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(Historical Imagination)**

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The Boundaries between the Historical and the Imaginary: (Historical Imagination)

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Abstract :

This study explores the boundaries between what is historical and what is imaginary through the concept of historical imagination. While history is traditionally seen as a neutral recording of past events, the historical novel adopts parts of that history and treats them through a literary perspective. opposite a historian who is constrained by accuracy and objectivity, the novelist employs his artistic imagination to reconstruct events and characters, offering a subjective vision of the past. In this paper, we try to address in depth the bilateral relationship between the novel and history, focusing on the nature of the boundaries between them, and the importance of historical imagination in shaping the narrative vision.

Keywords: Historical imagination, Historical novel, History and fiction, Literary perspective, Narrative vision.

Introduction

History is considered to record events that occurred in the past in a neutral manner, and the historian is a prisoner of those events that he cannot, if he is neutral or truthful, change in their course, while the novel that includes historical imagination takes a piece of that history to treat it in a literary style with a special nature and tools, the historical material constitutes one of his daughters with the writer's imagination to formulate it in a way that suits his vision and view of what is happening around him, and then to install his people as he sees them, not as history mentioned them. Therefore, this paper will try to expand on the bilateral relationship between the novel and history to find out what they are, then

the nature of the borders and the relationship that unites them, as well as how important is historical imagination and its centrality within that duality?

1. Introduction to the Nature of the Relationship:

The nature of the relationship between the novel and history is due to intertwined and overlapping cognitive considerations and this "the novel is one of the most literary genres containing human knowledge in the modern era, everything in life is of interest in the soul, society, feelings, history, past and present of life" ¹it is as when Bakhtin "dialogue sex eat all races, and if it is when other sex has no law"² and here can differentiate between history and novel and that "history, which is a utilitarian discourse seeks to reveal the laws" ³ While the novel that works on imaginary material away from the realistic material on which history works, and since they belong to the kingdom of narrative, the forms of exchange between them have become systematically affordable, and it will remain on the process of mutual assimilation to adapt the context of reception with the systemic ability where the novel can receive historical materials to construct a narrative entity that is artistically significant.⁴ Based on these data, between history and the novel: "semiotic and more open semantics take into account the narrative laws that differ between the rigor of grammar and the fluidity of open connotation,"⁵ which may pose problems related to the concepts of the novel and history, how history works in the novel and how the novel reformulates history imaginatively?

2. The Concept of History:

It was stated in Lisan al-Arab that: "History is the definition of time, and dates like it, dated a book for such a day and time:" ⁶and the Arabs did not know history until a late period, as: "The history that people date is not purely Arabic, and that Muslims took it from the people of the Book and Muslim history dated from the time of migration and became history to today." ⁷ History has several concepts, it is defined by Muslims and Arabs as: "the science of news" or "the art of news" where Ibn Khaldun says: "The truth of history is that it is news about the human meeting, which is the urbanization of the world, and what is exposed to the nature of that urbanization of conditions such as: savagery, humanization, nervousness and types of overcomings of human beings on each

¹ Abderrazak Ben Dahmane, "The Historical Vision in the Contemporary Algerian Novel", PhD thesis, Algeria, Hadj Lakhdar University, 2013, p. 09

² Mohamed Al-Qadi, The Novel and History, Studies in Reference Imagination, Tunisia, Dar Al-Marefa Publishing, 2008, p. 85

³ Abdullah Ibrahim, Historical Imagination, Narrative, Empire, and the Colonial Experience, Arab Institute for Studies and Publishing, Beirut, 2011, p. 9

⁴ Abd al-Salam Aqlamoun, The Novel and History, Dar al-Kitab al-Jadida al-Mutahid, Beirut, 2010, pp. 101.

⁵ Ahmed Youssef, The historical condition and the suggestions of altruism in the novel of Prince Lowasani Al-Araj, Journal of Communication Annab, University of Badji Mokhtar, 1

⁶ Ibn Manzur, Lisan al-Arab, Cairo, Dar al-Maaref, p. 58

⁷ Ibid., p. 17

other and what arises from that of the king and countries and their ranks, and what human beings produce with their work and endeavors of earning, pension, science and crafts, and all other things that happen in that urbanization by nature of conditions"⁸

As for Michel Foucault, he defines history as: "the sum of the facts of human experience, that is, the events that take place in life, whether past or present," but there are those who argue that: "Converting historical material into writing results in writing this writing as a kind of literature, according to WHITE Hayden, who believes that there are no historical facts without being written by the same writer marked with creativity, and she writes a story formulated with a formulation tinged with the subjectivity of its owner."⁹ Among the definitions of history is that it is: "a story about the past, or a set of human events and facts that have passed and ended; but they are subject to transformation, interpretation and influence, which are events and facts that leave their mark and effects in the present and future and contribute to the formation of human behavior in general and creative action, including literature in particular" ¹⁰and this is not far from what Wasini Al-Araj went to that history: "is the completed material that has passed a time that ensures the limits of the contemplative distance between it and that material."¹¹

3. Historical Novel:

The historical novel relies mostly on the aspect of fictional storytelling, without the absence of the presence of the historical dimension, which shows the extent to which the novel is linked to history, which is reflected in the nature of the novelist art itself, which tries to depict reality through imaginative artistic depiction. History here is the main source in historical writing, from which the themes and worlds of the narrative text are derived, which means: "The historical becomes a novelistic component capable of diagnosis and interrogation outside the presuppositions that may be called for by the possibilities of writing and reading alike"¹² There are those who say that "the novel is the closest literary arts to history"¹³ and perhaps its specificity is what "made it a documentary text of history that supplemented the real history with imaginary material that artistically tells the latest history through its arrangement and interpretation, tales that penetrate the official narratives of history." ¹⁴All this intermingling and interaction between these two components, which complement and intersect at certain moments,

⁸ Ibn Khaldun, Introduction, Cairo, Dar Ibn Al-Jawzi for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2005, p

⁹ For the Arabic novel, "Memory and History", Beirut, Arab Diffusion Foundation, 2013, p. 234

¹⁰ Aziz Shukri Madi, in the theory of literature, Beirut, National Institute for Studies and Publishing, 2005

¹¹ Abdullah Ibrahim "historical imagination" previous reference

¹² Abdel Fattah Al-Hazmari, Do We Have a Historical Novel?, Chapters in Criticism Magazine, Cairo, Winter 1997, p. 62

¹³ Ibid., p. 62

¹⁴ Ibid., page 63

which led to the emergence of a new literary genre, attracted readers through its themes rooted in history, to which this literary genre was then known as the poison of the historical novel. This makes it "possess a discourse that relies on the experience of imagination and establishes, despite that, a relationship it really wants with history, so that the subject of imagination becomes history."

It is difficult to define the concept of the historical novel until George Lukács defines it as: "A novel that evokes the present, and contemporaries live it as their previous history of the self"¹⁵ The researcher Said Yaqtin considers: "The fact that the historical novel is a narrative work aimed at reconstructing an era of the past in an imaginary way, where historical characters overlap with imagined characters, and we in the historical novel find the presence of historical material, but presented in a creative and imaginative way."¹⁶ Hence, the historical novel becomes: "a work of art that rises on the basis of historical material, but it is presented according to the rules of narrative discourse (based on the imaginary dimension, no matter how realistic or real) and this imagination is what makes it different from historical discourse."¹⁷

4. The Concept of Imagination:

The novel is considered a kind: "a linguistic text imaginary complex references and currents"¹⁸ and given the existence of the fictional narrative component on which the novel is based, so this will require standing on this concept to know what it is and its development in the context of the novelist, when returning to the islands of the linguist of the word "horses" in the tongue of the Arabs we will find "Khal thing Khaal horses and uncles and horses.... He thought and in the proverb who hears will not think any,..."¹⁹ Through this definition, it can be noted that there is a relationship between imagination and illusion, which also refers to the issue of historical imagination: "La fiction" has been raised in most cultures, it has been known with the Greek philosophical thought, which raised this creative forms through the concept of simulation,²⁰ which is considered by Aristotle the main factor in the reproduction of reality in different ways, he believes that the writer when he simulates it does not say, but acts in this movable and that The poet

¹⁵ Faisal Darrag, *The Novel and the Interpretation of History*, Morocco, Arab Cultural Center, 2004, p. 203

¹⁶ Said Yaqtin, *Issues of the New Arabic Novel, Existence and Borders*, Difference Publications, Algeria, 2012, p. 257

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 258

¹⁸ Shoaib Halifi, *The Imaginary and the Reference, The Process of Discourses*, Chapters in Criticism Magazine, Cairo, Rabie, 2005, p. 230

¹⁹ Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, vol. 1, p. 1304

²⁰ Mohamed Salmi, "The Dialectic of Artistic and Historical: In the Novel of the Book of the Prince", a memorandum submitted to obtain a master's degree, Algeria, Mohamed Khadra University Biskra, 2016

does not simulate what is a being, nor does he simulate what can necessarily and probably." ²¹

It is clear through this presence of the imaginary side, which then developed with the philosophers of Arabs and Muslims, when standing on the perception of Ibn Sinai to imagine we find him says: "The imagination is the speech that the soul calls him to unfold things and contract things without vision, thought and choice; Excited about him, if it is said again and another body excited by the soul about him obedience to imagination not to believe often affects emotion and does not occur believable and perhaps the certainty of his lie imagined"²² and this is close to what went to Mustafa peace in his definition of imagination: "It is a linguistic procedure derived from the pictorial energy of language and the representative ability of the human mind, and that awareness of the universe and perception embodied in the form of perceptions and representations It is in other words a hypothetical possibility in which what is being located after it has been represented."²³ This may refer to the importance and centrality of fiction within the context of the narrative, especially in the duality of the relationship between the novel and history.

5. Historical Imagination in the Duality of Novel and History:

Historical imagination has been addressed and raised many questions and inquiries about it, especially in the context of the duality of the novel and history when determining what they are and the relationship that exists between this duality, which occupied the subject of researchers in modern critical studies, where Abdullah Ibrahim went in his book tagged "Historical Imagination, Narrative and Empire, and the Colonial Experience" to demand a transition from the term historical novel to a more accurate term "historical imagination." Literary by deconstructing the duality of the novel and history, so that a new narrative identity can be created. By moving away from writing that carries historical facts, albeit dating back to the past for the sake of future theses and problems. By also revealing shifts in grand trajectories, he proposes in the term "historical imagination" that this narrative writing be liberated from a position whose qualitative boundaries have been restricted to a vast boundary of writing open to the past and present." ²⁴

In this context, Abdullah Ibrahim defines "historical imagination", saying: "The historical material formed by narrative has been cut off from its documentary and descriptive function and has become an aesthetic and symbolic function, as historical imagination does not refer to the facts of the past, nor does it determine or promote them, but rather inspires them as interpreting pillars of its events, which is the product of the interactive relationship between narrative enhanced by fiction, and history supported by facts, but it is a third composition different from them."²⁵ In doing so, he defines the boundaries and

²¹ Previous reference, Shukri Madi, in the theory of literature

²² Ibn Sina, Kitab al-Shifa within the Book of the Art of Poetry: p. 161, quoting: from Saeed Jabbar from narrative to imaginary, p. 45

²³ Al-Mustafa Salam, Al-Takhbeel in Contemporary Critical Thought, p. 71

²⁴ Previous reference Abdullah Ibrahim, Historical Imagination, p. 5

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 5-6

boundaries of the area between the historical and the imaginary, and that area is what he calls historical imagination. In a related context, Paul Ricoeur agrees in a term called "narrative identity" that it is: "It is the focus in which the exchange, mixing, intersection and interweaving between history and fiction by narrative occurs, thus producing a new formation that is able to express human life better than history alone or literary narrative in itself and alone."²⁶ It also focuses on that tiny space between history and fiction that cannot be singled out.

However, the researcher Amna Belali deals with "historical imagination" based on the distinction between it and "interpretation of history", she believes that "historical imagination succeeds" in which the novelist to imagine possible historical events in a real historical framework, the story starts from the faculties of historical material, and imagination is busy producing what fills that framework of details and parts, history here begins when the novel ends.²⁷ Here history can be linked to what the novelist proposes and proceeds from. While she believes that "the interpretation of history is the one in which some novelists tend to take the historical material achieved in advance and work on the event, historical figure or historical topic and interpret it to serve their interests, so we read history, but from the perspective of the novelist, who directs the reader towards events and recipes for personalities whose history is different from what the recipient is accustomed to, that is, he portrays them and questions them and discusses some of their issues, perhaps around the text marginally and the margin is dead."²⁸ History here precedes a novel and with the difference between historical imagination and interpretation becomes clear, they represent two sides of the same coin, the first is imagination based on the beauty of the artistic side of a novel, while interpretation of history is an imagination open to multiple readings furnishing production ideological, intellectual and cognitive dimension of a novel.

Conclusion

From the above, it is clear to us the extent of the intertwining and overlapping relationship between the novel as an imagination, as well as history in terms of a previous reality, and how that relationship takes place or is dealt with within the context of the narrative, and then also with the possibility that the novel becomes able to receive historical materials in order to build an independent narrative entity based on historical imagination, which has become an indispensable element in dealing with the historical novel. By dealing with historical imagination, it is possible to identify the boundaries or boundaries that exist between the historical and the imaginary, which by their nature have aroused a lot of ink and are still within critical and literary studies.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 6-7

²⁷ Amna Belali, *The Algerian Novel between Imagination and Interpretation of History*, Fifth Literary Courtyard Researches, 1433 AH, p. 257.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 13

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