

The Mobility of the Algerian Arab Novel between Social and Ideological References

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Abstract

The Algerian Arab novel was able to trace the movement of time and talk about all the issues that Algerian society experienced throughout all the historical eras it passed through. To narrate to us the most accurate details and social, intellectual, political and ideological changes, which the writers have creatively explained through the novel. In contrast, a critical approach emerged that accompanied this creative intellectual movement, demonstrating the value of novelistic creativity in changing society. By following up on his issues and highlighting his problems in order to find solutions for them. It is the social approach that focuses on the mechanism of reflecting reality within the narrative text and also on the extent to which it shows the creator's commitment and participation in conveying the issues of the society to which he belongs.

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Introduction

The realism of the Algerian Arab novelist

The novel is one of the most faithful literary genres in expressing reality in all its aspects, to the point where it has become intertwined with history. It goes beyond narrating facts to narrating the reality in which the people live, the foundation upon which any historical era is built.

Therefore, literature, and the novel in particular, represents an important reference that makes it easier for us to be aware of the social, historical, political and cultural reality, in its various stages and transformations. The writer, with his awareness and possession of expressive tools, was able to contribute, alongside history, to conveying the events that society went through, and this is indeed what happened in Algeria. The constant changes in the social and political reality have pushed writers, and novelists in particular, to move, keep pace with events, and express them.

The revolution has been a controversial topic and an important focus in many novels. Thanks to the accuracy of the depiction and the skill of the composition, these novels were able to convey to us the revolutionary events with all the changes and developments that they entailed, leading to the stage of independence and the new political systems that followed it. The people supported it in order to reach a better reality.

The novel continued to monitor the movement of change and development, discussing the social reality after the removal of the obstacle of colonialism, and focusing on the areas of renewal, change, and difference from the past, which was full of tragedies. Therefore, it became a cognitive reference that explains the social history of a society. Considering that the novel text is in constant relationship with societal transformations.

Thus, each novel was able to “present something different in the midst of the reality of infinity.”²⁾The differences in the narratives are what motivate us to read them and reflect on the similarities and differences in them and the observation they provide of lived reality.

Therefore, “each novel has a unique characteristic that is not repeated in any other novel, and perhaps what makes us eagerly accept reading the novel is that difference between it and other novels, and this is also what makes us accept making comparisons based on the distinct difference rather than on the clear similarity.”²⁾.

Topics vary from one novel to another, and even if some novels happen to address a specific topic, the way it is presented will inevitably differ from one writer to another, depending on each one's point of view and orientation. This is what makes literature unique and special.

The critic Ibrahim Abbas saw that with the emergence and spread of the concept of the sociology of the novel, those interested in the Arab novel began to pay attention to the content, considering that the genre of the novel is broad enough to express life in all its aspects and manifestations, whether intellectual, social, or even ideological (3).

The Algerian novel, like other novels, whether Arab or international, was represented by pens that entered the field of writing with an open heart, seeking to embody reality, engage with it, and investigate its truths. It remained in constant movement with the wheel of history and societal developments, to address various topics and issues that concerned the people. All it had to do was delve into its depths to ensure its portrayal of reality was accurate, expressive, and, more than that, influential, as it addresses the truth before anything else, and what is real must be influential.

This dynamism that the novel has experienced throughout its various stages had to be accompanied by criticism that presents this type of literature to the reader, clarifying its importance and motivating them to continually explore it. Criticism brings literature back to life through the act of reading and critical study using various methods.

The distinguished historical periods that Algeria went through contributed to the birth of a generation of creative people and writers. Their works were a strong incentive for some scholars to venture into criticism and study and analyze literature according to different critical theories established by the West and later addressed by Arab critics. Algerian critics had to play on it and use it in the study of Algerian literary text.

The critic Allal Sanqouqa saw that the Algerian novel was concerned with embodying the content, and did not look at the form except as a servant of this content (4). He called the criticism that was concerned with studying the novel "impressionistic and ideological criticism" and he saw that this type of criticism was a direct reason for the Algerian Arab novel's orientation towards the model of critical or socialist realism.

He stated that critical novel writing took two forms:

1- The first aspect: represented by the realistic concept of the novel's function. This type of criticism viewed the novel as having a social and political goal.

2- The second aspect: It was represented by critical approaches that depend on impressionistic and superficial foundations that stop at the limits of research in the content area of the novel, without delving into its depths to search for the artistic and aesthetic aspect. (5)

** Examples of Algerian realistic novel criticism:*

If we are talking about the Algerian Arabic novel in particular, we must also talk about the Algerian critical blogs that have focused on studying this type of literature and researching its social aspect.

1. *Establishing realistic novel criticism in Algeria:*

Mohammed Masayef's blog "The Modern Algerian Arabic Novel between Realism and Commitment" (6) is one of the most important critical journals that has focused on studying the Algerian Arabic novel, and has gone on to classify it and determine its social and ideological orientation.

The critic mentioned at the beginning of his book that he thought of presenting a study on the novel. Considering that there was no complete objective study that addressed its study during the seventies, In addition, the Algerian novel is considered one of the most prominent signs of our country's renaissance in the literary and cultural sector (7).

His study included nine novels: "Al-Laz" and "Al-Zalzal" by Tahar Wattar, "Southern Wind" and "The End of Yesterday" by Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga, "What the Winds Do Not Scatter" "Ambition" by Mohamed Arrar Al Ali, "Birds at Noon" by Merzak Baktash, "The Sun Rises on Everyone" by Ismail Ghamoukat, and "Fire and Light" by Abdelmalek Mortad.

The critic explained in the introduction to his book that he adopted an approach "based primarily on objectivity in research, moderation in judgment, respect for the writer's personality, and artistic and ideological compatibility" (8). He justified his choice of this approach by saying that it is the approach that separates literature from its author and determines the interests and trends of our contemporary literature. He also explains the importance of this approach that he followed, as it alone benefits literature, its author, the reader, and the literary renaissance as well.

He also added that through his study of the novel's themes, he attempted to determine the author's direction, examine its artistic structure and technical tools, and that he relied on texts when making judgments and taking positions.

He said that the judgments he issued on some literary works, even if they were harsh, were objective and would convince the writer of the necessity of benefiting from them From it⁽⁹⁾

The critic classified the novels and presented them through subheadings. He did not take into account their publication dates, but rather tried to include each novel less than one of the categories to which it belongs, which he defined as follows:

*The ideological novel: "The Laz" and "The Earthquake".

*The purposeful novel: "The End of Yesterday", "The Sun Rises on Everyone", and "Fire and Light".

*The realistic novel: "The South Wind" and "Birds at Noon".

*The novel of philosophical reflections: "Ambition".

*Characteristics: "What the winds do not blow away."

And he mentioned Also, although these novels deal with the subject of revolution, they were not written during the revolutionary events. Rather, a period of calm and stability was needed for writers to be able to create such literary works.

This is what happened during the period of independence, when some writers returned to talk about the revolutionary period and the recent past with all that it contained of events, battles, and social and political contradictions. Therefore, the period of independence was the most appropriate period for the emergence of this type of literature represented by the novel, which requires the possession of special expressive tools that enable the writer to employ the elements of the novel and also requires to Enough time to come to light fully.

The novel's primary approach, adopted at the beginning of its emergence, was to draw its themes from the armed revolution, while also addressing the social and political implications arising from it.

The ideological and social orientation of the novelist Tahar Wattar:

Speaking about the artistic side of Tahar Wattar's works, the critic saw that the latter pays great attention to the intellectual and ideological side at the expense of his interest in the artistic side, which remains limited. Muhammad Musayif says that Tahar Wattar "is very interested in expressing the idea and position, and he is hardly concerned with the linguistic tool and style except what is necessary for this expression. This seems like a faint shadow of the writer's thought, positions, and ideological interests" (10).

The critic believed that novelist Tahar Wattar attempted to present his ideological position through his novel "The Laz," while through his novel "The Earthquake," he attempted to address the social reality after the independence period, which was characterized by numerous social and political contradictions.

The writer must have Commitment And expressing the issues of his country, But it should not be restricted by ideological and partisan boundaries, for its content and style should govern its literature. (11)

What is noticeable while reading Muhammad Musaiif's critique of what Tahir Wattar's novels contain is his complete support for many of the opinions, ideas, and principles related to socialist ideological thought.

As for the rest of the novels included in Muhammad Masayef's critical blog, his opinion on them was directed towards the content aspect in the first place, and the following is a mention of some of the judgments he made on them: (12)

- In the novel "Ambition" by Mohammed Arar, the novelist attempts to explore matters of thought, life, death, immortality, and love.

- As for Abdelmalek Mortad, he tried through his novel "Fire and Light" to address the issues of colonialism and civilizations.

- She also wrote the novels "The End of Yesterday" and "Birds at Noon." "What the wind does not blow away" The social and psychological effects of the revolution within the people, especially within the working classes.

- He saw that Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga's interest in "South Wind" was social, but the writer's tendency toward a realistic style made this interest seem like a secondary matter. The critic's realistic style was represented in "description", as the writer provided an accurate description of the village, its traditions, and the psychology of its people.

Therefore, the critic saw that the portrayal of social reality in the novel "The Earthquake" differs from that in the novel "The South Wind." The novelist Tahar Wattar, through his description of aspects of life within the city of Constantine, tried to show the class differences within society and clarify his position on them, while Abdel Hamid Ibn Hadouga was satisfied with an accurate description. Even in his discussion of the conflict between "Ibn Qadi" and "his daughter Nafisa," he was content to present a point of view. Both parties⁽¹³⁾.

The critic reached a number of conclusions through his reading of these novels, which we mention from it⁽¹⁴⁾

- Some writers focus on the idea at the expense of the expression, such as the novelist Tahar Wattar, while others tend to focus more on the expression and formulation.

- Some writers use dialogue and monologue in a striking way, as Ismail Ghamouqat did in his novel "The Sun Rises on Everyone," which makes his novel seem sophisticated and enjoyable.

- Lack of sufficient attention to the symbolic style by novelists, To add some mystery to the literary work that requires standing in order to understand and interpret it, Instead, they preferred to use the symbol with the popular idea or phrase, or with a clear position that did not require consideration.

The critic gave an example of this with the title of the novel "The Earthquake." The symbol in the title is clear, indicating the weakening of the feudal lords' morale and their fear of the agricultural revolution and its consequences.

Critic Mohamed Masayef urged writers to continue their journey and adhere to their ideological stance, while taking care of their artistic tools, so that the Algerian Arabic novel will have a bright future and be able to join the ranks of the Arab novel.

- *Realistic trends in the Algerian Arabic novel:*

Wasini Al-A'raj's book "Trends in the Arabic Novel in Algeria - A Study of the Historical and Aesthetic Origins of the Algerian Novel" is an important reference in the field of Algerian novel criticism. Through it, the critic sought to identify the various trends adopted by the Algerian novel throughout the various stages of its development and its ability to keep pace with reality.

The critic focused his study on the seventies, a period that witnessed numerous changes in all fields. Important topics were raised that were addressed by literature, and the novel in particular, which witnessed a rich quantitative accumulation during this period in particular. The Algerian novel spoke about revolutionary circumstances, and also dealt with post-independence topics, and the agricultural revolution project was one of the most important of these topics.

Wasini Al-A'raj divided his book into two chapters. In the first chapter, he talked about the novel and its precursors, which were the product of the national revolution, specifying the historical periods that Algeria went through and how literature is connected to them. In the second chapter, he talked about the trends of the Algerian Arab novel, which he divided into four trends: reformist Romantic, critical realist and finally socialist realist.

In the second chapter, he talked about "Trends in the Algerian Novel," dividing this chapter into four sections:

- 1- Reformist trend:

This trend appeared in the Algerian novel during the forties of this century, but it was superficial in its dealings with the problems of society, as it looked at them from "above" (15) without trying to investigate their truth and understand their essence, which goes back essentially to the prevailing class system.

The bourgeois reformist rejects revolution and is content with only offering advice, guidance and direction. For this reason, the critic saw that this trend carried ideas that were contrary to the movement of human history (16). Which calls for revolution for complete

liberation, whether from colonialism or from the class differences that burden society. Included in this trend are the novel "Ghada Umm al-Qura" by Ahmed Reda Houhou, and other novels such as "The Voice of Love" by Mohamed Mani', "Nar wa Nour" by Abdelmalek Mortad, and "Houriya" by Abdelaziz Abdelmajid.

Reformist thought proposed formal solutions represented by long rulings and sermons that indicated one thing: its escape from the reality that requires revolution in order to achieve real and serious change.

2- Romantic trend:

The critic included among them the novels "What the Winds Do Not Scatter" by Mohamed Arar, "The End of Yesterday" by Abdelhamid Ben Hadouga, "Blood and Tears" by Abdelmalek Mortad, and other novels in which romantic consciousness exerts a strong presence, as their characters turn into unusual heroes who do not represent social reality. Even if the social issue is raised, it always tends towards fantasy that does not delve into the depths of reality with all its negatives and positives, but always deal with it superficially, proposing ideal solutions that can never be reached.

The romantic trend, according to critic Wasini Al-A'raj, has remained focused on the issues and problems raised without attempting to grasp their essence. This has made it unable to grasp the true nature of reality.

Therefore, the most prominent feature that distinguished this trend is its escape from the reality of life to an ideal, imaginary reality far from the truth.

3- Critical Realism:

At the beginning of his discussion of the critical realist trend, the critic presents a historical presentation of the critical realist movement in the West, where many critics considered Balzac the father of realism. He had reached the point of depicting the tragedy of small landowners through the novel "The Peasants," through which he presented the social facts that the people were living in an honest manner. (17)

He depicted the misery, hardship, and worries of the peasants, and he only occupied himself with his reality, "because realism for him represented the search for the deeper essence that is hidden beneath the surface. This is the essence of this great writer." (18)

The critic Wasini Al-A'raj saw that he should present a set of characteristics that distinguished critical realism, including: (19)

1- It deals with reality as a field for creative research, and there is no forbidden, taboo relationship between it and dealing with its various phenomena, whether from an ethical or social perspective.

2- It explores the essence of the social phenomenon, and attempts to present a realistic, honest, and uncontrived experience.

3- It rejects coincidence and immersion in fantasy that takes the reader into worlds far from social reality.

4- It aims to reconstruct a new reality based on specific cultural data as an alternative to the existing reality.

5- She was able to expose the flaws of the capitalist system.

6- It deals with the individual as part of society.

Critic Wasini Al-Araj believes that the Algerian novelistic heritage, realistic and revolutionary, was able to push the realistic trend in Algerian literature further forward, correcting its previous concepts of realism. (20)

And that Ibn Hadouga, through his novel "Southern Wind," presented the concerns of the working class through the character of "the shepherd Rabeh," and was able to depict the social contradiction, and that the novelist's honesty in depicting reality led him to predict the advent of the agricultural revolution. (21)

The critic considered the subject of the national revolution to be one of the most important topics that led Algerian writers to embody the characteristics of critical realism in Algerian literature. He attempted to study examples of Algerian novels, to examine the extent to which the basic conditions that make them belong to critical realism are met.

1- The Fire Novel: Nourredine Boudjedra

The critic saw that the artistic honesty that the novelist enjoyed enabled him to reach the essence of the issue that embodies the struggle of the Algerian soldier, his self-generosity, and his ability to sacrifice for the greater cause that is represented by the liberation of the homeland (22), as revolution is the solution required to reach a better reality.

2- The South Wind: by Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga

The second novel that critic Wasini Al-A'raj included in the critical realistic trend is the novel "Southern Wind" by Abdelhamid Ben Hadouga. Many critics supported him in this, including Muhammad Sari, who confirmed that Abdel Hamid Ben Hadouga in this novel did not deal with ideological discourse as much as he dealt with reality (23).

This novel was able to present a picture of social life in the rural environment. And what it included of conflict between the old, represented by the feudal class, and the new, represented by the younger generation.

3- Birds at Noon: Marzak Baqtash

This novel tells the story of the harsh life that the child Murad and his classmates experienced during the events of the liberation war.

Through this young hero, the writer attempts to raise the issue of class, which begins with the sea, which represents the society that is driven by various contradictions embodied through people's lives and their struggle for honorable survival. (24)

The writer never took a risk when he made Murad a revolutionary hero with all the attributes. He chose him to be an evolutionary character, growing with the development of events, and the subjective experience is inseparable in essence from the overall struggle experience.

The critic believes that although Murad appears at first glance to be a "child phenomenon" in all his actions, they can only result from a person who has reached maturity. However, when we understand the essence of this child, the matter becomes completely normal. Murad's actions are logical and realistic. He was driven by his reality, which is full of values and principles that always motivate Murad towards the better, in order to understand the truth of things.

Critic Wasini Al-A'raj also included the novels "On the Path" by Haji Muhammad Al-Sadiq, "Ambition" by Arar Muhammad Al-Ali, and "Before the Earthquake" by Boujadi Allaoua within the critical realist trend.

All of these novels were seen by the critic as falling under the critical realist trend, given that they dealt with issues of independence imposed by the class system and saw the necessity of struggle to build a new world. Even though their forms differed, they all flowed into one source, which is the critical realist trend that condemns colonialism and reveals the negative aspects that resulted from it.

4- Socialist Realist Trend:

The 1970s witnessed a widespread boom in Algerian fiction, which was based on the various intellectual, ideological, and artistic propositions of the socialist school. In this chapter, critic Wasini Al-A'raj spoke about the signs and indications that paved the way for the emergence of the socialist realist trend, which is a development of what was brought about by the critical realist trend.

One of the most important features of the socialist realist approach was its unique ability to "predict" (25), which is formed in the socialist writer through his adoption and experience of the historical events of the working class and the entire people.

Literature in socialist realism does not address the reality of a societal elite, but rather supports the reality of the working class and categorically rejects all forms of tyranny and opportunism. Consequently, it criticizes reality and proposes solutions to overcome it, considering it unacceptable due to the class struggle it entails.

The social approach raised the issue of commitment, as literature should adhere to the social issues of the people according to what is dictated by the laws of the socialist system, and this is what indicates "the authentic connection in socialist realism between the method and the doctrine" (26). Thus, the writer under this system has been freed from dependence on the ruling class that restricted his freedom for a long period of time, to enjoy the freedom of expression about the various issues that the people live and suffer from, to draw his subjects from the depths of life so that they are more impactful and realistic, far from the imaginary world in which he was swimming.

AndThe most important feature of socialist realism is that it is very popular, addressing the issues of the people and the working class. This opened up new horizons for the creative person, both in terms of the content imposed by the new reality, the reality of the revolution, and in terms of the artistic forms proposed by socialist realism (27).

In order for the creative person to have an effective role in light of the principles and ideas presented by socialist realism, he seeks to grasp the essence of issues through his experience of them, and this is what made literature occupy a lofty position through its embodiment of the suffering and pain of the people and its expression of their aspirations and hopes for a bright future. It is certain that there were many novelistic attempts that tried to adopt the socialist trend in Algeria, during the period of its emergence, but the French bourgeois dominance did not make the task of this adoption easy.

Wasini Al-A'raj believed that the Algerian novel did not fall into the ambiguity and pathology of the Western novel, but rather grew on the ground of a society trying to build itself and carrying an optimistic view of the future that would be through the just socialist system. (28)

Critic Wasini Al-A'raj considered the novelist Tahar Wattar a pioneer in the field of socialist realism, as he was able, with his historical and creative awareness, to take the Arab novel an important step that made it committed to the issues of the nation and the prevailing ideology. This novelist acknowledged his adoption of the socialist orientation in his writings, and so we find him saying that: "LiteraturesocialistThe herosocialistHe was not born in Algeria, ... Except in literature written in the Arabic language. As one of the Arabic language writers, I am proud of this and take pride in it (29).

The critic included only Tahar Wattar's novels within the socialist realist trend, considering that they embody his principles and aspirations in their presentation of Algerian reality with its various contradictions. These novels are: "The Laz," "Love and Death in the Harrachi Era / The Second Laz," "The Earthquake," "A Mule's Wedding," and "The Fish and the Palace."

He believed that Tahar Wattar, through his novel "The Laz," had raised an important topic related to the internal issues that the revolution experienced within its circles, far from colonialism.

Thus, he re-examined a historical era that seemed largely obscure and presented "the communist's desperate struggle for his national principles, at a time when the reactionary mouthpieces were claiming that the Algerian Communist Party's position on the national revolution was no different from the position of the vacillating traitor on the national issue" (30).

Therefore, the critic believes that the novelist Tahar Wattar has opened our eyes to the truth, reconstructing historical facts anew and revealing the true traitor who was never represented in the character of "Zidan", who sacrificed his life for the sake of the homeland.

To reveal the true character of the revolution, the "Sheikh" who hid behind principles he did not believe in and only embodied in them in a way full of deception and cunning, to appear as a revolutionary fighter who was jealous for his country.

Thus, the novel "The Laz" was able to clarify a historical truth that history had overlooked for certain reasons, and re-examine it to convey it to the Algerian reader, who must necessarily understand it. This clarifies many of the issues that had seemed obscure through the historical presentation of the events of the Algerian revolution, and this is what critic Wasini Al-A'raj arrived at through his analysis of the novel "The Laz."

The critic Wasini Al-Araj confirmed that the truthfulness of the novelist Tahar Wattar's experience led him to the point of predicting some historical events whose truth or falsehood will be confirmed by the passage of time (31). He explains this by saying that "great literature is that which predicts the future by studying and criticizing reality" (32).

The novelist Tahar Wattar, through his experience of the social reality, was able to understand it and express it honestly, so we find him saying - Tahar Wattar - "My affiliation with the National Liberation Front Party allows me, as a writer, to remain in a permanent relationship with Algeria, and to live the daily life of the people. I hope, and I still hope, that writers, before ruling, will be objective in their view of Algeria" (33). Thus, the novelist Tahar Wattar was able, thanks to his good novelistic experience, which is ideological in most of its aspects, To open the way for the development of the socialist realist trend within Algerian novel writing, to make the contribution of literature to the social and political process a normal matter that cannot be rejected.

It maintains the existing relationship between the people and the authorities and clarifies the various issues that plague this relationship.

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