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Khaoula BOUBASLA ¹
Yamina SELAIMIA ²

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¹University Badji Mokhtar Annaba, Algeria.

²University Badji Mokhtar Annaba, Algeria.



Questions of Identity and the Implications of Islamic History in the Novel of “A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia” by Rachid Boudjedra

KhaoulaBOUBASLA¹
Yamina SELAIMIA²

¹ University Badji Mokhtar Annaba, Algeria. boubakhaoula88@gmail.com

² University Badji Mokhtar Annaba, Algeria. slaimia.yamina@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

History, in its relationship with the novel, represents a narrative contract that based on delving into the worlds of storytelling and its various narratives. History, as a document, and the novel, as a creative and imaginative work, blends to question the implicit structure at times and the explicit one at others. This questioning is influenced by an aesthetic and cultural background that explains the Algerian novelist’s interest in the temporal dimensions and social spaces generated from the relationship between humans, their environment, and their present.

In our study, the selected novel explicitly reflects the dialogical interaction between historical and fictional narrations. By tracing its historical and imaginative paths, we were able to identify the key points that represent the reading and analytical conclusions of this narrative discourse and its inspiration from history.

The Algerian novelist relied on Islamic history, which was a source of inspiration and an opportunity to discover new worlds that were previously marginalized. These are the same worlds that contributed to shaping the contours of identity. Thus, history served as the referential and cognitive framework that encompassed it and its problems. This indicates that history is not separate from it, but rather represents its most prominent manifestation and a key element of its components.

Based on this, RachidBoudjedra re-imagined identity from different perspectives. He chose for it to be without a title and with lost features in his novel “A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia”.

Keywords: Islamic history, Implicit structure, Identity, Novel.

1. Introduction:

The social, political, and economic transformations after the successive crises experienced by Algerian society have revealed a reality that requires rewriting its past differently. This entails renewing questions of identity and formulating new concepts around it, considering identity as a key historical and intellectual component tied to those transformations.

The contemporary Algerian novelist found himself within the depths of Algerian reality, searching for questions about a present that has yet to overcome the obstacles of its past—this past with its untold histories. Therefore, the novelist has interested in representing those histories in a way that demonstrates the extent to which Algerian narrative interacts with historical references.

In this investigation, the selected novel explicitly reflects the dialogical interaction between historical and fictional narration. By tracing its historical and imaginative paths, we were able to identify key points that represent reading and analytical conclusions about the position of this narrative discourse in its

inspiration from history.

The Algerian novelist relied on Islamic history, which was a source of inspiration and an opportunity to discover new worlds that had been marginalized. These are the same worlds that contributed to shaping the contours of identity. In fact, history serves as the referential and intellectual framework that encompasses it and its issues. Thus, it is not separated from identity; it is the most significant manifestation of it and a major element of its components.

Based on this, RachidBoudjedra re-imagined identity from different perspectives. He chose it to be without a title and with missing features in his novel "A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia".

1-The Definition of Identity

The concept of identity is one of the most closely connected concepts to the social, cultural, and historical life of both the individual and the group. «It is not an entity given once and for all, but rather a reality that is born, grows, forms, changes, ages, and undergoes existential crises»¹. This formation is subject to temporal and spatial transformations, making the concept more ambiguous and denying identity any characteristic of closure or permanence.

Since identity is a process that influences thoughts and behaviours, its concept «affects our ideas and behaviours in many different ways»². It includes any individual specificity within a social framework, thereby it becomes language, gender, cultural level, field of work, psychological concerns, and intellectual aspirations—all of which a framework for shaping a given identity. In this sense, identity is a set of life's imprints, and its scope is broader than one or two characteristics.

After having provided a general overview of the concept of identity, we will take a closer look at its manifestations as a fundamental dimension that clearly contributes to shaping the structures of the contemporary Algerian novel's text.

2-Questions of Identity and the Implications of Islamic History

Looking for self and historical identity with all its complex intricacies is prominently present in the novels of "RachidBoudjedra". Since the beginning of his artistic and creative journey, he has worked with historical texts. He attempted to create harmony between the novelistic and historical discourses and embark on a new adventure with each historical novel he completed. Most of his historical novels deals with issues related to the social and political reality, and expresses his stance on contemporary events.

He «boldly paved the way for addressing the forbidden, delving into the concealed, interrogating history, enriching the narrative with encyclopedic knowledge, inserting cinematic techniques in writing, employing intertextuality, and integrating fields of knowledge such as mathematics, elements of visual arts, philosophy, and adopting ambiguity and the surreal. He also relied on free association, that is, an excessive dependence on the unconsciousness as a framework of the artistic text»³.

In effect, "Boudjedra" not only draws from history, but also uses it in his previous novels such as "The Battle of the Alley" and "A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia," as a narrative discourse that illustrates what happens in reality.

Nevertheless, the novel of "A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia" «is not an explicit historical novel; rather, it is primarily a novel of reality or events, which invokes history, then departs from it to establish a narrative text with harmonious aesthetic dimensions. In this case, we cannot distinguish between what is historical and what is narrative. It is a novel that employs history to understand the dimensions of the

¹Alex Mucchielli, Identity, translated by Ali Watfa, Al-Wasim Printing Services, Damascus, Syria, 1st edition, 1993, p. 7.

² Amartya Sen, Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny, translated by Hamza Ben Qublan Al-Muzaini, Jadawel Publishing, Kuwait, 1st edition, 2012, p.20.

³Mohammed Besnassi: *The Concern of Identity in RachidBoudjedra: A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia as a Model*, Journal of the Jordanian Arabic Language Academy, Issue 25, Year 2019.p.20.

present, and invokes the past to create the current realistic framework as the characters envision it»⁴.

In this novel, the presence of history arises from a linear path through which the novelist achieves specific goals, including the past ones that are embodied in its events and characters before the present with its conditions and reflections on social and political reality. Additionally, it relates to the narrative text as a linguistic icon with its characteristics and aesthetic functions, which has a structure that allows it to merge with the historical text selected by the novelist.

Indeed, «reading the novel of *A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia* requires another expectation. This is linked to the effectiveness of reading in itself because the reader cannot imagine that he is gliding through this text without exerting effort that involves unlocking the text and adapting it. The effectiveness of the interpretation that the reader performs is one of the initial steps towards producing a possible reading. The latter begins from the perception of meaning and its exploration to reach the potential for understanding»⁵.

In the preceding section, the critic "FathiBoukhalifa" pointed out to the effectiveness of reading as one of the priorities of the reader because it helps him understand and interpret the text and grasp its meanings. Thus, reading for the sake of reading, without comprehending the nuances of discourses and their hidden meanings, robs the reader to be at the forefront of the texts and relegates him as he was before.

As for our reading of the novel "*A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia*," it differs from previous studies regarding reading procedures. Hence, we will attempt to read it from a cultural perspective and make the exploration of cultural frameworks feasible. Among these implied frameworks are:

A. The Framework of Fragmented Identity

It is important to clarify the nature of the novel "*A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia*" as it is a text that openly raises questions that reflect the depth of the novel's characters.

The main character builds multiple images, including the loss of his title. This was not mere coincidence but rather a response to the troubled reality; a reality that reveals the separation of the active selves/ the people of Manama from their history and collective memory.

The latter dealt with its historical identity by indifference and ignorance of its temporal and spatial details, even of its famous figures, despite their firmly established names in historical memory. «The title-less man suffered from the indifference with which the people of Manama responded to his excavations about the house where Ibn Khaldoun wrote part of his introduction and his complete autobiography. Ibn Khaldoun had resided in the town between 774 and 777 of the Hijri calendar. Therefore, Mohammed, the title-less man, felt profound sorrow because he could not impress them with a subject his heart possessed while they admired his constant vigilance regarding his shadow, which he never left behind»⁶.

The character of "Muhammad, the title-less man," needed that search so that he could relieve the tension, as he was unable to define his relationship with "Ibn Khaldoun" and what he represents as an important historical and cultural reference for him.

In the previous section, we find him attempting to approach the place where "Ibn Khaldoun" wrote his introduction. However, he quickly transitions to another place, leading the reader to feel that this quest is merely a dream from which "Mohammad, the title-less man," will awaken. Instead of pursuing his quest and asserting his viewpoint, he puts us with his confessions that reveal his anxiety from the people of his town. 'Ibn Khaldoun' became a secondary subject for them because those selves had disconnected from their historical environment and Arab Islamic community."

⁴FathiBoukhalifa: *The Novel and Historical Text: Towards a New Methodology for Writing History in Novels*, the novel of 'A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia' by RachidBoudjedra as a model, Algerian Poetics Laboratory Journal, University of M'sila, Algeria, Issue 1, March 2009.pp.1337-138.

⁵FathiBoukhalifa: *The Novel and Historical Text: Towards a New Methodology for Writing History in Novels*,p.138.

⁶RachidBoudjedra: "*A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia*", Vol. 1, translated by MerzakBaktache, ANEP Publications, Algeria, 2nd edition, 2002,p.13.

The bad thing is, «The truth is that Ibn Khaldoun story does not concern them at all; it was a deeper plunge into the world of fantasy than other miracles. They could not know the person who settled in their town about seven centuries ago, and wrote books that did not exist except in the mind of the title-less man»⁷.

"Ibn Khaldoun" has become a fabricated history placed in the realm of miracles, and what connects these selves to their history has become a form of superstition. They are more attached to what surpasses them, even if it is incidental. Consequently, they have destroyed communication with their past, where truths have disappeared, and the image of the past has been obscured. In this behaviour, they establish a history of absence and disconnection.

«Every time Mohammed, the title-less man, held more tightly to the period that Ibn Khaldoun spent in Manama, the people of his town drifted further away from him. This was because they did not know that person, and they could not imagine how such a great man could stop one day in a town that God had exalted it one day»⁸.

Ibn Khaldoun represents a historical reality as he embodied the intellectual leap in the era of Arab Islamic culture decline. He is worthy to be a reference upon which the threads of Arab identity in its contemporary backwardness rely. Yet, it is met with much apathy that reflects the decay of the Arab culture and the disintegration of its internal identity. Meanwhile, the West nurtures thinkers like him while Arab societies engulfed outside their existence and history. How could these selves not recognize him? How could they be surprised by his existence simply because they belong to a town that lacks the most basic elements of life?

The efforts of "the title-less man" ultimately lead to the realization that the selves surrounding him, particularly his mother, Messaouda, who «could not suppress her anger when he returned one night drunk, and she screamed at him: "Here you are, turning the world upside down with this story of Ibn Khaldoun! Women mock me, and they claim that he is Jewish," and he did not utter a word to correct the horrible mistake that his mother made»⁹.

At this point, the narrative presents details that clarify the memory of the community, which has severed ties with its identity, history, and its roots. She mocks the truths claimed by her son, and it passes on the mechanisms of blockage that distort representations of history, turning Ibn Khaldoun into a Jew—from a perspective that cuts off the paths of references, books, and experiences in the face of its narrow awareness.

This identity is the result of many factors leading it to detach from its past and transform into new identities that carry a different awareness than its historical one. This new memory represents a container for the collective consciousness of the Manama people.

At the same time, there is another identity of "Mohammed, the title-less man," It is a contemporary identity and an implicit opposition to the detached historical one. This contemporary identity forms a deep awareness that seeks to understand its past with its references; it can restore the remaining identities and correct their course instead of dispersion. Its silence does not mean that it rejects communication with them, but rather it tries to rebuild bridges of communication between the detached historical identities and the contemporary identity.

All discourses of separation crumble when the detached selves attempt to speak of their past and memory that they have detached themselves from, so that they can adapt to their present. «When the relations between the mother and son enhance greatly, she asks him to whisper some secrets to her about the origin and race of Ibn Khaldoun, whom he has enamoured with. At that time, the title-less man seizes the opportunity to tell her everything about the history of this great man and other celebrities»¹⁰.

The contemporary identity tries to change the perspective of the detached one towards its history. It enters into the depths of its belief detached from its past, makes it align with its present, and attempts to take refuge in it so that it might forget the past and its pains. Therefore, the two identities merge to form a new identity far from contradictions.

The novel delineates its features between the opposing frameworks to briefly answer several questions. It defends the journey of Mohammed, the title-less man, in search of his lost identity by returning to history makers and searching in their biographies to feel his constant belonging to them and to their past.

⁷ The same source: p.14

⁸ The same source: p.14

⁹ The same source: p.15

¹⁰ The same source: p.47.

This is because history grants him tools that enhance his confidence greatly, and enable him to face all the pressures that may hinder him from finding what he aspires to.

B. The Framework of False/True Identity

The question of identity resurfaces once again, as Boudjedra reaffirms identity and its historical roots. Therefore, his text addresses this issue as « a sensitive starting point in understanding the present reality by returning to history, since the matter is the foundation of the present and its natural extension. The record of history may contain elements that can be applied to the current negative reality. In the present, there are reflections similar to the history is essentially a revelation of reality and an attempt to comprehensively read it.»¹¹

This reading unveils the existence of fixed identities that can expose the falseness of reality and reveal its truth. History is the hidden force that fuses questions of identity into one crucible and establishes dualities or general cultural patterns.

The psychological pain experienced by the protagonist, "Mohammed, the title-less man," and the sense of loss that made his self fragmented, is what determined the journey in search of his identity. «He wanted to know why the foreign legislator, who ravaged the country for a few centuries, deprived him of a name like the other people— a name he could carry with him when he sleeps, wakes, eats, reproduces, gets angry, and reconciles»¹².

It is a time that requires us to pause and reflect—under the colonizer's material and psychological damage—on the hidden cultural framework behind which the lost surname of Mohammed is concealed. This is what made him terrified of the present and seek his salvation through documents, references, and «history books, to which he dedicated his life. Driven by a certain curiosity, he wanted to know what happened in distant eras, and what lies behind the successive walls surrounding the town where he grew up and encountered certain mysteries... and to understand why he was the first to witness life and why he was born alone»¹³.

History gradually emerges as a belief adopted by "Mohammed, the title-less man," to reach his goal. His questions reflect the depth of his connection to it. What draws attention is the 'Other' (the colonizer), who sought to falsify his identity. «Then came that day when this ancestor appeared! Or an exact image of him! He was wearing a tattered jacket, and his posture resembled that of a puppet. His eyes followed and unsettled him. He said to him: "How miserable I am with your knowledge of what happened".... "I will wait you in the courtyard. The wind is strong here, and the heat is suffocating. I do not wish to see Messaouda.... I know about the issue of her cucumbers, but don't be fooled by that silly nickname. You have all the clarifications in the manuscripts you keep reviewing»¹⁴.

This passage can be considered as a model for the escape from confusion experienced by "Mohammed, the title-less man". His grandfather's character as its features described resembles a human monster. He has a terrifying giant voice and a strong smell of alcohol. He named 'Bonfous', he is seen with these traits that quickly change within the narrative space and interact with the journey in search of the lost identity. It shifts from its negativity to a driving force of the events to reveal hidden truths that drive the background of the cultural reading. Thus, we will try to grasp those elements that carry the hidden structure:

- **How miserable I am with your knowledge of what happened / Erasure of identity:**

The French colonizers wronged Algerian families by causing individuals suffer from psychological complexes as a result of «the practices that reflected the machinery of identity erasure. These practices included the disgusting surnames given to Algerian families during the establishment of the civil status register. The individual did not stop at this blatant falsification, as they were simply stripped of any surname»¹⁵.

These repulsive surnames formed a framework that reflects the uniqueness of the text in addressing

¹¹Mohammed Besnassi: *The Concern of Identity in RachidBoudjedra, A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia as a Model*, p.25.

¹²RachidBoudjedra: "A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia", Vol. 1, p.8.

¹³The same source: p.8

¹⁴The same source: p.70-71.

¹⁵Mohammed Besnassi: *The Concern of Identity in RachidBoudjedra, A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia as a Model*, p.34.

such topics. It is a text that plays with the mechanics of writing, for Mohammed did not suffer from those awful surnames; rather, he was deprived even of their ugliness and stripped of his surname, along with his family. They were «without a surname since that day in 1840 when the foreign head of civil status humiliated their great-grandfather. As it is said, he stripped him of his surname and attached two disgraceful letters to him, from which the family has yet to recover»¹⁶.

Hence, the grandfather stated that he was miserable about what happened to Mohammed and his family in terms of the distortion of their identity. He comes from the past, trying to present a series of truths, which we can consider a dismantling of the present and the future that we will ultimately attempt to reach.

• **But don't be fooled by that silly nickname:**

The narrator's choice of the grandfather's appearance is the only way for Mohammed to restore his true identity through resurrecting the past. Therefore, the grandfather asks him not to pay attention to the silly nickname given by the colonizer because it is merely a facade to preoccupy with his false identity and forget his true one. Thus, he loses the historical memory that requires deep searching. «Nor the two letters that symbolize him, which the colonizer attached to him, as if to compel him to excavate his identity in the depths of ancient history, climbing down it in a descending manner»¹⁷.

The two letters that the colonizer given to him and what they symbolize represent the framework of false identity that required looking into its implications.

• **You have all the clarifications in the manuscripts you keep reviewing:**

«Thus, exposing what colonialism has perpetrated against identity is a prominent mechanism in addressing the causes of the distortion that has affected the self, so that it becomes possible to search and reclaim the authentic identity to rebuild the self»¹⁸.

We conclude that the opposing duality of 'falsification/truth' reveals the dark side of colonialism which manipulated identities and their complex structures. It leaves them anxious and searching for the essence of the self who is afraid of the future."

«The Arab Islamic identity is rich in its contributions, contrary to what the colonizer sought in terms of distorting and excluding this authentic identity rooted in history. However, Mohammed was indeed deprived of his family name, yet it is impossible to take away his belonging to a lineage of great figures that changed the course of global civilization and immortalized their names despite the denial of the deniers»¹⁹.

This distortion also erased truths that he knows well are connected to both the true identity and historical reality, which through them one looks toward the future. Therefore, the narrator referred to the manuscripts that Mohammed reads as material documents that can be used to discover his true identity.

C. The Framework of Identity between Similarity and Difference

The theme of similarity and difference prominently appeared in the novel of 'A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia' because it has witnessed several changes that produced many paradoxes and deep gaps at the level of events and characters.

It also chose between merging with modernity and clinging to its heritage. «Modern Arab thought has tied to two different directions: one that calls for mimicking Western culture and aligning with its perceptions, and a second that follows the perceptions of inherited religious culture and its historical references»²⁰.

The world of "Mohammed, the title-less man and his town" will reveal several issues posed by the novelist to convey his frameworks and reinforce the positions of the self that has been searching for years within a biased fabric for which direction to choose, especially in light of the crises faced by the Manama.

«On that night, the one without a surname saw his grandfather in a dream. When he woke up the next day, he fancied he saw him sitting in the courtyard reading an ancient Arabic manuscript written in numbers according to the method used in the second century of the Hijra. He quickly remembered that he had been extremely drunk the night before. His grandfather had died long ago, he had been illiterate like other elders

¹⁶RachidBoudjedra: "A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia", Vol. 1, p.46.

¹⁷ The same source: Vol. 1, p.11.

¹⁸Mohammed Besnassi: *The Concern of Identity in RachidBoudjedra, A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia as a Model*, p.34.

¹⁹The same source: p.36.

²⁰GhazlanHashemi: *Contradictions of the Centre and the Margin in Contemporary Thought*, Nippur Publishing House, Iraq, 1st edition, 2014. p.82.

of Manama, who had been overlooked by progress and condemned to retreat amid the scorching southern winds and within their narrow surroundings»²¹.

The narrator, while recounting what happened that night concludes by selecting vivid images that refer to the elders of Manama as illiterate and they have no development. This means that they live in isolation, which he later declared by: 'That town is barren and lacking in life.

Mohammed, the title-less man, « was the only man who could read and write, along with the land surveyor and the teacher»²².

This paradox, which leans towards the dreamlike, evokes what has not been explicitly stated: how could an old illiterate man read an ancient manuscript related to the 2nd century AH? We may not answer this question because it is interpreted according to each reader's perception. However, we will delve into the depths of the characters, which in turn will answer that question from their own perspectives, and help the reader with their multiple voices in understanding those hidden narratives.

The town of Manama embodies a "spatial setting" laden with ignorance, epidemics, and famines, and surrounded by walls on all sides. For centuries, it has been subjected to the laws of nature, which forced it to live stripped of all signs of life. Its people suffered from brokenness and loss, and they diminished from their existence. The town's fate was to remain alive, but it was on the verge of vanishing, especially after one of the merchants failed to rebuild it. «The town was isolated during that era, boycotted and ostracized from all thriving civilizations»²³.

On this basis, the novel reconsiders the issue of isolation and withdrawal because «this confirms that the matter of heritage forms a central axis for the process of thinking to embark on the act of analysis, exploration, and uncovering various questions related to the Arab self, which has been traumatized by the obsession with backwardness that has affected it for decades»²⁴.

The novel evokes many scenes in which there is a lack of closeness, interaction, and dialogue with other cultures. However, the experience of "Shajarat al-Durr" will spark several discussions on this topic that reveal the anxieties of identity and its troubling questions.

According to Mohammed Abed Al-Djabri, «modernity does not mean rejecting heritage or breaking with the past. It means elevating the way we engage with heritage to the level of 'contemporaneity' -meaning keeping pace with global progress»²⁵.

To shed light on the issue of heritage, which often evokes the past with its pains, defeats, fears, and fractures; it prompts a re-reading, understanding, and escape into it. It also leads to closing oneself within its walls and refusing to engage with the other. Modernity seeks to open new horizons that embrace development, with the possibility of engaging with the past in a way that allows for difference without completely severing ties with it.

«The next day, she sat in her usual spot, working slowly on embroidering a green silk shroud. 'Am-Mohammed,' who was her husband's second brother and a man without surname, dared...to joke with her slyly. He asked what she was doing. She calmly replied: "It's a shroud"»²⁶.

Based on this perspective, "Shajarat al-Durr" initiated new commercial activities that Al-Manama town had never known before. This town had relied solely on silkworm farming and ram fighting for its livelihood. Through her project, «a silk shroud embroidery industry emerged in Al-Manama, which later developed the town's economy. The town's fortunes suddenly grew and it became the largest exporter of silk shrouds in the world. As a result, the family without surname could have enjoyed prosperity because this industry brought in hard currency to Al-Manama. It even attracted the capital of those who had been

²¹RachidBoudjedra: *A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia*, Vol. 1, p.16.

²²The same source: p.07.

²³The same source: p.33.

²⁴Dr. RedhaCherif: *A Critical Approach to the Question of Heritage and Modernity in the Discourse of Mohammed Abed Al-Djabri*, Civilization Problems Journal, published on 15/12/2020, p.1.

²⁵Mohammed Abed Al-Djabri: *Heritage and Modernity: Studies and Discussions*, Arabic Unity Centre, 1st edition, Beirut, Lebanon, 2000, p.16.

²⁶RachidBoudjedra: *A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia*, Vol. 1, p.132.

imposing their law on the stagnant silk market»²⁷. Shajarat al-Durr built her legacy, and the people of Al-Manama kept up with this modernization on all levels.

Thus, she broke the boundaries of closed identity by interacting with the outside world. «A few months after the birth of the twins without surname, greedy businessmen, large-bodied commercial representatives, and gambling brokers began to flock to Al-Manama. Despite Mohammed's vigilance, they managed to infiltrate everywhere. Then, with the collusion of the governor, they obtained contracts through which they made unimaginable profits by buying at low prices from the family without surname and reselling them at a hundred times the original price. Millionaires from the Gulf invested in this flourishing trade, followed by wealthy people from around the world. The dangers became real, and commercial capitalism started to take root in Al-Manama»²⁸.

The trade of "Shajarat al-Durr" was distinguished by its strong openness to the outside world. Thus, it achieved a remarkable transformation that established a new perspective toward the "other". The latter was viewed as a material and cultural difference that Shajarat al-Durr adopted to advance the town of Al-Manama. The townspeople showed positive reactions and quickly adapted to the demands of this phase. They even celebrated this diversity despite Alaoua Al-Ahmar's warnings about the potential consequences. It was difficult to stop them, as they had been deprived of it for a long time.

Nevertheless, Mohammed, the title-less man, «Instead of finding joy in his heart, his isolation is increased with the flourishing of the silk shroud trade»²⁹.

In this discussion, we can bypass all the signs of progress that Al-Manama experienced. «In my opinion, this anxiety stems from a lack of understanding, or a failure to internalize a major historical phenomenon — modernity — in its broadest sense. It has never been fully considered objectively in its specific philosophical significance. However, it is always viewed in light of the painful transformations it has imposed on our heritage, thinking and living»³⁰.

In this regard, DariushShayegan explained the concept of modernity that must be approached based on its interaction with our history and traditions. If modernity is driven by a desire to dominate our identity and its components, it becomes a threat to us.

« Mohammed, the title-less man, was angry at his wife for falling into the trap of commerce and forgetting the historical model of the woman whose name she borrowed the only queen in the history of the Islamic world who faced many alliances. She breathed the spirit of freedom into her empire and taught women how to benefit from it to spread revolution everywhere»³¹.

This is what Mohammed, the title-less man, experienced. He was gripped by tension as the silk shroud trade conflicted with his self. It makes it difficult to shield and hide behind its walls from the "other" who was seeking ways to dominate.

Conclusion

Every text has its particularities and procedural mechanisms, and each novelist has his or her way of incorporating history, especially in light of the immense significance of Islamic history across its eras. The latter is the memory of the Arab nation, its identity, the foundation of its existence, and a key force in preserving its heritage and ensuring its continuity. From this perspective, the novel of **"A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia"** addresses questions of identity through various implicit frameworks, such as the fragmented identity, which chose the past to understand its existence and search for its lost identity. There is also the framework of the false identity. It is a self to show a new awareness by creating an image that defends its true identity. Finally, there is the framework of conformity and difference, which represent individuals who sought to embrace the culture of diversity, and participate in the process of openness instead of isolation and self-enclosure.

²⁷The same source: pp132.-133.

²⁸The same source: pp.135-136.

²⁹The same source: p.137.

³⁰DariushShayegan: *The Amputated Self: The West's Obsession in Our Societies*, Dar Al-Saqi, 1st edition, 1991, p.11.

³¹RachidBoudjedra: *A Thousand and One Year of Nostalgia*, Vol. 1, pp.138-140.

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2. Amartya Sen: *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, translated by Hamza Ben Qublan Al-Muzaini, Jadawel Publishing, Kuwait, 1st edition, 2012.
3. DariushShayegan: *The Amputated Self: The West's Obsession in Our Societies*, Dar Al-Saqi, 1st edition, 1991.