life in the world." Everything in the viewpoint of post-modernity is relatively diverse and probable, as it tries to question everything rational concerning language and communication, undermining the possibility of clear and simple understanding, opening up the interpretation and possibility channels<sup>27</sup>.

The formation of New Historicism is a branch of cultural criticism and was led by Stephen Greenblatt. New Historicism does not view history as a unified and

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<sup>24</sup> Saïd Allouch: *Cultural Criticism or Salafist Modernity*, Abi Raqraq Printing and Publishing House, Rabat, 1st edition, 2007, pp. 17-18.

<sup>25</sup> Megan al-Ruwaili, Saad Albazei: *The Literary Critic's Guide*, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, Morocco, 3rd edition, 2002, pp. 305-306.

<sup>26</sup> Abdullah Al-Ghathami: *Post-Awakening, Discourse Shifts from Individualism to Plurality*, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca – Morocco, 1st edition, 2015, pp. 9-10.

<sup>27</sup> Mohammed Bekkaye: *Postmodern Archipelagos, Stakes of Human Self: From the Dominion of Enclosure to the Recognition of Liberation*, Al-Rafidain Publishers, Lebanon, 1st edition, 2017, pp. 7-8.

homogeneous entity, but rather sees what is known as cultural formulae and full cultural analysis as going beyond the text to identify the links between the text and values on the one hand and institutions and other cultural practices on the other. Hence, New Historicism was committed to uncovering the historical contexts in which texts were formed. If history was one of the pillars of New Historicism, textualism, language, and literary representation were strongly favored as the basis for historical analysis. As such, literary criticism among the proponents of this current tends towards history, "immersed in reading history as a textual composition primarily, looking at the specific historical and cultural locations occupied by literary texts and exploring the conflicts, contradictions, and collisions between historical forces and political and ideological trends therein."<sup>28</sup>

Despite the overlap between cultural analysis and the new historicism, we note Greenblatt, who is firmly associated with new historicism in literary studies during the Renaissance era, has now abandoned it in favor of his preferred cultural poetics, resulting in a project that revisits the intersectional axes of texts, "replacing the historical textual sequence of independent literary history with the synchronous text of cultural systems." The shifts in Greenblatt's thinking from cultural poetics in 1980 to new historicism in 1982 to cultural poetics again in 1988 came about during his study of Shakespearean plays and Renaissance discourse, where he seeks to uncover the ways in which collective beliefs and experiences are formed, how expression is transferred from one tool to another, and when expression becomes artistic discourse that can be traded, and how the boundaries between cultural practices of things that are considered artistic and those that are not are drawn, using the concept of culture<sup>29</sup>.

New historicism rejects both the marginalization of traditional literary history and fictional texts. According to new historicist critics, literary texts do not necessarily embody the author's intention or reveal the spirit of the era that produced it, as "traditional literary historians emphasize." Similarly, literary texts are not self-sufficient artworks that transcend the time and place in which they were written, as new critics have believed. Instead, they are cultural tools that tell us something about the interaction of discourses, a network of social meanings that operate in the time and place in which the text was written<sup>30</sup>. Therefore, new historicism is one of the critical outcomes of post-structuralism, bringing together many of the elements that have dominated other critical approaches, such as Marxism and deconstruction, as well as cultural anthropology and other disciplines. These elements come together to support new historicism in its quest to read literary texts in their historical and cultural context, where ideology and social power struggles influence the formation of the text, and where meanings change, which new historicism has inherited from deconstruction<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Mohammed Bekkaye: *Postmodern Archipelagos, Stakes of Human Self: From the Dominion of Enclosure to the Recognition of Liberation*, Al-Rafidain Publishers, Lebanon, 1st edition, 2017, pp. 7-8.

<sup>29</sup> Youssef Alimat: "Cultural Pattern," *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9. 30- Greenblatt and others:

<sup>30</sup> Greenblatt and others: "New Historicism and Literature," *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>31</sup> Megan al-Ruwaili, Saad Albazei: "The Literary Critic's Guide," *op. cit.*, p. 80.

The analytical approach to literary texts has evolved from the literary to the cultural, where the cultural approach seeks to "rely on a scrutinizing reading to recover the cultural values absorbed by literary texts, as opposed to other texts that cannot contain the context in which they were produced." Contrary to other texts, the literary text includes its own context of production, making it possible to form a picture of culture as a complex formation<sup>32</sup>. While Koller recognizes the interaction between the literary and cultural phenomena in the analysis of texts, understanding parallel discourses as a necessity that is imposed on the viewer who must be familiar with both sources of cultural studies – the first extending from previous currents that paved the way for cultural criticism, such as structuralism, and the second is European Marxist theory, which analyzed popular culture as opposed to the bourgeoisie culture as an oppressive ideology, because its meanings are employed to place readers or viewers in the position of consumers in order to legitimize state power. The interaction between these two analytical approaches to culture, culture as an expression of the people and culture as imposed on the people, was important to the development of cultural studies<sup>33</sup>.

Abdullah Al-Ghathami is considered one of the most important critics who focuses on studying cultural criticism and cultural patterns. He suggests that cultural patterns are "eternal and entrenched historical patterns that always dominate". In his book "Cultural Criticism: Reading Cultural Patterns", he poses a question on how we can make a significant shift in the act of criticism from literary criticism to cultural criticism. He answers that achieving this shift requires a set of processes, including a shift in the critical terminology, concept, function, and application<sup>34</sup>. Some critics and scholars argue that literary criticism and cultural criticism have become distinct and that literary criticism has reached its limit of maturity and lost its ability to meet the cognitive and cultural changes that the world is witnessing now. They suggest that cultural criticism should replace literary criticism. However, some critics oppose this idea, asserting that cultural criticism should serve as a complement, not a replacement, to literary criticism<sup>35</sup>.

Scholars have found that aesthetic conjectures in literary texts are an effective formation in the formation of patterns indicative of the manifestations of the existence of strong resistance, the emergence of social classes, "the authority of monks, as well as manifestations of cultural, political and national differentiation. When we scrutinize the literary discourse, ancient and modern, and explore its mysteries through careful cultural reading, we notice that its basic codes, poetry, prose, and criticism, were a reservoir for the destruction of conflicting cultural patterns, contradictory referential representations, and verbal silences that traditional textual reading did not succeed in revealing<sup>36</sup>". While there are critics who refused to

<sup>32</sup> Youssef Alimat: "Cultural Pattern," op. cit, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Saïd Allouch: "Cultural Criticism or Salafist Modernity" op. cit, pp. 54-55.

<sup>34</sup> Abdullah Al-Ghathami: Cultural Criticism – A Reading of Arab Cultural Patterns, Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca – Morocco, 1st edition, 2000, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> Abdullah Al-Ghathami, Abdul Nabi Astif: Cultural Criticism or Literary Criticism, Dialogues for a New Age, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 1st edition, May 2003, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Youssef Alimat: "Cultural Pattern," op. cit, p. 2.

abandon literary criticism, because the basic principles of cultural studies are not a replacement for literary studies, " but rather an inoculation of it that serves New peculiarities, you need to focus on the elements and techniques of literary analysis in culture: Thus, in principle, there is no need for conflict between cultural and literary studies, literary studies are not constrained or committed to some concept of a literary subject that cultural studies should reject. Cultural studies arose as an application of the techniques of literary analysis to other cultural subjects; literary studies, moreover, may make progress when literature is studied as a special cultural practice<sup>37</sup> " .

Cultural studies did not reject the trends of literary criticism and its approaches, but rather took advantage of them " as an important stage in the development of the levels of reading texts, and should be bypassed by the trend to the levels of cultural significance to reveal the meaning and develop cultural awareness.<sup>38</sup>" thus, Cultural Studies seeks to link the relationships between the parts of the text and reveal the cultural patterns that carry marginal and silent issues, so the development of reading from literary to cultural; therefore, " the advent of a new style of reading allows the development between objects and ideas within the text and within culture and helps the reader to reveal the moving horizon of culture within literary texts.<sup>39</sup>". The new reading since the era of modernity and then what After that, it is no longer limited to relying on ethical artistic and cognitive standards guided by the aphorisms of texts and masterpieces, but the evaluation has become related to philosophy, history, anthropology and psychology, because creativity in its specificity and comprehensiveness touches on issues and experiences related to human life in its various manifestations<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, saying cultural criticism isolated from literary criticism, does not bring us to the relative truth of the text, and saying that cultural criticism defines itself by closing to itself, is unacceptable. Cultural criticism in isolation from the idea of cultural comparison is also unacceptable. And here we have to point out that the relative correct reading, perhaps, includes the spaces of the text in their diversity: the circle of the text, the nuclei of the text, the perimeter of the text, the network of relationships in the text, the conditions of production of the text, and this is done within the mechanisms that have become known to analyze, process and evaluate the text (Time, Place, fame, formats, interpretation) and thus can include cultural criticism<sup>41</sup>.

## Conclusion:

Postmodern literary studies have opened up new perspectives for thinking about contemporary novels, also calling for the shaking up of traditional studies that seek aesthetics and taste. Cultural studies have introduced mechanisms that offer deeper

<sup>37</sup> Saïd Allouch: "Cultural Criticism or Salafist Modernity" op. cit, pp. 57-58.

<sup>38</sup> Abdel Fattah Ahmed Youcef: Reading the Text and Asking the Culture, The Domination of Culture and the Reader's Awareness of Meaning Shifts, Modern Book World, Beirut – Lebanon, 1st edition, 2000, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> Op. cit: p. 26.

<sup>40</sup> Mohammed Berrada: Arabic Fiction and the Challenge of Renewal, General Egyptian Book Organization, Arab Creativity Series, 1st edition, 2012, p. 106.

<sup>41</sup> Hifnawi Ba'li: "Introduction to Comparative Cultural Criticism Theory," op. cit, pp. 53-54.

insights, which, based on the foregoing, allow for the following conclusions to be drawn:

- Contemporary novels have become a form that does not match classical novels in form or content, as criticism and cultural studies have played a significant role in the development of literary texts.
- Novelists have moved from modernity to post-modernity because cultural diversity has made its presence felt, giving voice to the previously silent majority, where the old silence was due to the inability to convey its voice.
- Critical methods have introduced aesthetic and taste mechanisms that investigate language, but compared to cultural criticism, they have increased their depth in exploring the marginalised and silenced.

Cultural criticism and studies have revealed social issues through hidden cultural constructs.

- Contemporary novels address social issues and present what reality offers in a creative and solid form.
- Cultural analysis cannot be restricted to the discovery of hidden constructs in literary texts alone, nor can it be limited to famous texts alone, as marginalized texts also have their hidden constructs. Because the selection mechanisms that govern the critic are expressions of a hidden construct that can be analyzed aesthetically and culturally.
- The new histories agree with the majority of the trends that bring them closer to the unified umbrella of cultural criticism, and differ in other things that increase the sense of loss that comes with dealing with the contemporary critical scene.

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