

RESEARCH ARTICLE	Titling and the Production of Meaning — A Semiotic Approach in the Novels Memory of Water and The Lady of the Shrine by Wassini Al-Araj
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Abstract The importance of the title in a literary text is addressed as a fundamental linguistic and semiotic sign that precedes the text and opens its doors to the reader. The title forms the text's facade and serves as a means to decode its symbols and surrounding ambiguity. It is considered a key element for understanding and analyzing the text from a semiotic perspective. The article clarifies that the title is not merely a word or a passing phrase but carries deep connotations reflecting the psychological and philosophical dimensions of the creator. It raises questions that stimulate the reader to delve deeper into the text. The article also reviews classifications of titles, such as the real title, the false title, and the subtitle, and highlights the importance of the paratext that surrounds the main text, including titles, prefaces, dedications, and others, according to the theory of critic Gérard Genette. Additionally, the article presents semiotic applications on the titles of the novels Memory of Water and Lady of the Shrine by Wassini Al-Araj, illustrating how the title reflects the semantic and symbolic structure of the text and encourages the process of reading and interpretation.	
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Introduction

The title is considered a linguistic sign that precedes the text and entices the reader. It is one of the most important textual thresholds that work to clarify the meaning of the text, both its apparent and hidden aspects. It primarily allows access to the world of the text and positioning within its corridors and labyrinths, as well as recalling the secrets and mysteries of the creative process. (Khaled, 2007, p. 6) It is one of the most important elements in the composition of the text, serving as its authority, its media facade, and its significant part. The title contributes to interpreting its symbols, decoding its codes, and removing ambiguity. Thus, it is the key with which we unlock the semiotic locks of the text (Ben Qwider, December 25, 2020 p. 231). (Bin Qwaider, December 25, 2020, , p. 231)

The title is also considered, from the perspective of those who study it, a necessary sign in approaching and interpreting the text, as the title cannot be overlooked as an important icon for decoding the text's codes. The relationship between the title and the text is based on the principle of complementarity, where the title is presented first, followed by the main body that interprets it in one way or another and contains it.

According to Leo Hoek, the title is seen as “the sum of linguistic signs (narrative words, sentences...) that can be placed at the head of each text to identify it, indicate its general content, and entice the intended audience.”

What can be concluded is that the title is nothing but a primary semiotic sign whose message is received by the recipient from the sender of the text. This message, in turn, consists of a concentrated set of ideas, concepts,

and values, revealing largely the psychological dimensions of the text's creator, as well as unveiling the aesthetic style of their writing and the depth of their philosophical perspective on the issue they address—without excluding all of this from hinting at the text's content or meaning.

From these terminological definitions of the title, we understand that it is no longer a trivial or marginal element but has become the key to the text, both in its creation and its reception. Before the text there is the title, and after the text the title remains.(Bin Qwaider, December 25, 2020, , p. 231)

The Importance of the Title: The importance of the title, which is the subject of this study, arises from the new rhetorical approach that seeks to break the dominance of the literal and comprehensive title, establishing instead an allusive title. The title is one of the most important components of the literary work; it is the authority of the text and its media facade, the significant part that contributes to interpreting it and unraveling its ambiguity. Therefore, the author carefully titles their texts because it is a procedural key with which we open the semiotic locks of the text.(Jamil, 1997, p. 107)

The science of titling has received great attention from writers, novelists, critics, and contemporary researchers. It is considered one of the most important textual thresholds that contribute to the construction of the text, and it is regarded as a paratext to the original text because of the meanings and suggestions it carries. Abdul Qadir Rahim states: "...The title in modern texts has become an urgent necessity and a fundamental requirement that cannot be dispensed with in the overall structure of texts... Through the title, the reader can enter the world of the text without hesitation, as long as they rely on the title for the text."(Abdelkader, 2010, p. 46)

Perhaps the most prominent theorist who focused on the title is Gérard Genette, who was able to engage with it continuously and systematically. He presented a comprehensive study on paratexts, treating the title in depth and methodically by defining its position and functions, especially since most of his critical works follow a methodological sequence.(Farid, 1995-2000, p. 46) His book *Paratexts*, published in 1978, is considered the most important work addressing paratexts (or textual transcendentals) and their role in the interpretation and understanding of the text.

When studying a literary work, it must be done on two levels: the first is the main text, which constitutes the content and subject of the book. In the novel, the elements addressed here include narration, language, the perspective through which the narrator views the events, and time in its two dimensions—narrative time and actual events' time—as well as description related to the creator's vision of places and objects, character types

and their motives, and other elements of the narrative imagination.(Shoaib, 2016/2017, p. 25)

The other level is the paratext, which represents the external framework of the main text. One of the most famous critics who addressed this level is the French critic Gérard Genette. Genette breaks down the paratext into the peritext and the epitext. The epitext includes all the discourses outside the book that relate to it and revolve around it, such as interviews, private correspondences, testimonies, readings, comments, and other notes that serve the text. (Shoaib, 1992, p. 83) Genette sees paratextual elements as surrounding and framing the text; more precisely, they exist to present it... to affirm its existence in the world at the moment of its reception and consumption. Thus, the paratext becomes the means by which a text can become a book in itself and present itself to the reader.(Abdel Fattah, 1996, p. 16)

What Genette means by the peritext includes the main title, the subtitle, internal titles, prefaces, appendices or tails, warnings, introductions, presentations, openings, footnotes, endings, inscriptions, guiding phrases, the book's concept, examples and explanations, dedications, wrapped bands, and other types of secondary signs and signals such as copied manuscripts, author signatures, the author's original handwriting, and all these elements surround the text from the outside. These are initial thresholds through which we enter into the depths of the text and its intertwined symbolic spaces, with the text itself being the focus of the study.(Abdel Fattah, 1996, p. 17) Genette addressed this topic in his book *Paratexts*, published in 1987, where he explained in a systematic and organized way what Henri Mitterand called the "margins of the text"—that is, the totality of data that fences in the text, protects it, defends it, distinguishes it from others, determines its place within its genre, and encourages the reader to acquire it. These include titles, quotations, dedications, icons, the names of authors and publishers, and so forth.

The importance of the title becomes clearer through the questions it raises—questions for which answers are often not found until the end of the work. The title whets the reader's appetite to read more by accumulating question marks in their mind, stirring curiosity and making them more eager to read. This compels the reader to delve deeper into the text to answer the questions left by the title and to reflect those answers back onto it.(Abdelkader, 2008, p. 12)

The title is also considered an effective tool that the author can use to attract the reader's attention. This is supported by the opinion of critic Bushra Al-Bustani, who views the title as a linguistic message that identifies the text's identity, defines its content, attracts the reader, and entices them to read it. It is the visible element that indicates the hidden meaning and content of the text.

As for Bassam Qattous, he believes that the title is “a communicative sign or signal with a physical, material existence, and it is the first tangible encounter between the sender (the text) and the receiver.” (Bassam, 2001, p. 36)

Semiotics and Titling: Semiotics has given great importance to the title, considering it an effective operational term for approaching the literary text and a fundamental key that the analyst uses to penetrate the deep layers of the text in order to interpret and uncover its meanings. The title can deconstruct the text in order to reconstruct it by uncovering its semantic and symbolic structures. Thus, the first threshold the semiotic researcher steps onto is the interrogation and both horizontal and vertical analysis of the title. (Jamil, 1997, p. 96) This is what has led scholars to focus on studying these thresholds by exploring their relationship with the text and the author.

The interest of semiotic researchers in the title was neither arbitrary nor coincidental. Rather, the title is a textual necessity that has turned it into a successful operational term in analyzing the literary text and a key tool that enables access to the depths of the text in order to interpret it. It is also the first of the textual thresholds that should not be skipped. (Abdelkader, 2008, p. 39)

Critic Bassam Moussa Qattous sees the title as a semiotic system with semantic, symbolic, and iconic dimensions. He views it as a horizon—just like the text—that may render the reader unnecessary or, conversely, may remain inaccessible to any reader. (Bassam, 2001, p. 6)

The title is considered an essential and indispensable necessity in the construction of texts due to its distinguished position in contemporary literary and critical works. It serves as a fundamental entry point for reading a literary work, as it embodies semiological semantic systems that carry within them ethical, social, and ideological values. For this reason, “titling is the first stage at which the semiological researcher pauses to contemplate and interrogate in order to explore its structures and semantic expressions.”

Titles are semiotic signs that “perform the function of containing the meaning of the text, as well as serving an intertextual function. The title refers to an external text that intertwines with the main text, aligning with it in both form and thought.” In addition, it represents the intent of the sender, which firstly establishes the title’s relationship with its external context—whether that context is a general social reality or a psychological one—and secondly, its relationship with the creative work itself.

For the semiotician, the title is considered the core and center of the literary text, providing it with vital meaning. As Mohamed Fattah states: “The title provides us with valuable material for deconstructing and analyzing the text.”

The title is also a condensed sign with a semiotic referential dimension, establishing a broad textual space that may awaken what lies dormant in the reader’s consciousness—whether intellectually or culturally—thus immediately prompting the process of interpretation. (Bassam, 2001, p. 36)

The title is a foundational semiotic sign that stimulates multiple layers of reading, gradually asserting itself as part of culture and releasing new energies. It is as if the act of reading begins with the title—and thus, so does the act of interpretation. (Bassam, 2001, p. 36)

The title also plays an important semiological role within the realm of signs and serves many functions in cultural and civilizational communication. (Jamil, 1997, p. 99) André Martinet views the title as “a semantic anchor that the reader must pay close attention to, being the highest possible authority due to its extreme linguistic economy and its richness in free referential (intentional) connections to the world, to the text, and to the sender.” (Jamil, 1997, p. 39)

The title also gains confirmation within the text itself, in one or several contexts—such as narrative, descriptive, linguistic, or semantic contexts, whether intellectually or experientially. Mahmoud Abdel Wahab considered the title, on a linguistic level, to be a linguistic segment that sits atop the text and is governed by grammatical and semiotic rules.

If we attempt to identify the mechanisms and procedures of semiotic analysis, we find ourselves facing a great diversity in the way texts are analyzed semiotically, due to the fact that this approach draws upon various fields of knowledge—such as linguistics, stylistics, rhetoric, and psychology.

The modern creative text is shaped by an essential equation: the title comes first, and the text follows. It is only fitting, then, that the title—being the leading element—be studied, analyzed, and used as a lens through which to view the text, since it carries a concentrated load of the text’s core themes. It is the face of the text, condensed onto the cover page. For this reason, the title has always been considered a semiotic system with both semantic and symbolic dimensions, enticing the researcher to explore its meanings and attempt to decode its symbols in order to uncover the layered textual concepts embedded within the text’s space. Jamil Hamdawi says about semiology: it is the science that studies systems of signs, whether linguistic or non-linguistic. (Jamil, 1997, p. 86) These signs are of three types: the icon, the index, and the symbol. Peirce considers that the sign consists of three components: the signifier, the signified, and the relationship between them.

In the case of the icon, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is one of similarity and resemblance — such as maps, photographs, and printed documents that directly refer to their subjects through like-

ness. This is one of the simplest mental operations, where the mind links things that resemble one another. As for the index or indicative relationship, the connection between the signifier and the signified is a logical causal one — like the link between smoke and fire, yellowing and illness, or yellow teeth and smoking. In this case, the signifier is the result and the signified is the cause. The fourth element of the sign, which is the perceiving human, can easily understand the relationship by using reason to logically connect cause and effect. As for the symbol, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and conventional, without any inherent rationale. One of the clearest examples of symbols is road signs: the triangle symbolizes a car breakdown, and the circle indicates a prohibition on stopping or passing. But what is the connection between the triangle and stopping? It is a conventional relationship. The same applies to the swastika and Nazism, or the olive branch and peace. (Shoaib, 2016/2017, p. 24)

The way the title is designed on the cover can also render it a non-linguistic sign. As a semiotic sign, it performs informative and communicative functions. "Semiotics" has given great importance to the title, considering it an effective operational concept for approaching literary texts and a fundamental key that the analyst uses to penetrate the depths of the text in order to interpret and decode it. The title has the capacity to deconstruct the text in order to reconstruct it, by uncovering its semantic and symbolic structures. Thus, the first threshold the semiotic researcher encounters is the interpretation of the title, both horizontally and vertically (Jamil, 1997, p. 96)— which is why many scholars have focused on studying these thresholds, exploring their relationship with both the text and the author.

Types of Titles and Their Importance: Titles vary according to the diversity of texts, their purposes, and functions. A title is always closely linked to the text. According to researchers, one of the key classifications is that of Leo Hoek, who divided titles into two types: the main title and the subtitle. Similarly, Claude Duchet also classified titles into two categories: the main title and the secondary title. (Farid, 1995-2000, p. 67)

Despite the differences in terminology from one scholar to another, there is a general consensus that there exists a primary title and a secondary one — or what is sometimes referred to as an internal and an external title. (Jamil, 1997, p. 67)

The external title, which appears on the front cover of the book, work, or composition, is marked by a prominent presence in terms of font, design, and meaning. When delving into the depths of the text, we speak of the internal title, which branches from the main title. There is also the sectional title, which distinguishes segments, paragraphs, and textual sequences. (Jamil, 1997, p. 134)

The Main Title (le titre principal): It is the title through which the author presents the work to the reader and is referred to as the "main," "primary," or "original" title. (Shadia, November 2000 p. 270) It serves as a kind of passport that grants access to the text, distinguishing it from other texts. It is also the title that appears on the book's cover and is the first thing the eye encounters. (Abdelkader, 2010, p. 50)

The False Title (faux titre): It comes immediately after the main title and serves as a shortened version or repetition of it. Its function is to reinforce and emphasize the main title. (Mohamed al-Hadi, 1991, p. 457) It usually appears between the cover and the inner (Shadia, November 2000 p. 270) title page and helps preserve the book's title in case the cover page is lost. It acts as a precaution or safeguard, and no book is without a false title.

The Subtitle: It derives from the main title and "follows it to complete the meaning." (Mohamed al-Hadi, 1991, p. 457) It is often used as a title for paragraphs, sections, topics, or definitions within the book. Some refer to it as the secondary or second title in relation to the main title. It serves as an explanatory and interpretive title that follows the main title to complete its meaning, functioning as a heading for internal segments or thematic units within the book.

The Semiotics of Titling in the Novels *Memory of Water* and *The Lady of the Shrine* by Wassini Al-Araj

Title Semiotics: The titles of *Memory of Water* and *The Lady of the Shrine* are not devoid of intention or purpose, which is revealed through the narrative body of the text. The reader of these two novels will find that the main text is linked to the main title by threads of connection that grow stronger and clearer as the reading progresses. The author's choice of these titles for his literary work was not random; rather, it reflects a deliberate vision of the value of the title, its expressive and structural flexibility, and its ability to represent and encompass semiotic meanings in its own way.

The title is the first element that the reader encounters. It is one of the most important thresholds in the narrative discourse, appearing right after the author's name. Interest in its study and analysis has grown in modern critical discourse, as it is considered a core sign loaded with encoded potential that invites multiple interpretations and is capable of generating meaning. The title is a semiotic signal that tempts the reader to revisit it, as it sparks new energies that begin with reading and evolve into interpretation.

The Author's Name: The author's name is considered one of the key signs that form the outer cover threshold. No work can be devoid of its author's name. The arrangement and placement of the author's name carry symbolic, aesthetic, and compositional value. In the novels *The Lady of the Shrine* and *Memory of Water*,

the author's name appears at the top of the cover page (the front), not isolated from the titling block which, though it may vary and take multiple forms, ultimately falls under the creative identity of its author.

The author's personal and creative identity is what gives the text its unique details, artistic character, and distinctive style. His name becomes part of a tightly connected verbal chain, forming a cohesive linguistic and semantic structure.

When the author's name rises to the level of the text itself, it becomes active and dynamic, offering itself genuinely for interpretation. But if it is merely limited to the cover, it becomes a marker indicating that the author is famous or somewhat known, rather than being a subject for deep reading.

Placing the name at the top of the page does not give the same impression as placing it at the bottom. Therefore, most recently published books tend to present the author's name at the top. This position has not been abandoned by the creative self of Wassini Al-A'raj in his two novels and many other works. Through his continuous presence at the top of the page, he asserts his existence and authority over the novel, guiding the sequence of events and adventures and often taking on the leading role. (Jamal, 2011, p. 47)

The Semiotics of the Title in the Novel *Memory of Water*: The title is a linguistic structure visually separate from the narrative text; that is, it is characterized by formal and apparent independence. The novel *Memory of Water* is a composite structure made up of two words: "Memory" and "Water."

The word "Memory" is a feminine active participle of the verb "to mention," meaning to say, report, or count. From it comes the verb *istadhkar*, meaning to recall or evoke. We say: "If memory does not fail us," meaning we do not forget. *Khalal* in memory means weakness or flaw in memory. Memory loss means losing the ability to remember and recall the past, either due to an accident or aging — that is, a person remains conscious but loses the ability to remember.

There are other uses of this word all indicating preservation and storage, meaning that memory is a repository of information and past recollections — not merely as history, but as facts blended with the human emotional dimension. Memory is our sixth sense, possibly controlling the other senses. It resists absence and forgetfulness and is a force for continuity and change. (Jamal, 2011, p. 75)

This title indicates a certain time, and the marker of this is the word "Memory." What is striking about this title is that it contains two titles: a main title by which the novel is known, and a secondary title placed in parentheses before the main title. The main title is called *Memory of Water*, while the secondary title is *The Ordeal of Naked Madness*. The latter seems to function as an explanatory

phrase clarifying the meaning of the main title, suggesting that this memory is a dark one, carrying harsh and difficult days.

The main title's meaning hinges on the word "Memory," similar to titles that include an additional phrase where the added part has broad semantic significance, though in this case the added phrase has a weaker connotation.

Memory is a mental and psychological power that preserves experiences and knowledge in the mind and recalls them when needed, where the five senses interact to perform the act of recollection. Memory is not merely visual, auditory, or olfactory; rather, it is an integration of these senses enriched by emotion, making it a comprehensive sense capable of reviving the past and acting upon it in a way that suits the present time and its events that trigger recollection.

The second word in the compound title is "Water." Water is a singular noun; its plural forms are *anwāh* and *miyāh*, and its dual form is *mā'ān*. Water, as is known, is a transparent liquid without color, taste, or smell, composed of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. It is also universally recognized as an essential and active element for the existence and continuation of life for all living beings, from humans to animals and plants, and it is absolutely indispensable. It is the symbol and secret of life on the surface of the Earth and its inhabitants.

Water's name has never been associated with memory, and its connotations are tied to its value as life itself. Life cannot exist without it; it is the refuge of the thirsty. To say that water has a memory is a metaphorical suggestion — memory is a much stronger and more profound notion than that. (Farid, June 2019, p. 180)

If we accept that memory refers to past events and recollections, and that water symbolizes life, fertility, and continuity as two self-evident truths, then this intersection inevitably leads us to acknowledge that the title is a subject open to, and even stimulating for, exploration and interpretation. It is not enough to stop at the lexical meaning of each word individually; rather, we must go beyond that to interpret it as a linguistic and syntactic compound. "Memory of Water," this nominal compound consisting of two words, is like a unified entity. We find that "memory" is a definite noun by annexation (*idaafa*) to "water," making "memory" the predicate of an omitted subject estimated as "it" (هي). (Kebbabi, June 2017, p. 186)

The title *Memory of Water* shifts toward a deep metaphorical meaning: memory encompasses all forgotten events, feelings, impressions, pleasures, explanations, anxieties, fears, and horrors that have afflicted human life. (Jamal, 2011, p. 76) The dimensions of memory manifest through human existence and its relationship with the past, extending into the present and future

times, through the reshaping of this memory according to the changes invoked by current times.

Our interpretation of the original title *Memory of Water* remains incomplete and potentially ambiguous unless we connect it to the subtitle chosen by the novelist to complete the main title, which is *The Ordeal of Naked Madness*. Here, it is worth noting the characteristic duality that distinguishes the titles of novelist Wassini Al-Aaraj's works. His novels often have subtitles that clarify the ambiguity of the original titles, as he did in many of his novels: *Lady of the Sanctuary* with the subtitle *Elegies of the Sad Friday*, *The Tragedy of the Seventh Night After the Thousand* with the subtitle *Sand of Water*, *Guardian of Shadows* with the subtitle *Don Quixote in Algeria*, and in this study's titles: *Memory of Water*, clarified by the subtitle *The Ordeal of Naked Madness*, and *Lady of the Sanctuary* with its subtitle *Elegies of the Sad Friday*.

Wassini Al-Aaraj attributes his use of dual titles in his works to the idea that a short title, composed of one or two words, is a reduction that diminishes the value of the text. Such a title is a "surgical" act because it has a reductive nature.

The phrase *Naked Madness*, which completes the word *Ordeal*, carries a subjective dimension. It refers to the novelist's psychological state during the 1990s, a period when he experienced severe psychological repression. He walked around disguised, fleeing death, and his exaggerated caution regarding death made him imagine unreal things. He became on the brink of madness, as confirmed by the narrating self identified with the novelist.

It seems, then, that the use of these dual titles stems from a specific vision and a deliberate strategy, aimed at increasing clarity, understanding, and interpretation of the text's intricate and closed worlds. The same applies to the title *The Ordeal of Naked Madness*, which is metaphorical by virtue of its similar relationship: madness is personified as a naked human being undergoing an ordeal. The term *ordeal* suggests problems and crises, while *madness* comes from the root verb جَنَّ (janna), meaning "to go mad," and refers to one who has lost their mind.

This title expresses the crisis of the 1990s more explicitly. The word *ordeal* directs us to the crisis of the 1990s, with all the negative changes it caused in the structure of Algerian society—where values were almost completely destroyed, acts of violence accelerated, killing and death dominated the social scene, and bloody terrorist operations escalated.

For the novelist Wassini Al-Aaraj, *the crisis* was the motivating force behind his writing, because at that time writing was an awareness of the value of life and a means of resisting inevitable death. We find this triad—life / writing / death—defines the logic and development of the

narrative in *Memory of Water*. There is no life without writing... and death remains an impossible wager except through continuous insistence on life, meaning on writing... Life is my wager, not death, and writing is its beautiful shadow.

The ordeal of death lurks in *Memory of Water* alongside the gift of life, and narratively it is equal to the word darkness, which the novelist uses to open the first section of the novel titled *The Rose and the Sword*. This title, in turn, semantically connects with the novel's subtitle *The Ordeal of Naked Madness*. The sword is a symbol of the authority of killing and savage death, which has always tried to annihilate life symbolized by *the rose*. The coupling of the rose with the sword is a semantic displacement—otherwise, what is the point of uniting a symbol of beauty, sweetness, love, and life with another symbol of cruelty, amputation, ending, and death?

The title combines two words that often carry contradictory connotations: *the rose* conveys notions of beauty, innocence, life, and youth—all positive and lovely implications—while *the sword* suggests power and authority and is a tool used for killing, injustice, and oppression. These connotations only emerge when paired with *the rose*, so as long as the sword is with the rose, her life is in danger.

The second subtitle is titled *The Step and the Voices*. *The Step and the Voices* is a subtitle that combines two words differing in morphological form—the first is a singular feminine noun, the second is a broken plural. The implication of this subtitle is that there is walking, and during this walking, voices are heard.

Through this section titled *The Step and the Voices*, the university professor narrates his day, which started at four in the morning. Here, he begins his predetermined program, with the clock showing seven forty in the morning, and this marks the beginning of the steps of this miserable man who awaits death, considering that he will never return to his home again. The first feelings of fear begin as he passes in front of the long Bouchaoui forest, then enters the university—a process accompanied by many mental calculations and psychological disturbances: How should he enter? Which door should he use? He must change his entrance every time, avoiding any routine pattern that would betray him. He wears a mustache and a notable hat he calls *the beret* so that his pursuers do not recognize him. After the university adventure comes the adventure of going to the post office to send a *blue letter* to "Maryam," who fled to France to save herself. Then he heads to the printing press to check on the status of his novel, which has been delayed in publication despite being completed. The delay is due to the printer's fear for the professor's life because the novel contains bold ideas condemning terrorism. Finally, after much back and forth between the professor and the printer, he takes his novel to be

printed elsewhere, as he cannot do without it. He describes the novel as “the text of my language, my fatigue, my fear, my day.” (Farid, June 2019, p. 183)

“Memory of Water” is a memory that carries great pains experienced by the Algerian individual, especially the intellectual, whom the secondary title *The Ordeal of Naked Madness* describes. This madness afflicted the Algerian intellectual, who now lives through his own killing dozens of times each day. He hallucinates and hears voices warning him of death and urging him to save himself. It is a conscious madness, imposed by a reality that kills creativity. This madness is described as “naked,” and thus this memory leans toward oblivion, because true memory is the one that preserves the names of poets, thinkers, and creators. (Farid, June 2019, p. 184)

Accordingly, the secondary title clarifies and supports the main title, as the memory is indeed an ordeal. Therefore, the main title *Memory of Water* together with its secondary title *The Ordeal of Naked Madness* are two thematic titles condensed in their bearer by relying on symbolism and metaphor. Their author employed the symbolic method in formulating them by using contrasting attributes in search of strong suggestion and meaning. (Farid, June 2019, p. 184)

The title *Memory of Water* remains full of interpretive energy, opening it up to context in all its connotations, thus expanding the reading. Indeed, we do not fully understand titles objectively unless they are placed within their specific context.

Semiotics of the Title in *Sayyidat al-Maqam* (The Lady of the Sanctuary): The titles of Wassini Al-Araj's novels are condensed ideas drawn from many years of experiences, presenting a general vision of numerous events connected to his personal perspective. These titles, as linguistic achievements, express multiple condensed ideas that operate on different levels—signaling, referential, and communicative—demonstrating their functions through their relationship to the novel itself.

Wassini Al-Araj usually clarifies the main title by adding a secondary, lesser title beneath it, reflecting the impact or outcome related to the main title. He drew inspiration from Sufism in the use of the term *maqam* (sanctuary or spiritual station), similar to the use of the name *Maryam* (Mary), who represents the feminine in his life.

A close look at the word *Sayyida* (Lady) as a semiotic sign in Arabic dictionaries shows it derives from *sayyadah* (leadership and boldness). It means master or chief, whose plural is *sudah*—one who surpasses others in intellect, wealth, influence, and benefit. *Sayyid* means “master of everything” or “the highest.” Thus, the word carries connotations of sovereignty, elevation, and high status. When reading the novel, one recognizes the esteemed position attained by the protagonist, *Maryam*. (IbnManzur, 1992, pp. 279-296)

As for the word “*maqam*” as a semiotic symbol in Arabic dictionaries, it comes from the root related to *maqam* and *maqama* meaning: a place or session, and *maqamat al-nas* (people's *maqamat*) meaning their assemblies or gatherings, and *maqam al-sadah* meaning the seat or position of the masters. Thus, the title of the novel *Sayyidat al-Maqam* (The Lady of the Sanctuary) semiotically combines sovereignty (*sayyadah*) with the concept of place or station (*maqam*), (IbnManzur, 1992, p. 228) both of which belong to Maryam, the Lady of the Sanctuary. Here, the title matches the text, since the heroine of the novel is the Lady of the Sanctuary, which made it necessary for her to occupy the largest space at the top of the cover, just as she does within the text itself.

The main title of the novel refers to a high status attained by one of the ladies whom the author will speak about, and an event will happen to her that makes her a subject of elegy. Here, the sense of estrangement (*ghurba*) appears through *Al-Jum'ah Al-Hazina* (The Sad Friday), during which the event occurred to that lady. This estrangement arises from the horizon of the reader's expectations based on the cues of the title. When the reader looks at this title, they will be struck by two things: first, that there is a lady who holds great favor with the author; and second, the title points to the sacredness of the name.

The term “*Sayyida*” is a semiotic sign originally used as a title or form of address for any woman, but its use here carries a greater significance and refers specifically to the name of the novel's heroine, “*Maryam*,” because the title *Sayyida* was originally used for the Virgin Mary due to her sacred status. Hence, the general reference to the female figure makes the work a subject of inquiry. The meanings and beauty carried by the female figure draw the reader closer to the work; the reference was meant to attract attention. The word “*Sayyida*” in the title serves as an informational, intellectual, and cultural sign.

Anyone who reads the novel forms a connection with the female figure who has represented Algeria throughout history. The status (*maqam*) of this lady is high in the narrator's eyes; he mourns her throughout the narrative and gives “The Sad Friday” multiple dimensions. From an intellectual perspective, *Sayyidat al-Maqam* (The Lady of the Sanctuary) is itself a symbol of liberated thought. This is evidenced by her insistence on not abandoning ballet as a manifestation of modernity, and by the fact that she fulfills her duties first to herself and then to her country and beloved. The progressive thinking embodied by this lady of high status in the novelist's view is reflected throughout the pages of the novel. The fundamentalist movements played a role in highlighting this rigid thinking due to their opposition to symbols of liberation and modernity, which Maryam, the Lady of the Sanctuary, represented.

Wasini Al-Aaraj depicted in this novel the tragedy of his homeland, which he believes will not end except through deep thought and tireless effort working to advance Algeria. He feared nothing except those fundamentalists, whose brutal insistence is confirmed by the events, massacres, and raging fires in Algeria, imposing a rigid ideology that rejects freedoms.

The novel has two powerful titles: the first is "*Sayyidat al-Maqam*" (The Lady of the Sanctuary), and the second, placed below it, is "*Marathi al-Jum'a al-Hazina*" (The Laments of the Sad Friday). The second explains and clarifies the first, meaning that the Lady of the Sanctuary was mourned many times for what happened to her on that stormy and difficult Friday for both the novelist and the reader. That sad Friday marks the end of Maryam, the Lady of the Sanctuary, who was a friend of the writer and was attacked by society for being a ballet dancer. She was characterized by her strength, passion, and stubborn determination to continue her path, opposing the youth of fundamentalist religious movements who saw her as deviating from religion and its strict teachings.

The title "*Sayyidat al-Maqam*" is connected to Wasini's experience on two levels: the artistic level and the content level. From an artistic perspective, the narrative inside the novel links to this title, with the subject revolving around the female figure who represents culture because she is free from the constraints of religious fundamentalism. This is the aspect that repeatedly tried to prevent Maryam, the ballet dancer, from this path, symbolizing an attempt to undermine the progress of civil society.

The actions of the narrator and his beloved Maryam are linked to the two titles written on the novel's cover page. The word "*Sayyida*" (Lady), which begins the title, is a tribute to her, giving this lady a prestigious status in the narrator's eyes and reflecting on the reader. In other words, the title deploys this lady in the best way possible: throughout the novel, she symbolizes openness, freedom, and civil statehood. This is also true in Wasini Al-Aaraj's view, as he wanted to present this lady, the ballet dancer, as opposing what he called "the guardians of intentions" (a metaphor for fundamentalists).

Thus, the reference in the title relates to the meaning of the text through the cohesion of Maryam's desire to persist with ballet and the survival of the city through maintaining the love between her and the narrator. Here, the two units—the story of Maryam and the story of the city—are interconnected and complementary; losing one means losing the other, as becomes clear through reading the novel's pages.

The novel "*Sayyidat al-Maqam*" is a historical inspiration from the events of October 5, 1988, and the resulting riots and bloodshed. The Lady of the Sanctuary was part of that tragedy, as she was shot in the head during those events. The writer built the events of the Sad Fri-

day around the sorrowful laments of that day. This is evident in a series of narrative excerpts throughout the novel, which are units from different chapters that come together to form the overall axis of the text. These excerpts emphasize the connection, interdependence, and extension of the titles to the text, because titles are inseparable from the novel as a condensed and intensified text. (Tayeb, April 15-16, 2002, p. 25) This is clearly shown through the intellectual framework linking all the novel's thresholds and the entirety of its chapters.

The name "Maryam" is drawn from the memory of history, bringing us back to the sacredness of this name as an exemplary model to be followed. This is what led the author to venerate Maryam in his various novels. On the other hand, Maryam is the writer's muse, and her name, as a distinctive sign, is heavily relied upon by the author in this novel to liberate the country from rigid thinking. If we remove Maryam from Wasini's novels, we would be stripping the author of the very source on which he bases his ideas. Maryam is his intellectual source; he knows that she will keep the reader in constant attention to all her movements. Therefore, the influence of the Lady of the Sanctuary extends to most parts of the novel. When Maryam is described or spoken about, it is a depiction of liberated thought free from the constraints that existed in Algeria during a certain period of history. From the author's point of view, she is a symbol for everything that strives for the advancement of Algeria.

The novel "*Sayyidat al-Maqam*" is characterized by the presence of continuity and coherence between its thresholds and narrative passages, starting from the title, passing through the dedication and introduction, and extending to its chapters and openings. Therefore, the novel has a distinctive intellectual structure, revolving largely around the daily life of the Algerian people and the difficulties and challenges they face, which made Wasini keen to present it in a form familiar to his audience.

The title *Sayyidat al-Maqam* serves as the main axis and extends throughout the various narrative passages in the eleven chapters of this novel, as the author delved deeply into the significance of the title by linking it to the mechanisms of the work itself that helped build this novel, relying on his memory and history to cover those past events.

As for the secondary title of *Sayyidat al-Maqam*, which appears beneath the main title as "*Marathi al-Jum'a al-Hazina*" (The Laments of the Sad Friday), the Arabic lexicons define *marathi* (singular: martha) as elegies—poems or other texts lamenting the deceased, recounting their virtues and qualities, enumerating their merits to revive their memory and praise them. We say "he ritha (lamented) so-and-so," meaning he mourned them with elegy and lamentation, praising them after their death.

The deliberate lexical choice of the word "Sad Laments" becomes clear as it forms the most fitting description of what happened that day – Friday – a day marked by numerous calamities, the most severe being the treacherous bullet that lodged in Maryam's head, changing the course of her life and that of the narrator alongside her.

The phrase "The Laments of the Sad Friday," as the secondary title of this novel, carries additional connotations that reinforce the main title, linking closely to the elements of the novel itself, which are the true extension of these thresholds. In other words, the title is essentially a partial textual structure, and likewise, the body of the text is also a partial textual structure. Therefore, it becomes necessary to examine the connections and relationships between them, as the main text may be an expanded image of the title, while the title may be a symbolic representation of the text. (Ahmed, August 2009, p. 131)

The title also refers to history through its archival function, marking one of Algeria's most difficult days in the modern era – a day when human lives were violated, and the language of bullets became the sole speaker in the streets and cities of the country. Whereas the title "Sayyidat al-Maqam" (Lady of the Sanctuary) encapsulated the female character, this second title points to a collection of other references. Here, the writer could not contain himself when formulating the title; he could not escape his deeply ingrained subjectivity within the work and thus highlighted the immense pain of this lady, along with the pain of the nation.

For Wassini Al-Araj, the title carries a referential function, as it refers to the novel, and the novel, in turn, refers back to it; each leads to the other. The "Sad Friday" turned the life of the professor-narrator and his student upside down, and the novel contains, in all its narrative details, laments for that ill-fated day. Thus,

both elements run in parallel from the beginning to the end of the text, which is natural since the latter element represents the main theme in which many secondary ideas are embodied, clarified, and analyzed. The title appears at the beginning of the text, with another parallel text above it that introduces and refers to the work, just as the work refers back to the title. (Basma, p. 25) The text explains the expressive and linguistic meaning from which the title is formed, and this is what the events of the novel evoke. The main and secondary titles start with the novel and end with it, maintaining the same rhythm of presence, so the novel later becomes an explanation and clarification of them through the element of reference.

The subtitle, "Laments of the Sad Friday," carries a poetic element that gives it a flow of creative energy, making it an alluring force to attract the reader and draw them into responding to it, prompting an emotional and sentimental interaction with the meanings and suggestions conveyed by the title. Thus, the title acquires deep connotations, distancing it from being merely descriptive or direct, granting it the power to fertilize the imagination and spread aesthetic pleasure. (Basma, p. 63)

Conclusion

The novel is deeply connected to its title, as the title serves as a parallel text that carries many connotations and symbols. It is the first code the reader's eye encounters, provoking the receiver and opening a wide space for interpretation and understanding of what unfolds within this artistic work. Among novelists who have paid attention to the poetic nature of titles in their works is Wassini Al-Araj, who excelled in choosing the titles of his compositions to evoke pleasure in the reader's psyche and invite them to read. This is evident in the novels *Memory of Water* and *Lady of the Maqam*, which are the subjects of our modest study.

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