



Representations of prisoner hero in the novel (Eastern Mediterranean) (By the novelist Abdul-Rahman Munif)

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ABSTRACT

This study tries to interrogate one of the important Arab novels, which is the novel (Eastern Mediterranean) by the great novelist (Abdul- Rahman Munif) and the narrative work in a way that shows the great value that novel contains in representations of the political side and its reflection on character of the hero and movement of narration within a novel as well as the relationship of the heroine character to both jail and jailer alike, who represents on the other about heroine character, and how to express the repressed freedoms within structure of the novel, as well as explaining the concept of heroism and its content, in a different way from what was usual for reader or recipient.

Keywords:

Introduction

The novel plays an important role in communicating what the writer wants, directly or indirectly, because of the writer's way of writing, which is commensurate with the current general situation in which his living. In the present time, the authorities cannot suppress in the street and front of people's eyes. This is due to fear of media and public opinion, so it resorts to a method in its external framework that represents one of the systems followed in all countries. Still, in its inner world, it represents freedom of authority in its repressive practices inside the corridors of the prison and its dark and frightening cells, which smell of death.

Perhaps Abdul--Rahman Munif found in the novel (Eastern Mediterranean) revealing the secret prisons and its corridors, something similar to objective equivalent of lost freedom in Arab countries. Because revealing freedom or

conducting its manifestations is a crime in the eyes of successive authorities, and this is why Abdul-Rahman Munif used the story of prison to express his opinions. Through it, he exposes the cases of oppression inside prisons, and describe a hero who has gone through various kinds of torment inside these prisons, except that he - the hero - is not in a general sense of heroism, but is that fighter who look for change, and who carries the sign of opposition against the ruling policy in all its kinds and forms. That can see it in the novel (Eastern Mediterranean), where Abdul-Rahman Munif gave a role of character of the prisoner hero to (Rajab), Rajab is a political prisoner, as Rajab himself stated in the novel during his conversation with the doctor (Vali).

The concept of the prisoner hero in the political novel:

Because of stifling of freedoms in the Arab world to express an opinion, the political

position may be fragmented, covering the social reality, politics or political symbolisms enter into details that appear sticking to the individual social reality, based on this, the political practice appears ((More complicated and comprehensive, because the individual's life within a social system has become politicized at all levels, some areas that seem - on the surface - far from the circle of political construction are subject to a political decision, such as how economic wealth is distributed, the education system, movement of labor force, laws of population, the orientation towards industry or agriculture)) (Wadi, 2003; Al-Madhi, 2008). Accordingly, we can consider politics as a social pattern that controls all life's facilities. The novel (Eastern Mediterranean) illustrated the crises of the Arab world as it was a witness to the absence of rights and the absence of consciences because novel (Eastern Mediterranean) and other narratives that take from prison as a theme represent ((The brighter type in facing oppression, exposing the problems of intolerance and trimming the clutches of backwardness and ignorance)) (Asfour, 1998). Perhaps from here arises the idea of nihilism, which prioritizes the individual over society, and freedom over the organization. In contrast to the mechanisms of power that try to address the human senses and control him, and thus the novel works on an important topic, which is the test of the individual's rebellion against the prevailing social discourse on the one hand, and liberation from the tendency of power on the other hand, in light of new narrative techniques (Al-aroui, 2006 and Huwaid, 2018).

A careful reader of a novel (Eastern Mediterranean) finds that Abdul-Rahman Munif included his novel with political connotations experienced by Arab countries, it was able to photograph ((The prison world is a depiction that does not overlook the smallest details, showing how ugly these prisoners live, and the writer's eye is keen on through into folds of tragedy, which the author describes with great skill)) (Mansouri, 2008). The concept of heroism in prison breaks our expectation structure; because heroism has a different concept from what is rooted in our minds.

Perhaps launching word heroism has a lot of approval because he is not a hero in full concept of heroism, but rather an educated person who loves his country, who wants to reform and change reality. Still, he is destroyed by an act of bitter reality, and his hopes are disappointed (Abdul-Rahim, 1991). Thus, we find that heroism in literary criticism of the novel and theatre does not necessarily mean physical strength, but rather moral and ethical strength (Wadi, 2003).

First: The prisoner hero:

The first appearance of the image of this hero was formed by a person deprived of will through a scene of description in a philosophical language within the narrative text ((On earth is an animal with stature)) (Munif, 2006). This dispossession of the will of the personality, even if it came at first glance voluntarily through the signature of Rajab Ismail to relinquish any political action, but in essence, it is a repressive policy practised by the authorities on people. The personality lives in a state of constant anxiety with itself and its surroundings, and it stems from a social and moral hierarchy (Yaqtin, 2001). Which is what made Rajab's personality a weak character in some cases. This becomes evident when we find him saying: ((Tomorrow I will sleep at the grave, I will tell her)) (Munif, 2006;). Here, we ask a question: Was the weakness that we saw on Rajab was part of true personality structure, or are external factors that carry energies of personality?

Rajab's weakness went through maybe a human physical condition that occurs to all human beings when exposed to these different types within dark cells, which perform their role in service and preservation of homeland, as you claim!? But Abdul-Rahman Munif, when he embodied state of weakness at the beginning of novel and what means of defeats it suffers from at the level of character, he intends to tell us the extent of repression practised by these barbaric authorities against their citizens, we do not forget here that Abdul-Rahman Munif was smart and sharp, when he decided to leave the place from his novel; This is because throughout the novel we did not notice a single description indicating a specific place in itself, this may have

been clear since the title (Eastern Mediterranean), an indication from him that Arab countries and those located in the east of western countries are all suffering from the same oppression and injustice by authorities, so we find Abdul-Rahman Munif when he heads towards western countries, we hear on the tongue of Rajab descriptions of many places, such as Greece and France.

But Abdul-Rahman Munif returned to paint for us attempt of those peoples to reject oppression and social deprivation as a pattern of policies practised by authorities, for this he tried to restore the heroine character (Rajab Ismail): ((Do what you want)) (Munif, 2006). Likewise, Rajab's mother attempt to encourage him not to confess regardless what he might be subjected to from torture ((The world is life and death, Oh Rajab, my commandment to you is not to harm anyone, bear it, my son)) (Munif, 2006).

For Rajab's personality to strip the robe of humiliation inflicted upon it due to signing by ceding any political activity, it was necessary to pause that represents the struggle of the soul towards events on one side. A return in time and the recovery taking place with him on the other side, which is similar to the state of self-cleansing of character, we have observed this on Rajab acted when he got out of prison, so Rajab after prison is not Rajab before prison, as (Anissa) described him. Rajab's sister, she says ((Rajab is not Rajab now)) (Munif, 2006). This psychological conflict that character of hero / Rajab suffers in the novel made intensity, weakness, and ambiguity go in two parallel lines when one of it rises the other will decrease, so sometimes we find the deficit may be dominated when he listened to news of his mother's death after his release from prison, according to Anissa. She was shocked him by this news ((he struck his face and hit his forehead)) (Munif, 2006). His mother's death resulted from the policy of oppression that the authority exercised for everyone connected with Rajab. One of the results of this was her death while she was suffering from her son's grief (Rajab). On the other hand, the character suffers from ambiguity in her behavior, as if ambiguity is a natural response to that character, this is what Anissa reveals about Rajab going out every day

at morning without knowing what he was doing, with her keenness on that knowledge, and her failure at last to know.

This weakness and ambiguity in character of the hero, and it regards, after that is an attempt to build a strong personality that accompanied a will, this persistence is shown through dialogue that took place between Rajab and his mother: (((To Hell, to do what he wants, and I will not interfere and do not care))) (Munif, 2006). Abdul-Rahman Munif managed the dialogue in a way that represented two different people. Rajab's character was the optimistic young towards changing life and ridding society of the governments' restrictions. And the second character, the personality of his mother, who is defeated, crushed by effects of a wheel of political destruction, which the life makes her experienced, her dialogue was realistic and tinged with an emotional charge towards her son.

But the rebellion of hero's personality did not come to fruition, which indicates the rampant political influence of these governments, which made Rajab live in a state of alienation and isolation inside his homeland, as he is a prisoner inside this country, who cannot smell the air of freedom, which led him to travel outside his homeland, perhaps he finds what he wants. ((The Prison, Oh Anissa, inside the human)) (Munif, 2006). Abdul-Rahman Munif directed his hero towards freedom, but freedom was not present in the East. Still, a contrast to this direction, it is in the West, to begin his journey on board (Achillos), which Rajab began to address as it was a human, complain to her his concerns and what he suffered, and comparing her passengers and what he suffers in the past in the dark prison cells, so that we can say: Abdul-Rahman Munif used the principle of humanism within novel through questions and self-disclosure by the character of hero Rajab while he was on the back of (Achillos) ((Achillos: stop for)) (Munif, 2006). Despite Rajab's feeling of this freedom, he was unable to adapt to it, and here we have right to ask, is freedom in those countries the same as freedom in the country of Rajab, or are they different?

It can be said: that freedom Rajab wants is not freedom that those governments provided to their people so that every person can exercise his freedom without restriction or condition, but the freedom that Rajab demanded is for his country to enjoy it, that any citizen has the right to live in peace, eat in peace, read peacefully and love peacefully, It did not happen in the eyes of Rajab, through many recollections that are made by Rajab and Anissa as well, such as the death sentence, it was heard by Rajab, which represented climax of event and worsened complex inside novel ((He read the names and I heard my name, it was the third)) (Munif, 2006). On an ideological level, death sentence was a well-known consequence of those authorities toward undisciplined persons.

Abdul-Rahman Munif delineated the reality of these societies and the extreme poverty they suffer as a result of the policies practised by their governments, which led to the crushing of large strata of society, and among them is the Rajab family, after the death of his father, as the novel comes from Anissa ((my mother started sewing clothes)) (Munif, 2006). It was also necessary to have a cultural and knowledge repository that heroine personality could draw from and lean on, through reading the circulating - some of that might be politically forbidden. Strangely, these same books that may result in Rajab being subjected to political arrest are found in the streets of Paris. Paris of freedom regarding expression and opinion. Rajab says ((In Paris, I saw wonderful things)) (Munif, 2006). Then he compares it with freedom stolen in countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, according to the title, and he recalls the time ((We found when searching house of a detainee, the attached criminal tools)) (Munif, 2006).

After character of the hero had tasted the taste of freedom in those countries, it decided to take another course in the political struggle - from it, point of view - to expose those dark cells and basements that were intolerable to severity of torture and abuse, for trivial and more superficial charges fabricated against it, due to this Rajab decided to present a painting of torture inhuman to (Geneva). He says: ((The second idea that occupies me)) (Munif, 2006). It

is striking in a novel (Eastern Mediterranean) that heroine's attempt to change was based on timidity. These attempts were always aborted initially, which reflected negatively on Rajab's character's thinking and constant feeling of disappointment. That is why we find him saying: ((The paper that I signed on the death certificate was, death of Rajab Ismail, as a person who dreams of writing)) (Munif, 2006). He also says: ((I feel helpless and finished)) (22). As a cumulative result of these disappointments that Rajab's character was suffering from, which is, in fact, a model for every person who is exposed or may be perceived as being exposed to the authorities, he - Rajab - always suffered from a lack of adaptation to freedom that exists in France during his trip, this may be because of his feeling not belonging to Paris, as Rajab himself referred to this ((Paris was not created for me)) (Munif, 2006).

After these events comes an incident or situation that Rajab is exposed to, which is the arrival of Hosni Abdul-Jalil's letter, in which he tells him that Hammed - Anissa's husband - is in danger as a result of Rajab not attending, or the risks that Hamid and his family may be exposed to if Rajab does not return from his travel, therefore, Rajab decided to return to his country, his decision-making came as an inevitable result of two levels that Rajab put in his calculations, namely:

The first: his fear for Hammed, who was tortured for a crime he did not commit. If they killed Hammed, his four children and his wife Anissa would be deprived of him, while if they killed Rajab, they would kill one person.

The second: it seems to be the most important, that Rajab made this decision, as a reaction to the first disappointment. By signing an agreement to intervene politically, as if the decision came as a philosophy of self-cleansing. That is why he decided to return in the spirit of rebellious hero who does not know the end of what awaits him, and he says ((I will tell them I came back as I want)) (Munif, 2006).

In recent events of novel (Eastern Mediterranean), Abdul-Rahman Munif created a set of scenes, through it the meaning can be explored and interpreted from angle of audience. The peacock feather, which Rajab

picked up from his father's Qur'an as if it were a symbol of the state of continuous oppression, which is practised by authorities over successive generations, It is a symbol of the rampant corruption within those governments without interruption, the feather itself is an indication of the continuation of this injustice for subsequent generations, through the movement of character ((The book still has a peacock feather inside it, the feather that was inside the Qur'an that my father left, and I don't know how Ragab's hand extended. And he picked it up ... Someone grabbed the book, looked at it disgustedly, then threw it on the table, Rajab picked it up and put peacock feather on the same page he reached)) (Munif, 2006).

Abdul-Rahman concluded his novel with the death of character of the prisoner hero ((On the fourth day, at noon exactly, Rajab died, how did that happen? Why? Until this moment I do not know)) (Munif, 2006). Rajab's death in the novel is a symbolic sign of state apparatus's political oppression against its people. They did not kill him directly but instead worked to tame him between enticement, intimidation and humiliation. When they were unable to do so, they tortured him until it ended and he was blinded and died.

Second: 1- The relationship of authority with the prisoner hero: Authorities seek to implement laws to preserve social order inside the country, but these authorities may - which is a lot in our Arab countries - monopolize laws to preserve their interests and their own institutions far from justice and equality.

In novel (Eastern Mediterranean), Abdul-Rahman Munif portrayed the relationship between authority and other, an antagonistic relationship that reaches beyond its levels. Among these scenes, what Anissa tells us, she says: ((I used to remember again my mother standing in front of the door)) (Munif, 2006). Abdul-Rahman Munif was able to portray this relationship based on marginalizing and excluding others' rights. The authority - time and language did not prevent them from using what a person would like. Instead, the situation came to cancel the other by making Rajab House a seat of authorities through their presence inside it ((The two used to change every few

hours and they were sitting most of the time in the hall, facing the door they would jump like wolves if they heard steps approaching, one of them would open the door, and the second pointed his gun at, on the other hand, the frightened children's and made them cry, while their looks at adults were direct accusations of malice (Munif, 2006). The authority also exercised its oppression by absenting Rajab from his family, a policy they used to force him to confess ((four full months and no one knows anything about Rajab)) (Mansouri, 2008).

The relationship of authority to Rajab is represented by pressures it exerted upon it after travelling abroad for medical treatment, despite his signature to give up any political activities. Yet, they forced Hammed to sign three times a day at the police station, and inform them of forcing Rajab to return from travel, which constituted torture self to Rajab, Hammed and his family.

2- The interrogator's relationship with the prisoner hero: The interrogator represents a front of the authority. He is the executive organ inside the prison cells, enjoying all powers, and issuing orders. The interrogator takes two methods to convince the prisoner, the first: is his fear for his interest, so he must cooperate with him and provide the prisoner with information that interrogator asks him to do, the second method: is the appearance of investigator in the authority of an authoritarian executioner, which is an actual image of Arab authority for the salvation of every different thought (Mansouri, 2008). In novel (Eastern Mediterranean), the character of Noori, the fierce, barbaric investigator whose heart no knows the mercy, was formed ((He held my fingers firmly, and pushed them between two halves of the door)) (Mansouri, 2008). His barbarity is evident in Rajab's description of him during Rajab's conversation with the doctor (Vali). What he suffered in prison, Rajab said: "Noori does not know torture except for this name. He used to say while he was feeding the birds, looking at them and talking to me, he confessed, I say to you: Admit, son of the Whore, I was tired of yesterday's party, if you did not speak, then I will call Abed and will start the party) (Mansouri, 2008).

The interrogator may reach a stage of pleasure and sadism by inflicting pain on prisoners ((They put me in a large bag)) (Mansouri, 2008). And when the interrogator cannot withdraw confessions from a prisoner, he resorts to cold-blooded killing without hesitation. This is evident in the killing of Amjed and three others ((in the deadly silence that controls everything)) (Mansouri, 2008). For an incident to be framed in its legal and media framework, they shaped the event in a manner commensurate with killing that Amjed and his colleagues were subjected to.

3- The warden's relationship with the prisoner hero: The warden was only a puppet of the executive, he was often defeated, but he was involved in these events in one way or another.

So meeting Rajab mother with that warden who resembles her nephew (Mahmoud), trying to kiss his feet, fulfilled his task by telling her that Rajab is alive inside the prison. Still, good-heartedness and toughness is not a permanent characteristic of a single prison warden, and sometimes he is tough-hearted because he implemented orders what he learned to implement. Says, Rajab: ((A man said, I could not see his face)) (Mansouri, 2008). This position reflects the relationship between warden and prisoner when he resorts to applying for orders. At the same time, he may be tolerant at times, as we saw with Rajab mother.

This duplication in wardens' dealings with the prisoner was what made Rajab think to himself, that warden might change while he was in that narrow cell, after former warden opened the hose inside the cell, as a type of torture, he says: ((I said to myself)) (Mansouri, 2008). Thus, the warden is merely a tool to implement orders that are issued to him, so the character of (slave) represents this model, so the dialogue that took place between the investigator Noori and Rajab reflects this picture, he says: ((Why do you look at me like this, son of a harlot)) (Mansouri, 2008). Perhaps drawing of the warden's character for her in this way by Abdul-Rahman Munif in (Eastern Mediterranean) reflects marginalization of the authority because it is a subdued figure, closer to prisoner and his sense of how the authority deals with.

4- The relationship of prisoner hero outside the prison: It is a relationship that arises between prisoner hero (Rajab) and the persons outside prison framework, whether Rajab was during this inside or outside the prison, and extent to that relationship affected character's path within novel. (Eastern Mediterranean), perhaps the character of Anissa was one who took a large space inside novel as a participant in events on the one hand, and a narrator of events, on the other hand, had a significant impact on Rajab's psyche, as he considered him as his second mother, especially after the death of his mother.

As for (Rajab mother), she was a stable, strong and inspiring model for Rajab's character. She was always trying to sharpen his motivation despite the tragedies and psychological distress that he was exposed throughout novel. For the beating and obscene speech in the minister's office, for those strikes her condition worsened, which led to her death, this was a case of political repression. As for the character of (Huda), despite small space that she took in novel, it had a clear psychological reflection on Rajab's character, Huda's marriage contributed to Rajab's disappointment because her marriage to another person than Rajab was a result of the policy followed by authorities in pushing Rajab into prison. If it were not for prison, Rajab would have been fortunate in this matter from Rajab's perspective.

As for Hamed, his character began to appear and grow due to events that accompanied this character, to turn at the end of novel into a political fighter unintentionally, when he found himself inside a circle of interrogations and prisons, which awakened in himself a hatred for ruling authorities and their apparatus, he turned into a political figure within the novel.

Conclusion

1. The novelist Abdul-Rahman Munif created an objective equation within his novel (Eastern Mediterranean), to be an accurate expression of the abhorrent reality.
2. The novel (Eastern Mediterranean) carried a political character that exposed

Arab systems and their relationship with peoples by stifling their freedoms and inability to express.

3. The novel showed a different concept of the hero through different reading and behavior within the novel.
4. The novelist introduced useful techniques in the narration of novel that enabled him to communicate speech to a recipient in a novel way that makes receiver live a difficult psychological time close to the spirit of the novel and what it aspires to.

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