

The background is an abstract painting with a rich, textured surface. It features a mix of warm colors like ochre, terracotta, and burnt orange, interspersed with cooler tones of green, blue, and grey. The brushstrokes are visible, creating a sense of depth and movement. There are some darker, almost black, spots and areas of white, suggesting a complex, layered composition.

Yemeni Novels In The Twentieth Century Their Inception And Development

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Yemeni Novels In The Twentieth Century

Their Inception And Development

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1. Introduction

a. Topic and purpose of thesis

The Yemeni novel has historically been difficult to define. Up to 1927, Yemeni literature consisted largely of poetry and short stories. Poetry and folk song poems in the south and north of Yemen greatly attracted attention of Yemeni and Arabic writers as well as readers,¹ and many collections of poems² were published. Due to factors ranging from the scarcity of publishing houses to their limited commercial capacity, however, the Yemeni novel took a relatively long time to establish itself. The Researcher Sabry Muslim proposes that Yemeni novels are actually unknown to the Arab reader and even to the Yemeni reader, noting that most Yemeni novelists write outside of Yemen.³ Similarly, the writer Ibrahim Abu Talib suggests that if we tried to count the number of Yemeni novels published before 2000, there are less than one hundred.⁴ Scholars also disagree on which novel is the first Yemeni novel. Although the Yemeni writer Ahmed Abdullah Al-Saqqaf published his novel *Fatāt Qarut* in 1927,⁵ critics including Hisham Ali, Amna Yusef, and Ibrahim Abu Talib, discount it in their studies or in articles because it was published outside Yemen. Instead, they believe that the novel, *Said* by Muhammad Ali Luqman, is the first Yemeni novel on the pretext that it was published in 1939 in Yemen. Indeed, many early twentieth-century works of literary history claim that Yemeni authors have no distinct tradition of the novel. Academics deny the existence of the novel in Yemen, to the point of claiming that Yemeni culture and style of life was not ready for the potential of fictional creation. The writer and critic Muhammad Nasser Sheraa agrees, writing

¹ Mark Wagner and Wail S. Hassan, Yemen. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Arab Novelistic Traditions*, Oxford University Press, 2017. p. 1.

² Collections of poems like collection *Habib* by Ahmed bin Muhammad Al-Mihdhar 1886; *The Land of Saba* by Al-Bardouni 1999.

³ Wagner, Hassan, Yemen, p. 1.

⁴ Abu Talib, Ibrahim: "al-khitab al-rūā'ī al-yamanī: rū'a mukhtaṣara fī al-masīra wa al-maḍmūn." *Archive al-Sharekh*. <https://archive.alsharekh.org/Articles/132/17507/394249>, 2006.

⁵ Ibid.

that, “The genre of novelist creativity in Yemen has taken a modest path since its inception in the year 1939 until now, if we consider the novel *Said* by the Muhammad Ali Luqman as the beginning of the track.”⁶ Half a century later, it is clear that these ideas have been based on lack of research and rigorous thinking.

This thesis takes a purposefully broad view of the Yemeni novel, reading three influential early novels by Yemeni writers working inside and outside Yemen to identify key features of the twentieth-century Yemeni novel. These novels, which I selected for their publication chronology, as well as their diversity topics and narrative techniques, are *Fatāt Qarut* (1927), *Al-Rahīna* (1984), and *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* (1998).⁷ Previous studies such as Abdulhakim Baqees’s *Fatāt Qarut and Pioneering the Marginalized Novel. Criticism of Society and the Relationship with the Other*⁸ debate the Yemeni novel’s origins and focus on statistics about the number of published novels, the factors that contributed to their dissemination, and the topics discussed. By contrast, my thesis analyzes the novels themselves to show how authors deploy novelistic techniques to address key political, economic, and social developments in twentieth-century Yemeni life. Additionally, this thesis highlights the diversity of Yemeni novels by examining how their content and narrative structure develop during the Twentieth Century.

Most Yemeni novels from the 1927s to the late 1950s are characterized by social themes dominated by reformist social preaching or an attempt to criticize a social phenomenon. By the 1990s, publication of Yemeni novels increased fourfold, and authors became more bold in discussing controversial issues and ideas, due in part to changes in the political situation and the fall of the ruling authority after the revolutions 1962 in north Yemen and 1963 in south

⁶ Al-Houthi, Mohammed: “Masār al-Riwaya al-yamania al-ḥaditha.” *Archive al-Sharekh*. <https://archive.alsharekh.org/Articles/232/17950/404095>, 2013.

⁷ I would like to use the Transcription Arabic title of these novels (*Fatāt Qarut*, *Al-Rahīna*, and *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*) throughout this thesis.

⁸ Baqees, Abdul-Hakim Muhammad Saleh: *Thāmanūn ‘amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman. Qirā’a fī tarīkhia tashaqīl al-khitab al- rūā’ī al-yamanī wa taḥūlātih*. University of Aden Press, 2014.

Yemen. As I demonstrate, authors of novels also became more daring and experimental, reflecting larger developments in Yemeni literature such as *Al-Rahīna* (1984) and *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* (1998), and the novel's growing importance to writers as well as Yemeni readers.

b. Yemeni Literature: Background and context

The development of the modern Yemeni novel reflects corresponding historical and social factors. Early Yemeni novels focused on providing guidance and advice, including on traditional moral issues and the topic of immigration, a major theme in the novel *Fatāt Qarut* (1927). Over the next few decades, novelists turned their attention to historical topics including the Yemeni revolutions and political life, issues of the homeland, and life in the countryside, all of which inform the novel *Al-Rahīna* (1984). The 1990s sees the emergence of new narrative styles and interests, including more sensitive issues, such as politics and ideology. In addition, novelists shift focus to issues of the contemporary Yemeni self. Novels including *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* (1998) are less concerned with public issues, such as immigration, than with individual concerns such as memory and their personal experience of political, social and economic events.

I base my approach to periodizing the Yemeni novel's development on Abdul-Hakim Baqees's 2014 study *Thāmanūn 'amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman* [Eighty Years of the Novel in Yemen].⁹ Baqees's book is a comprehensive history of all Yemeni novels published between 1927 and 2013. It traces the development process of the Yemeni novel not only as a result of historical factors, but through the study of the relationship between the novel's subject matter and Yemeni society.¹⁰ However, Baqees does not analyze specific narrative elements, as I have

⁹ Baqees is a Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Aden as well as one of the few academic narrative critics in Yemen.

¹⁰ Baqees, *Thāmanūn 'amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 2.

tried to do here. Therefore, I used his book only in an attempt to contextualize the three novels I have selected for closer study.

Baqees divides the Yemeni novel's development into three stages, although other scholars including Abu Talib propose four stages.¹¹ To provide a brief overview of the Yemeni novel's development, I describe and expand upon these stages below:¹²

- Starting stage (1927-1960): The Yemeni novel first emerges near the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Although on one hand this stage contains failed attempts and shortcomings, on the other hand, Yemeni authors begin to experiment with the novel as a genre. This experimentation is demonstrated by Al-Saqqaf's *Fatāt Qarut* (1927), which was published in Java, Indonesia. Other novels followed, including *Said*, published in Aden in 1939 by Muhammad Ali Luqman, and the 1948 novel *Mabrsht Diary* by Abdullah Muhammad Al-Tayeb Arslan, which was printed in Aden at the *Fatāt Al-Jazeera* newspaper.¹³ These novels show diversity in technique as well as their subject matter, but they are influenced by the social reformist intellectual discourse of this period. Yemen was historically divided into north and south, and both sides were in war and instability. The Imam's rule was in control of the north and the British occupation of southern Yemen, Aden,¹⁴ as well as the criticism of social customs and traditions and the support of a progressive ideology.
- Establishing stage (1960-1970): This stage began chronologically from 1960 and it is an important stage on a national level due to political events in 1962, such as the revolution against the Imam in the north, and the 1967 revolution against British colonialism in the south. The novels of this period were characterized by realism

¹¹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹² See Abu Talib; Baqees; Wagner.

¹³ Baqees, *Thāmanūn 'amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 126.

¹⁴ Schmitz, Charles; Burrowes, Robert D: *Historical dictionary of Yemen*. 2nd ed., Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. p. xxv.

mixed with fantasy. The first attempt at documenting this was in Mahmoud al-Zubayri's novel *The tragedy of Waq Al-Waq* written in 1960. And two novels by the writer Muhammad Abdo, *ḥisān al-‘araba* 1959, and *mudhakarāt al-‘eāml* 1966.¹⁵ It seems that not many novels have been published in this stage compared to the earlier and later periods.

- One stage that Baqeas doesn't include but Abu Talib proposes is genre stage (1970-1980). During this period the novel was established as a literary genre in its own right in the awareness and practice of Yemeni writers. The novels produced feature more artistic narrative techniques, in terms of form and content. Authors working during this stage included Muhammad Abd al-Wali, Abd al-Wahhab al-Durani, Abd al-Karim al-Murtada, Zayd Mutee' Dammaj. This political period is considered to be the period after the revolution in the south and the north, a transitional period to the independence of the country. During this period, writers felt freer to write about the previous political period.¹⁶ This can be seen in Dammaj's novel *Al-Rahīna*, in which the narrator reflects on the injustice of the Imam's ruling 1948-1962.
- Renewal stage (1990) or the modern Yemeni novel: This is the last stage described by Baqeas. The nineties are important in the history of Yemen. In this period, the union between the south and the north established "modern Yemen." The country witnessed increased stability; despite the 1994 war between the south and the north, the situation quickly calmed down afterwards.¹⁷ In literature, this period sees attempts at renewal including that of expressions, paying more attention to form and content in an attempt to move away from the traditional narrative of the novel.

¹⁵ Schmitz; Burrowes, *Historical dictionary of Yemen*, p. xxvii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

Among the notable authors of this stage are: Habib Abd al-Rab Soruri, Nabila al-Zubair, Nadia al-Kawbani, Hind Haitham.¹⁸

From the inception of the first novel to the beginning of the 1970s, the total number of Yemeni novels did not exceed 30. These novels embodied the themes of preaching wisdom in a direct manner, often used magical legends, and relied on traditional linear plot structures. All these can be compared by contrasting the form with the subject and content, and the embodiment of social reality in these novels.¹⁹ According to the studies of researchers specializing in the field of narration, it is almost unanimously agreed upon that the decade of the 1970s had a transformational change on narrative styles in general, and the novel in particular. This change coincided with changes in politics, society, and the economy. The novel also progressed into an unfamiliar realm but at the same time still adhered to realism rooted in writers' surroundings and their society.²⁰ Writers benefited from Arabic and international experience and writings and friction with them and adopted new techniques different from the previous ones. Some of the most important techniques were in destroying the previous plot structure, working on its internal layout, and introducing symbolism instead of direct narrative, in addition to moving away from unresolved endings and the production of narrative works in literary forms that link reality to the imagined.²¹ These new techniques are important for developing the Yemeni novel and helping it compete with Arab and international novels, as well as avoiding placing a novel in a specific pattern, which leads to a loss of innovation and creativity. On the other hand, there was also an increased tendency of some authors to present controversial issues such as politics, terror, ideology, personal accounts of immigrants, estrangement and alienation, and the

¹⁸ Baqees, *Thāmanūn 'amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p.9.

¹⁹ Al-Houthi, *Masār al-Riwaya al-yamania al-ḥadītha*.

²⁰ Wagner, Hassan, *Yemen*, p. 3.

²¹ Al-Houthi, *Masār al-Riwaya al-yamania al-ḥadītha*.

production of narrative works in literary forms, calling for change and rejecting reality and its problems.²²

c. The Novels

The novels I examine in this thesis, *Fatāt Qarut* (1927), *Al-Rahīna* (1984), and *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* (1998), were published inside and outside of Yemen. All were well-received by Yemeni and Arab readers, and won Arab and international awards. *Al-Rahīna* and *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* were also translated into several languages including English, French, German, Spanish, and Serbian. I selected these three novels for analysis because their publication timing aligns with important political, social, and economic developments in Yemen. Each novel differs in content and narrative style, showing us the diversity of Yemeni approaches to the novel as a genre. By analyzing the literary techniques used by writers in these novels, I investigate the following questions: How do Yemeni novelists use certain narrative elements to express their life experiences? How do these changes help us understand the historical development of the novel in Yemen?

Fatāt Qarut (1927) belongs to the stage Baqeēs identifies as the “Starting stage.” It tells the story of two people who fall in love and decide to get married, but face obstacles due to the loss of identity, customs and traditions following immigration to East Asia, specifically Indonesia. The author of this novel is Al-Saqqaf (1882-1950). He was educated in Seiyun, in Hadhramaut-Yemen, and then in Hyderabad, India. Al-Saqqaf worked in the field of trade in Singapore, then moved to Java, one of the islands of Indonesia. In 1908, he emigrated to Indonesia, but remained informed by his Arab and Islamic culture and sciences. After he settled into life in Java, his literary interests prompted him to devote most of his time to reading and writing.²³ Al-Saqqaf

²² Baqeēs, *Thāmanūn ‘amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 6.

²³ Al-Saqqaf, Ahmed: *Fatāt Qarut*. Introduction by Al-Shatibi. Indonesia, 1927. 3. edition, Yemen: Dar Books ‘anawīn li-l-nashr, 2021. p.7.

published *Fatāt Qarut* in Indonesia in 1927, and critics such as Baqeess, Massoud Amchouch, and Sami Al-Shabati claim that it is the first Yemeni novel. Al-Saqqaf was arguably the key Yemeni Literary intellectual of the 1927s and opened the way for other Yemeni novelists and by drawing the attention of Yemeni and Arabic society to this genre of literature in Yemen. The author defines his novel as “a critical love novel that includes criticism of some of the habits of Hadrami in Indonesia.”²⁴

Al-Rahīna (1984) by Zayd Mutee‘Dammaj (1943-2000), appeared during the genre stage (1970-1980). The novel is about the unjust Imam in the north Yemen who kidnaps the children of his opponents and holds them as hostages in a palace. Dammaj was born in 1943 in Yemen.²⁵ He joined the Faculty of Law at Cairo University in 1964 but left after two years and joined the Department of Journalism in the Faculty of Arts. Dammaj died on March 20, 2000 in a London hospital.²⁶ He has published some collection of short stories such as *Tahesh Al-Hawban* in 1973, and *The Scorpion* in 1982.²⁷

Al-Malika al-Maghdūra (1998) by Habib Abd al-Rab Soruri represents the Renewal stage, which is characterized by bold themes and autobiographical novels. Soruri was born on August 15, 1956, in the Sheikh Othman neighborhood of Aden in Yemen to a religious family with literary interests. He received his early education in Sheikh Othman, then left for France in 1976 to complete his university studies.²⁸ Although trained in mathematics and computer science, Soruri is today considered one of the most important Yemeni novelists. Despite his long exile, he did not lose his connection with his country and the city of Aden appears in all his novels as a gateway to Yemen.²⁹ The novel itself was first written in French, and later

²⁴ Hadhrami people are a term used for all those who belong to the city Hadhramaut in southern Yemen.

²⁵ Dammaj, Hamdan: “Zaid Mutī‘Dammaj’s Biography.” <http://www.dammaj.net/>, 2009.

²⁶ See <http://www.dammaj.net/>.

²⁷ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*.

²⁸ Soruri, Habib Abd al-Rab: “Habib Abd al-Rab Soruri's Biography.” <http://www.habibabdulrab.com/habib/>, 2010.

²⁹ See <http://www.habibabdulrab.com/habib/>.

translated into the Yemeni dialect. It presents the reality of South Yemen during the communist period, focusing on the revolutionary ideas and the Marxist demonstrations that happened at that time. The novel revolves around a boy named Naji who narrates the details of his life and the historical and political events that take place in his city, Aden. Particularly during this period, Yemen was in a political transition toward what would become the modern state of Yemen, and the novel examines how this transition affected all aspects of daily life.³⁰

Although these novels are diverse in content and style, I argue that they express a shared preoccupation with representing the dramatic change of twentieth-century Yemeni life. By examining how the authors represent characters, place, and time as unpredictable, I show how they find literary expression of the struggle Yemeni people experience among themselves or between themselves and their government. The daily lives and social, political, or even economic experience of these three Yemeni writers shape both the topics and style of their narratives. Thus, these three novels index changing social, political, and economic conditions and their effects on the writers. The exemplary literary expression of the struggle between the people and their government may be found in *Al-Rahīna* by Dammaj, and in *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* by Soruri but in *Fatāt Qarut* by Al-Saqqaf, struggle occurs between the people among themselves. For example, the novel *Fatāt Qarut* is a social novel that discusses social aspects and personalities. In *Fatāt Qarut*, there are many characters of which I categorize as either the main or secondary characters. Some of these characters have a specific role, which the author tries to deliver a message during this character. On top of that, the examination of some characters of this novel will help readers better understand the novel, as well as the author's intentions behind creating these characters.

This work focuses on another aspects or elements, which previous analysts and scholars have no addressed. The analysis of some elements, such as the element of narrative “place /space”

³⁰ See <http://www.habibabdulrab.com/habib/>.

in *Al-Rahīna*, whose analysis has been edited by the Yemeni writer Muhammed Younis, in his work *Al-jins- al-aydūlūjia- Al-fadā' al-rīwayī fī-li- rīwaya al-yamanā al-mu'āşir* [Gender - Ideology - Narrative Space in the Contemporary Yemeni Novel] is just an addition and an attempt to obtain new conclusions. The writer does not only focus on the window space in the room of the protagonist; he discusses more than one narrative elements like gender as well as the ideology of the novel. The reason for choosing to analyze the place or narrative space in the narration of *Al-Rahīna* is that the happenings are in one place, which is a closed palace of the deputy Imam. This runs counter to the settings of the other two novels *Fatāt Qarut* and *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*. This analysis focuses on the space in the novel as well as on its symbolism that the writer tries to be presenting.

The most noticeable thing in the novel *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* is the events, which are between the past and the present, as well as these events are narrator's life and memories, and if the writer had listed all the details and events in the novel, the pages of the novel would not have expanded it; therefore, “time” is the most suitable element for analysis. The use of time in a narrative centers around three aspects: order, duration and frequency,³¹ and it seems there is no previous analytical study for this element in this novel. In addition, analyzing the element “time” in this novel helps us to understand the writer's method and his ability to reduce all the events of his life in a way that does not affect the context of the novel and makes the reader attracted to the events without feeling bored. In the analysis of the time element, I will focus on technical techniques as the order, which includes Anachronies (prolepsis, analepses) as well as the duration, which includes summary, scene, pause, and finally the ellipsis.

³¹ Genette, Gérard: *Narrative Discourse*. French, 1972. Translated into English by Jane E. Lewin, with a new Foreword by Jonathan Culler. Cornell University Press, New York. 1980. p. 11.

2. *Fatāt Qarut* [The Girl of Qarut]

by Ahmed Abdullah Al-Saqqaf

This novel was warmly received by writers and critics.³² First published in 1927, a second edition appeared in 2017, with a new cover, and under another title *Majhūla al-nasab* [An unknown parentage]. Early this year, Dar Books ‘anawīn li-l-nashr in Cairo released the third edition of the novel *Fatāt Qarut* by Yemeni writer Ahmed Abdullah Al-Saqqaf, as part of the *būakīr adābīa* series. The events of the novel revolve around a romantic love story, between Abdullah who comes from Hadhramaut to the Indonesian province of Qarut seeking comfort and enjoyment of the charming aspects of nature there, and a beautiful girl named Neeg, who lives with her parents.³³ Many articles and research on this novel focus heavily on analyzing its content, its history, and the writer’s goal, especially since it is the first published Yemeni novel. Baqeēs, for example, draws attention to the use of the novel to criticize society, as well as the indirect conflict between East and West in the novel, especially as the Netherlands was colonizing Indonesia during the period of writing and publishing the novel.³⁴

Less critical attention has been given to the novel’s individual characters. In this chapter, I will analyze four key characters Abdullah, Neeg, Al-Mutafarnj and Abdulqarad. Through his portrayal of these characters, I argue, Al-Saqqaf criticizes the customs and traditions of Arab immigrants, in particular Yemeni immigrants in Indonesia. In particular, he suggests that lack of education, imitation of the West, and marriage to immigrants leads to the potential loss of identity and rights as well as the disintegration of the family. Upon close examination of the text, however, it seems that the writer does not criticize immigration per se, but rather criticizes the lack of responsibility of immigrants who they marry local women for few days or months,

³² Al-Shatibi, *Fatāt Qarut*. Introduction, p. 3.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Baqeēs, *Thāmanūn ‘amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 20.

then travel and leave their women alone with no intention of returning to them or taking their women with them to their countries. Al-Saqqaf criticizes the customs and traditions of Arab immigrants, in particular Yemeni immigrants in Indonesia.³⁵

I would like to start by analyzing Abdullah. Abdullah is the protagonist, and his background resembles that of Al-Saqqaf, the novelist.³⁶ As mentioned above, Al-Saqqaf comes from an ancient family with a scientific reputation. Abdullah's character is written as an educated person, proud of his Arab and Islamic value; he also calls for reforming the wrong customs and traditions of the immigrant in the Yemeni immigrant community on the island Qarut.³⁷ Scholars including Al-Hamidani argue against assuming that protagonists express the personality of the author.³⁸ Al-Hamidani refers that the reason for the confusion of the concept of this main character and the character of the author is belong to two reasons, the first one is due to superficial reading, and the second is because characters in a novel have no existence that they are objects of paper or objects on paper. In addition, the character is a fictional character is not a reflection of the author's character, as it is only a formulation of imagination.³⁹ However, this novel is the writer's first attempt, despite his previous poetic attempts. It seems that this is the reason for the reader think that the main character, Abdullah, is a reflection of the writer's personality. In addition to that, the writer Al-Saqqaf as well uses the name Abdullah, which is also his father's name, which makes it more confusing.⁴⁰

Through the character of Abdullah, the writer criticizes the behavior and traditions of the Hadrami Yemeni immigrants. Al-Saqqaf mentions some of these tradition in Abdullah's marriage to his uncle's daughter, and first criticizes the fact that the spouses do not know each

³⁵ Baqees, *Thāmanūn 'amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 28.

³⁶ Al-Hamidani, Hamid: *Bunya an-naṣ as-sardī*. Al-markaz al-thaqāfī al-'arabī, Casablanca, 2000. p. 212.

³⁷ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 57.

³⁸ Al-Hamidani, *Bunya an-naṣ fī as-sardī*, p. 212.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁴⁰ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*.

other except on the day of marriage, and secondly, he also criticizes the behavior of women who do not wear hijab in front of strangers as the following quote shows:

وهكذا قبل عبدالله أمر أخيه إرضاءً له وهو بالطبع لم يكن قد رأى البنت التي سيتزوجها؛ لأنها عربية والعربية من حين تبلغ العاشرة أو التاسعة تُحجب حتى عن النساء الأجنبية فضلاً عن الرجال من أبناء جنسها، أما الرجال من غير العرب فلا تحتجب النساء عنهم!! فباعة المأكولات والمشروبات من الحاويين الذي يتجولون في الأزقة ببضائعهم يدخلون بيوت العرب ولا تحتجب النساء عنهم وباعة الأقمشة والملبوسات النسائية من عامة الصينيين والهنود، كذلك إذا مر أحدهم بـ "حارة العرب" وحرك به جرسه الذي يُعلن به عن وجوده لا يلبث أن يسمع النداء هنا وهناك من وراء الستائر المرأة على الأبواب المخصصة لمرور النساء فيدخل وتشتري منه السيدة ما أرادت ولا يخرج إلا وربة البيت الآخر في انتظاره، وهكذا والغالب ان يكون استدعاؤهم وقت خروج الرجال إلى أشغالهم، فكأن الحجاب إنما هو خاص عن أبناء جنسهن فقط وكأن هؤلاء الباعة ليسوا من جنس الرجال وكأنهم بمكانة من علو الأخلاق والتمسك بالفضيلة تجعلهم من المعصومين!!⁴¹

Thus, Abdullah accepted his brother's order to please him, and of course he had not seen the girl he was going to marry. Because she is an Arab, and an Arab, when she is ten or nine years old, is veiled even from strange women, let alone men of the same nationality as her. As for non-Arab men, women are not veiled from them!! So, the sellers of food and drinks from among the Taoists who roam the alleys with their goods enter the homes of the Arabs and the women do not veil from them, and the sellers of fabrics and women's clothing are from the common Chinese and Indians. And if one of them walks through the "Arab Street" and moves his bell announcing his presence, then he will soon hear the call here and there from behind the reflective curtains at the doors designated for the passage of women, so he enters, and the lady buys from him what she wants, and when he leaves this house, the housewife of the other house is already waiting for him. It seems that they are called at the time of the men in their work, and as if these women wear the hijab only in front of men of the same nationality, as if these sellers are not men and as if

⁴¹ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 105.

they are in a position of high morals and adherence to the virtue that makes them infallible!!⁴²

The words used from the previous quotation, such as the word “he had not seen the girl” show us that Abdullah wants to marry a woman he knows and that this marriage is doomed to failure, in addition to that there is no compatibility between the character of Abdullah and his uncle's daughter, and Al-Saqqaf embodies this through the behavior of women by the way of wearing the hijab and their lack of adherence to Islamic teachings. At the beginning of the novel the narrator describes Abdullah as a character whose education sets him apart from his peers as well as a character who adheres to the teachings of Islam:

ولم يكن عبد الله من عامة الشعب، فقد تربى في حجر والده وأساتذته تربيةً حسنة، وأخذ بحظ وافر من العلوم والآداب واتصل بكثير من العلماء وأهل الفضل في حضرموت ناهيك عما جيل عليه من الأخلاق الفاضلة والشمانل المحمودة وله ميل زائد إلى الأدب⁴³

Abdullah was not from the common people; he grew up under the care of his father and his teachers as well as he received a good upbringing. He studied many sciences and arts, and he also contacted many scholars and dignitaries in Hadramout. In addition to his virtuous morals and praiseworthy virtues, as well as his interest in literature⁴⁴

This description of Abdullah's character makes us notice the closeness of his character to Neeg's character. The writer deliberately shows this similarity between the two characters in order to support his idea of the importance of education and its adherence to the Arab-Islamic hobby.

The next quote presents Neeg's character:

نيغ، تلك الشابة العربية التي تربت في مكة ومصر وتشربت فيهما العلوم وانتقلت إلى إندونيسيا للعيش عند والدتها السندية⁴⁵

⁴² Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁴³ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 40.

⁴⁴ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁴⁵ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 67.

Neeg, that Arab young woman who grew up in Mecca and Egypt and she studied sciences there, then moved to Indonesia to live with her Sindhi mother⁴⁶

From the two previous quotes, I want the reader to notice the similarity of Abdullah's personality and Neeg's personality in that they are educated people and how the education in Arab schools had a great impact on the formation of their personality, which the writer portrayed as fairly typical personalities, and this is the reason why they fell in love with each other. Neeg is an Arab Indonesian girl who has lived most of her life in Mecca, studied there, and then completed her education in Cairo. When Neeg was about 17 years old, her mother (Mina) asked her brother, Hajj Mahroom, to send her daughter Neeg to Java. So Neeg does not know a lot about her father or her mother. Especially since her mother remarried, after she lost hope of her immigrant husband returning to them. In fact, Neeg is Abdullah's cousin, and her name is Sharifa, but Abdullah did not reveal her identity until the end a piece of information the author planned to conceal to the end of the novel.⁴⁷

It seems that Al-Saqqaf had tried to change this habit in immigrants, which had caused many children to lose their identity and rights. This was as a result of the recklessness and lack of awareness on both sides of the Arab immigrants as well as the local population. In this novel, he calls directly for social reform to curb this widespread phenomenon at the time.⁴⁸ When Neeg goes to the police station, she writes a report that she feels in danger and wants protection.

I quoted this next part of her report:

إنني جئت من مكة ووصلت إلى "قاروت" يوم 22 نوفمبر الماضي ونزلت في قرية رنجابانقو عند امرأة تدعي إنها أمي ولكني لم أعرفها إلا الآن واسمها مينة ورجل هو زوج تلك المرأة وليس هو أبي واسمه رسنا، أما اسمي الذي أدعى به في مكة وهنا فهو نيغ، يقال إن اسمي في الصغر إيفة ولا أعلم من هو أبي ولا استطيع الحزم بأن مينة أمي

⁴⁶ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Baqees, *Thāmanūn 'amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 25.

والذي كنت عنده في مكة وربيت في بيته منذ صغري هو حاج اسمه حاج محروم وهو أخو مينة
هذه.⁴⁹

I came from Mecca and arrived in "Qarut" on the 22nd of last November, and I stayed in the village of Rangabango with a woman who claims to be my mother, but I did not know her until now, and her name is Mina, and a man is the husband of that woman, he is not my father, and his name is Rasna. My name, by which I was named in Mecca, and here is Neeg. It is said that my name was Efa when I was child, and I do not know who my father is, and I cannot be certain that Mina is my mother. The person I lived with in Mecca and in whose house I grew up since my childhood was Hajj Mahroum, and he is the brother of this Mina.⁵⁰

Al-Saqqaf portrays Neeg as a strong, nationalist figure who defends moral Arab and Islamic values. Here, we see strength of her personality: she is not afraid to go to the police and express her fear of her family. By calling attention to her roots in Mecca, Neeg also appears as a character who is proud of her identity and belonging to Arab and Islamic culture. This is what the writer Al-Hamidani describes also in his book *Bunya an-naṣ as-sardī* about the main character or who plays the role of heroism in the novel, where he refers that it is common for character traits to be heroic and moral, and it is familiar in most modern novels.⁵¹ These characteristics are further visible in the argument between Neeg and the wealthy Dutch and European missionary.⁵²

Neeg's personality appears during this argument as strong, educated, and unafraid to defend her beliefs, her Arabic nationalism, and Arabic history. Baqees suggests that Al-Saqqaf exaggerates this dialogue and argues that this 15-year-old girl—who can only speak Arabic and Malay—

⁴⁹ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 34.

⁵⁰ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁵¹ Al-Hamidani, *Bunya an-naṣ fī as-sardī*, p. 212.

⁵² Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 36.

could not possibly argue with all historical and scientific information she deploys. Baqees believes that the writer Al-Saqqaf tries to use Neeg's character in the dialogue to pass the discourse of response to the West.⁵³ Indeed, the sources mentioned by Neeg during the debate between her and the Dutch investor and the Orientalist would only be accessible for a student with at least a university level of education, and this does not apply to Neeg. In addition, Al-Saqqaf presents the political events and the resistance of Dutch colonization of Indonesia through this dialogue. The writer uses the method of polarization between the characters, between the personality of Neeg and the personality of the rich Dutch, so that he can express his opinion against Western ideology.⁵⁴

At the same time, Neeg also struggles to integrate and harmonize with her surroundings. One of the events that reveal this trait in Neeg's character is when her mother tries to separate her from her love interest, Abdullah. Neeg's mother sends her daughter a fake letter from Abdullah, which states that Abdullah does not love Neeg and is not interested in her.⁵⁵ In the following quote, the narrator describes Neeg's shock after reading this letter:

إن نبيغ بعد أن قرأت رسالتك تحقق [لها] عدم اهتمامك بأمرها وإعراضك عنها وحيث لم يكن لها أمل في الحياة
سواك وقد جفوتها؛ لذلك سئمت البقاء وفضلت الموت على الحياة وذهبت ضحية طمع ابويها⁵⁶

Neeg, after reading your letter, she realizes your lack of interest in her and your distancing from her, and since she had no hope of life except you, and you disappointed her. She was hopeless and preferred death to life and she fell victim to her parents' greed⁵⁷

The phrases such as “she had no hope of life except you” as well as “she was hopeless and preferred death to life” and “she fell victim to her parents' greed” present, that there is an internal conflict in Neeg's personality between the desire for life and death as a result of feeling insecure,

⁵³ Baqees, *Thāmanūn 'amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 27.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁵⁵ Al-Hamidani, *Bunya an-naṣ fī as-sardī*, p. 304.

⁵⁶ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*. p. 98.

⁵⁷ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

humiliated and inferior because of losing her own identity, and thus this appears that her personality also has psychological dimensions.⁵⁸ Because of the loss of her identity, she was unable to integrate into society and she lost confidence in the people around her, especially her mother, and this struggle led her to an attempt to commit suicide by throwing herself in front of the train. However, at the end of the novel, when Neeg talks with her mother and discovers the truth about her father and her identity, she reconciles with herself and with the surroundings around her, thus leading to a more stable life.⁵⁹

Al-Saqqaf has successfully discussed the issue of immigrant marriage as well as loss of identity through the characters of Abdullah and Neeg. Abdullah who grew up in a cohesive family, is more stable than Neeg, who suffered from family disintegration and identity conflict. Al-Saqqaf also examines the role of education's impact on the conflict between tradition and modernity through the characters Abdulqarad and Al-Mutafarnj. Through Abdulqarad, Al-Saqqaf criticizes traditional thinking for its lack of modernity. Abdulqarad is the brother of Abdullah, and did not complete his education.⁶⁰ This was common among families who work in trade; the sons of these families often did not complete their education in order to carry on their family business. Abdulqarad's lack of education is visible in the way he writes his letters to his brother Abdullah, which the narrator describes as identical to the style used by Abdulqarad's father and grandfather:⁶¹

هذا أسلوب اختاره من جملة أساليب، ولكنه أسلوب شائع ومتبع أباً عن جد.⁶²

This is a method that he chose from a number of methods, but it is a common method and is followed from father to grandfather.⁶³

⁵⁸ Al-Hamidani, *Bunya an-naṣṣ fi as-sardī*, p. 304.

⁵⁹ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 112.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

The author confirms Abdulqarad's way and style in another place in the novel:

لو فرضنا أننا عثرنا على رسالة كتبها عبد القادر منذ عشرين سنة وقابلنا بينها وبين هذه لوجدت صدرها هو هذا بنفسه ونصه وشكله ونقطه لا يزيد حرفاً ولا ينقص حرفاً وهناك عدة رسائل ممَّن هم على شاكلته كتبوها لغيرهم في أوقات مختلفة تجدها نسخاً متعددة من رسالة عبد القادر كأنهم ينقلون عنها، أتدري لماذا؟ لأنهم يعدُّون الخروج عن المؤلف وإن كان إلى أحسن منه من التنطع ونوعاً الصلَّف.. يقولون هكذا والحقيقة أنهم عاجزون عن تغيير ذلك الأسلوب.⁶⁴

If we suppose that we found a letter written by Abdulqarad twenty years ago, and we compared it with this one, we will find that its begin is this in itself, its text, its shape, its dot and a letter is not added or deleted. There are several letters like this letter, which wrote by others at different times, and they pass it on through the generations, then the new generations just copy it, as Abdulqarad's letter, do you know why? Because they consider deviating from the usual, even if it is better than it, is a militancy and a kind of arrogance..They say this, and the truth is that they are unable to change that method.⁶⁵

As a character who writes in a traditional, unchanging style, Abdulqarad appears to be a traditional, puritanical personality. With phrases such as “followed from father to grandfather”, “we found a letter written by Abdulqarad twenty years ago” as well as “that they are unable to change that method,” Al-Saqqaf indicates that Abdulqarad not interested in the development and change, which shows us the extent of the Abdulqarad 's adherence to the past, customs and traditions. Al-Saqqaf also uses the Hadrami colloquial dialect to represent Abdulqarad 's speech. The use of the Hadrami colloquial dialect emphasizes the character's adherence to habits and traditions that prevents himself from integrating into the new life as others did.⁶⁶ Moreover, Al-Saqqaf suggests that Abdulqarad's lack of education is responsible for his lack of openness to other knowledge and culture.⁶⁷ According to Hamon's theory about the

⁶⁴ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 15.

⁶⁵ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶⁷ Baqees, *Thāmanūn 'amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 29.

semiology of fictional characters, the typical character in the novel is either a help or an obstruction.⁶⁸ Al-Saqqaf embodies Abdulqarad's character in the novel as an obstacle personality. For example, Abdulqarad vehemently rejects Abdullah's marriage to Neeg, and puts pressure on him to marry his uncle's daughter.⁶⁹

عبدالله فما كان يرغب في ذلك الزواج، ولو ترك الأمر إلية وأعطي الحرية لإبداء رأيه؛ لأفهمهم عدم رغبته ولكن
أخاه عبد القادر رجل مستبد قبل ما طلبه عمه ولم يأخذ رأي عبدالله.⁷⁰

Abdullah would not have wanted that marriage if he has the freedom to express and the right to hold his own opinion to explain to them freely that he does not want this marriage.

But his brother Abdulqarad is a tyrannical man who accepted what his uncle demanded and did not seek Abdullah's opinion.⁷¹

The desire to control the shapes Abdulqarad's character reflects the power conferred on him by social tradition, which gives him a legitimate right to control the fate of family members on the basis that he is the older brother and takes the role of the father in the event of the father's absence. This character has the right to monitor everyone using coercion, whether physical or moral, on family members. Al-Hamidani describes this character as an intimidating character, meaning that everyone is afraid of it.⁷² It is also one of the characteristics of this quick-tempered personality, as described by Al-Saqqaf in the quote "Abdulqarad is a tyrannical man," Abdulqarad's authority over his brother Abdullah is so great that even if they do not live together, he can order him through a letter, and he may travel to him if the matter calls for that.

⁶⁸ Hamon, Philippe: *Pour un statut sémiologique des personnages in revue literature*. French, 1972. Translated into Arabic by Saeed Binakrad, with a new Foreword by Abdelfatah Kylytw. Dar al- hiwar li-nashr, Syria. 2013. p. 55.

⁶⁹ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 102.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁷¹ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁷² Al-Hamidani, *Bunya an-naṣṣ fī as-sardī*, p. 279.

سمع عن أخيه خبر أساءه وألجأه إلى السفر، وليته أشار إلى مضمون ذلك الخبر ولو إشارة خفية. من كتاب عبد القادر
يتبين أنه ضعيف سريع الغضب، عديم التروي، فاقد الشجاعة الأدبية جامد الفكر، غير أنه كان سليم الطوية سريع
التصديق محافظاً جداً على العادات القديمة⁷³

He (Abdulqarad) heard news about his brother (Abdullah) that made him upset and it made him want to travel to him, and I (the narrator) wish, he would have mentioned the content of this news even if briefly. From Abdulqarad's letter, it becomes clear that he is weak, quick to anger, impatient, and he does not have literary talent and creativity. However, he is well-intentioned, quick to believe, and very conservative of old habits.⁷⁴

We also conclude from the above quote that Abdulqarad's control over his brother Abdullah as well as over the family members in general as Abdulqarad is considered the eldest brother. This character in the narrative is essential; it presents a justify for a situation of the conflict in the novel, and the idea of conflict can't arise and develop and find a solution for itself without distributing the characters into two parties that attract and repel each other so that the balance and consistency required in the narrative discourse are achieved.⁷⁵ We can note this clearly from the previous phrases in the quote like “He (Abdulqarad) heard news about his brother (Abdullah) that made him upset” as well as “it becomes clear that he is weak, quick to anger.” If Abdulqarad's tyranny stems from his adherence to tradition, al-Mutafarnj, a friend of Abdullah, shows the risks of forgetting tradition altogether. Al-Mutafarnj is Hadrami, but denies his origin, identity of his own will, and affiliation with the Arabs in favor of complete imitation of the West.⁷⁶ Al-Mutafarnj is not keen to speak the Arabic language and choses, instead, to speak European languages and wear European clothes. Al-Saqqaf also does not give al-Mutafarnj a name, which indicates separation from his national identity. Instead, the character is known only by the adjective *al-Mutafarnj*, which is derived from the word *afranjī*

⁷³ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 15.

⁷⁴ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁷⁵ Al-Hamidani, *Bunya an-naṣ fī as-sardī*, p. 279-280.

⁷⁶ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 45.

meaning, "an Arab man who imitates westerners." And this indicates that this character al-Mutafarnj is not confined only to the period in which the novel is set, but it is a character that could also exist in the future. It is a generic character that a person can encounter anywhere and anytime. Al-Saqqaf defines al-Mutafarnj's character as one cursed by a loss of identity.

هذا "المتفرنج" فقد أضر به التعليم من حيث إرادة الاستفادة منه، فبدلاً من أن ينفع قومه بمعلوماته ويسعى في تقويم الأخلاق وتهذيبها باللطف واللين صار عوناً للأجانب عليهم، فلا هو أوروباوي؛ فتقول إنه يعمل لصالح قومه ولا هو عربي فينفع إخوانه⁷⁷

This "al-Mutafarnj" has been harmed by education in terms of wanting to benefit from it, so instead of benefiting his people with his information and seeking to correct morals and refine them with gentleness and kindness, he has become a help to foreigners against them, so he is neither European; to say that he works for the benefit of his people, nor an Arab, so he benefits his brothers⁷⁸

Abdulqarad's character adheres to false traditions due to not completing his education, but in al-Mutafarnj's personality, he receives his education in Western schools and turns completely towards Western culture, completely ignoring his culture and identity. Al-Saqqaf here does not criticize the study of studying in Western schools but the loss of identity. The writer is looking for moderation, that is, to be civilized and open to other cultures while maintaining one's own identity. Al-Mutafarnj's character to some extent exhibits a split personality. On the one hand, he is an arrogant person who does not want to speak the Arabic language and has a rude personality, but he is friendly, pleasant, and polite with his Western friends.⁷⁹

We can conclude from the previous analysis that Al-Saqqaf uses the romance story between Abdullah and Neeg as a narrative device for discussing the issue of identity and modernity. The writer discusses and raises social issues through these four characters in the novel in a literary

⁷⁷ Al-Saqqaf, *Fatāt Qarut*, p. 42.

⁷⁸ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁷⁹ Al-Hamidani, *Bunya an-naṣfī as-sardī*, p. 315.

manner and tries to find a solution to these issues. Abdullah is an educated and stable personality with firm roots. Neeg's character is proud of her identity and her Arab and Islamic values, and Abdulqarad clings to the past. Finally, Al-Mutafarnj's character loss of identity despite his high level of education. These four characters are linked by two important elements: education and loss of identity. In the next chapter I start to analyse the novel *Al-Rahīna*, which takes place in a closed place, unlike the narration of *Fatāt Qarut*, which took place in different places and islands.

3. *Al-Rahīna* [The Hostage]

by Zayd Mutee' Dammaj

Published in 1984, Dammaj's novel is one of the few Yemeni works that has crossed the borders of Yemen in the Arab world and internationally. On the international level, *Al-Rahīna* was initially translated into French, English and German, and on the Arab level it was published in many editions, including two editions by Dar Al-Adab and Al-Rayes. It was also published in September 1998 as part of a book project in a newspaper, so the latest edition guaranteed it a widespread in the Arab world, overcoming the difficulties of transferring books between Arab countries.⁸⁰ *Al-Rahīna* also sparked great controversy, both in Yemeni circles and in the Arab world, because of its bold content that discusses life in the Imam's palace, not only political and social life, but also forbidden sexual relations and sexual exploitation—topics forbidden to discuss in public at the time. In the Twentieth Century, about 3 million copies were printed, and it has also been translated into seven languages.⁸¹ This novel is a realistic representation of the sufferings of the Yemenis in one of the darkest periods of their history under the oppressive

⁸⁰ See <http://www.dammaj.net/>.

⁸¹Ibid.

Imami tyranny. The hostage himself has no name, and as a result stands in for all children of revolutionary fighters and opponents of the Imam. They may be the next hostages.

Al-Rahīna is historical and partially autobiographical because the former Imam abducted the author's cousin in Sanaa.⁸² This novel represents the period of the Imam's political rule over the region of Sanaa and northern Yemen before the revolution in the sixties against the Imam.⁸³ *Al-Rahīna* does not exceed 200 pages and takes place in a closed space: the palace of the vice Imam. In this sense it is the opposite of *Fatāt Qarut*, whose heroes travel between different Indonesian islands. The story in general is about the hostage, who is the youngest son of a sheikh or one of the notables of the Imam's state. The deputy of the Imam takes him as a child to ensure that his father does not rebel, then returns him to his father when he reaches puberty to take another child's place. These children live in the castle prison and are taken from their families as servants to the palace of the vice Imam. This method of ensuring the loyalty of the heads of the regions was invented by the Ottomans when they occupied Yemen and was continued by the Imams after the evacuation of the Ottomans at the beginning of the Twentieth Century.⁸⁴ Wagner describes "the hostage's situation becomes a metaphor for the possibilities and limitations of political and social change in the region."⁸⁵

Past research on *Al-Rahīna* has overlooked the element of narrative "place/space." By looking at the element of place in *Al-Rahīna*, I argue, we notice the writer's transformation of the palace from a place that symbolizes a life of luxury and happiness, to a place that symbolizes the loss of freedom, imprisonment, and an arena for conflict between personalities. When the hostage moves into the palace, he does not have a private room, but Al-Duwaidar, who had become among his best friends, shares his room with the hostage. According to the description of the hostage and the comparison of the room with the rooms in the rest of the palace, Al-Duwaidar's

⁸² Dammaj, Zaid Mutī': *al-Rahīna*. Beirut: Dar Al-Adab, 1984.

⁸³ Schmitz; Burrowes, *Historical dictionary of Yemen*, p. xxvii.

⁸⁴ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*.

⁸⁵ Wagner, Hassan, Yemen, p. 6.

room is an old, dilapidated room, and there are no simple pieces of furniture in it. Al-Duwaidar is a boy (*ghulam*) who works in the palace and is called Al-Duwaidar, meaning “the beautiful, intelligent boy.”⁸⁶

Al-Duwaidar taught the hostage everything about the palace and explained to him how to obtain the satisfaction of the women of the palace, especially ash-sharifa Hafsa, the sister of the vice Imam, with whom later the hostage falls in love. Soon, however, the hostage reveals that the women of the palace will sexually exploit him. But Al-Duwaidar tells the hostage to accept this matter as Al-Duwaidar accepted it so that the hostage can live safely in the palace. Here the hostage falls into an internal struggle, either rebellion against the palace and adherents of moral values or submission to the palace's orders. Because of this conflict, the hostage tries to escape.⁸⁷ The internal struggle which the hostage suffers from maps onto two places. The first place is the Imam Palace, a beautiful, organized, and clean place. The second place is the narrow place; it is a friend's old narrow room with one window.⁸⁸ The writer describes the place in the novel, whether the palace or the room, as a topographical description.⁸⁹ When the hostage walks around the palace and he describe what he sees in it. For example, the following is a description of Imam's palace:

سرادب وقياب وممرات كلها مرصوفة أيضاً بالحجارة المربعة السوداء، ملحمة بالقضاض، المصنوع من النورة
البيضاء ... البخار يتصاعد بكثافة عند القمريات الرخامية الجاذبة للضوء⁹⁰

Understairs, underground room and corridor all of them are paved with black square stones, are welded with white qaḍāḍ (lime plaster) ... the steam rises intensely at the marble (Qamariyat) (or Lunar windows), which attracts light⁹¹

⁸⁶ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*.

⁸⁷ Younis, Muhammed Abdul Rahman: “Al-jins- Al-aydūlūjia- Al-fadā’ al- rūā’ī fi-li- rīwaya al-yamanīa al-mu’āšir.” *Archive al-Sharekh*. <https://archive.alsharekh.org/Articles/245/18332/411128>, 2015. p. 7.

⁸⁸ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*.

⁸⁹ Bahraoui, Hussein: *Bunya al-shakal al- rūā’ī*. Al-markaz al-thaqāfī al-‘arabī, Beirut, 1990. p. 61.

⁹⁰ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p. 8.

⁹¹ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

From the previous quote can the reader notice from the words such “ the marble (Qamariyat) (or Lunar windows)”, that The description of the author with these words indicates the luxury and elegance of the place, and this place is only the palace baths, and when comparing between the hostage room and the bathrooms, this indicates the luxury of the Imam's life in light of the conditions of a people who live in a state of poverty during the period of the rule of the Imam. Here the writer perhaps depicts the hostage room as the condition of the people. Despite the beauty of the description of the palace in the novel, this beautiful and spacious place was a prison for the hostage.⁹² The palace acquires the meaning of prison because it is a place characterized by seclusion and limitations, and the changes imposed on the hostage changed his lifestyle as well as subjection to the minor law. The protagonist is under house arrest in the palace and feels completely helpless, leading to a feeling of isolation, a sense of guilt as well as responsibility, and a lack of freedom.⁹³ We deduce this from a description the hostage his condition from the following quote:

وتداعت علي هموم عديدة وغمرني الحنين الى اسرتي بشكل مكثف⁹⁴

Many worries fell upon me, and I was overwhelmed with intense nostalgia for my family⁹⁵

وكان السور المحيط بكل ذلك عالياً.. لا تنفذ منه سوا فروع الاشجار الباسقة.⁹⁶

The wall around all this was high.. only the branches of tall trees pierced through it.⁹⁷

From the previous quotes “Many worries fell upon me, and I was overwhelmed”, we notice the feelings of sorrow and nostalgia that dominate the hostage, and the description of the hostage for the high wall may indicate that he is looking for a way to escape from the palace. In addition, this phrase “The wall around all this was high” confirms that the palace is like a prison for the

⁹² Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p. 97.

⁹³ Bahraoui, *al-shakal al- rūā'ī*, p. 61.

⁹⁴ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p. 73.

⁹⁵ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁹⁷ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

hostage. On top of that, Bahraoui refers in the book *Bunya an-naṣ as-sardī* [The structure of the text in the narrative] that in the Linguistic meaning, prison is the place where freedom is absent. However, the writer and novelist can give it another meaning in some contexts, a new dimension and a contradictory indication that does not match the interpretation of the common term for prison.⁹⁸ Thus, for example, Dammaj presents the space of prison in this novel as a palace. The prison space is fixed, meaning that prison is not a space of movement and transition.⁹⁹ However, the prison, which is the palace in this novel, has a kind of space of movement and transition, even its limitations; the hostage could move inside the palace and enter the rooms to clean and tidy up. As for the transition of the hostage, when he accompanied the women of the Imam's palace to the palace of the crown prince, this was an adventure for the hostage because he wanted to visit the crown prince's palace after her grandmother's story about the crown prince's palace:

كنت اعرف من خلال ما سمعته بأن ولي العهد يتحفظ بهذه الحيوانات الكاسره في مطابقتها الحديدية المظلة على
ساحة القصر لكي يتسلى بها عندما يلقي في بعض الاوقات ببعض خصومه إلى أقفاصها، وبأنه كان يتلذذ برؤية ذلك
المشهد الذي تقشعر له الأبدان ويشيب له الولدان...على حد تعبير جدتي رحمها الله! هذا ما دافعني
للمغامرة¹⁰⁰

I knew from what I heard that the crown prince kept these predators in their iron cages overlooking the palace square in order to have fun with them when he sometimes threw some of his opponents into their cages, and that he enjoyed seeing this scene that which made the body's goose pimples and made the children older men... In the words of my grandmother, may God have mercy on her soul! This is what prompted me to venture¹⁰¹

The phrases “the crown prince kept these Predators” and “he sometimes threw some of his opponents into their cages” present to us the injustice of crown prince and the rule of the Imam

⁹⁸ Bahraoui, *al-shakal al-rū'ī*, p. 62.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.66.

¹⁰⁰ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p.82.

¹⁰¹ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

in northern Yemen. This quote mentions the reason for the hostage's curiosity about this visit, and at the same time exposes the Imam and the ruling authority's dealings with its opponents. The palace in this novel is a place for corruption a space representing the political and economic life in north Yemen during the Imam's era. Dammaj presents in the novel various human, social and political relations in the period of the rule of the Imams, that is, before the establishment of the republican rule in Sanaa. The novel focuses on the body, sexuality, palaces, and the ideology of the defunct Imami class. All the above happening inside the palace space is an attempt by the author to reflect the situation in the city of Sanaa, which has a large space within a specific or miniature space of the Imam's palace. The hostage rebellion in Imam's palace may symbolize the beginnings of the September revolution, which rejected a truce with the rule of the Imamate. However, the end of the novel remains open and does not confirm the safety of the hostage (revolution) from those checkpoints (Hafsa) who tries to catch up with him. The open end in the novel does not put an end to the events, but it is suitable to be the beginning of other events, given that this is a beginning, and this, in my opinion, is more beautiful and creative. The writer chose the open end out of experimentation and change, which is an attempt to get rid of the plot of the traditional novel (beginning, knot, and solution), and experiment with different novel structures. The open endings leave the reader the task of judging them, and incomplete endings help stimulate the imagination and push the reader, especially in the moments of the endings, to be an active and effective producer.

It seems that Dammaj embodies in this space the struggle for a revolution; as Al-Duwaidar presents the people from whom the Imam took their freedom and rights, and these people surrendered to reality. The hostage represents the revolutionaries of the people who refuse to submit and dreams of freedom and a better homeland.¹⁰² Despite the hostage's feeling of isolation and loss of freedom in the vast space of the palace, there is a place of freedom in his

¹⁰² Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p. 124.

room, which he shares it with his friend *Al-Duwaidar*.¹⁰³ In the old, small, narrow room, the hostage is always thinking in his state and in the struggle for freedom.¹⁰⁴ Every night, when the hostage finishes his work and goes to sleep, and he lays on the mattress on the floor next to his friend and looks through the window, contemplating his condition and how he could change his situation and escape from the palace.¹⁰⁵ This small space for the hostage is a space of relaxation and contemplation by looking at the stars and the moon as well as observing the mountain where his village lies behind it. And not only that, but the hostage also imagines a love story with Sharif Hafsa. He always imagines Hafsa in his room and draws her when he looks at the stars.¹⁰⁶ At this moment, the hostage gets rid of the class restrictions that prevent him from confessing his love to Sharif Hafsa. Dammaj embodies in the space the dream, freedom and human feelings of the hostage.¹⁰⁷ Because of all these feelings that the hostage could not overcome the internal struggle between survival and escape. It seems that this small and narrow space is providing the hostage with feelings of struggle and not giving up. This quote illustrates the suffering experienced by the hostage in the recent events of the novel and his internal struggle between survival and escape:

أصارع قلبي وعقلي ونفسيّتي المرهقة التي باتت تدفعني حثيثاً لممارسة كل ما يمارسه صاحبي وزميلي وصديقي من أشياء لم أقبل الإقدام عليها ولا حتى مجرد التفكير فيها منذ أن وطئت قدماي هذا القصر وملحقاته ومن فيه.. لكنني بألم بالغ ومذل حاولت جهدي أن أخرج من هذه الدوامة بأي حل¹⁰⁸

I struggle with my exhausted heart, mind, and emotional state, which is now pushing me to practice everything that my friend and roommate practices of things that I did not accept to do it or even think about since I set foot on this palace and its annexes and those

¹⁰³ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁴ Younis, *Al-jins- Al-aydūlūjia- Al-fadā' al- rūā'ī*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁶ Younis, *Al-jins- Al-aydūlūjia- Al-fadā' al- rūā'ī*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁸ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p. 73.

in it..But with great pain and humiliation I tried my best to get out of this whirlpool by any solution¹⁰⁹

From this quote “I struggle with my exhausted heart, mind, and emotional state” we see that the hostage tried hard to escape from the palace. This indicates that the hostage did not surrender to his situation. Instead, he is still searching for a solution “I tried my best to get out of this whirlpool by any solution.” The hostage is at odds with the palace space, as it is a dark space in which oppression, injustice prevails, and class struggles, so he resorts to his room, especially its window,¹¹⁰ hoping to see a flash, anticipating the horizons of freedom and change. We clearly deduce this from the following quote:

وبرغم التعب والإرهاق فلم أستطع النوم .. ظلت عيناى مشدودتين إلى النافذة الصغيرة والوحيدة الصادر منها ذلك
البيص من نور النجوم¹¹¹

Despite the tiredness and exhaustion, I could not sleep..My eyes remained fixed on the small and only window from which that glimmer of starlight was coming¹¹²

Dammaj tries to make this small space the only safe space “fixed on the small and only window from which that glimmer...” that brings comfort and reassurance to the hostage,¹¹³ but with that at the end of the novel, the hostage prefers the city space, so he escapes to the vast and tragic space as the hostage describes it from his room through the window. We conclude from the foregoing that spaces lacked the space of freedom, which was completely non-existent in the space of the Imam’s palace, and the hostage finds a glimmer of freedom in his room, but this is not enough for the hostage, as he believes that complete freedom is to escape to the city’s space. Thus, the emergence of the internal conflict in the hostage as manifested through the interaction of the hostage with the space of the palace/prison reflects the feeling of the possibility of

¹⁰⁹ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹¹⁰ Younis, *Al-jins- Al-aydūlūjia- Al-fadā’ al-rūā’ī*, p. 28.

¹¹¹ Dammaj, *Al-Rahīna*, p. 15.

¹¹² Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹¹³ Younis, *Al-jins- Al-aydūlūjia- Al-fadā’ al-rūā’ī*, p. 29.

capturing anyone. Although all the events in this novel are in one place, it carries abundant emotion through the internal struggle of the hostage. The third and last novel *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* also features emotional conflict, but does so through a nonlinear narrative structure that invites readers to experience this conflict and confusion first-hand.

4. *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra [The Ruined Queen]* by Habib Abd al-Rab Soruri

Al-Malika al-Maghdūra was published in French by L'Armatin Publishing House in 1998. It was translated into Arabic (the Adeni dialect) by Dr. Ali Muhammad in 2002, and was translated into several languages and won international awards. *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* is characterized by oppositions. The novel begins in the “Martyrs’ Café” in Sheikh Othman, one of the neighborhoods of the city of Aden, but the end of the novel takes place in a hospital in the French city of Rouen, between two queens on the verge of death: the queen of chess, and the mother of the narrator, who is being treated for cancer. The novel also describes the repressive conditions that prevailed in Aden in 1960s, where political terrorism, repression, arrests, and assassinations prevailed. While Baqeas focuses on the specificity of the city of Aden for this novel,¹¹⁴ I focus instead on its multiple temporalities.

In narrative theory, time refers to a set of temporal relationships, velocity, and succession, between spoken situations and locations and their narrative process, and between time, narrativity discourse, and the narrative process.¹¹⁵ Yaqtin mentions in his work *Tahlīl al-khitāb Al-rūā'ī* [Narrative discourse analysis] that narrative time falls into three categories: the morphological time of the story, the time of grammatical discourse, and the time of the semantic text. The novelist presents these narrative times in the novel to present the time in which the

¹¹⁴ Baqeas, *Thāmanūn ‘amaan min al-riwāya fī al-yaman*, p. 127.

¹¹⁵ Yaqtin, Saeed: *Al-sardī al-‘arabī: mafāhīm wa-tajalīyāt*. Ruya li-Inashr, Cairo. p.89.

events occur.¹¹⁶ For example, the narrative time or the morphological time of the novel goes through the system of narrative material within the limits of a historical time, which all situations in Aden, in particular, what happened in Sheikh Othman in 1960s- 1970s.¹¹⁷ The significance of the multiple temporalities of my reading of this novel and choosing the element of “time” to analyze is to help us understand the narrative structure of a novel and the writer's ability to narrate many events and abbreviate some of them without affecting the context and structure of the novel. In addition, the element “time” is the appropriate element to analyze in this novel because the writer moves between the past and the present in his memories and between two places; the city of Aden in Yemen and Rouen in France. The arrival of the narrator's mother in France for treatment prompts him to recall his memories and nostalgia for the past, as if he was moving between the past and the present as a result of these memories and visiting his mother. More specifically, the author plays with time to show how the past intrudes on the present for the narrator, reflecting the tension between the narrator's desire to connect with his childhood and his home country and the struggle to remember past trauma. The story of the broken chess queen is slowly unravelling over time: this reflects the difficulty of remembering the trauma of the past. This narrative style puts readers through the same experience of wrapping around trauma. Soruri recounts many of his own memories through the character of Naji. The novel begins when Naji returns a game of chess to his friend Shakib after Naji's father breaks the chess queen. This event about the chess queen is the primary event in the novel. The writer tells some memories and details before and after the breaking of the chess queen. The author does not at first specify how the chess queen was broken.¹¹⁸

Gérard Genette proposes the concept of the anachrony of time (*anachronies de temp*) as a way to characterize this type of temporal paradox. The anachrony of time occurs when the narrator

¹¹⁶ Yaqtin, Saeed: *Tahlīl al-khitāb Al-rūā'ī*. Al-markaz al-thaqāfī al-'arabī ,1993 Beirut. p. 61.

¹¹⁷ Soruri, Habib Abd al-Rab: *al-Malika al-Maghdūra*. L'Armatin, France, 1998. Translated into Arabic by Ali Muhammad Zaid. Yemen: Dar Al-Muhajir, 2002.

¹¹⁸ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*.

follows the sequence of events according to their order in the tale, then stops, returns to the past, remembers and recalls previous events to the point he reached in his narration.¹¹⁹ The temporal paradox occurs in several places in Soruri's novel, but the most prominent is when the narrator details the breaking of his chess queen—an event that repeatedly sends him back to the events of the past.¹²⁰ Soruri also uses anticipatory narration, or temporal prolepsis (prolepse), to flash forward to future events. These moments motivate the reader to anticipate an event or to predict the future of one of the characters, and may serve as an indication of the characters' visions or dreams. They also add suspense to the novel. In Soruri's novel, these anticipations depend on the narrator's return to past events that help the reader to predict the upcoming events in the narration.¹²¹ Sourire deploys this anticipation when Hashwan threatened Adnan, which further gives the reader an opportunity to imagine that Adnan could lose his life in the upcoming events of the novel. The following quote shows us this technique; when Hashwan moved to the city of Naji and his friend Adnan, causing them problems in their future lives, as Naji describes:¹²²

وربما نظر حشوان إلى عدنان باعتباره كائناً غريباً، لا هو كبش ولا هو راع. لا. إن هذا الافتراض الذي يدحض أكثر مسلماته يُعدّ ببساطة عبثاً لعل عدنان بدا له راعياً دون قطيع - مناقساً محتملاً عموماً - وهذا ما لا يمكن تحمّله أو بالأحرى كبشاً يطير بعيداً عن القطيع، وهذا ما لا يمكن السماح به¹²³

Hashwan may have viewed Adnan as a strange being, neither a ram nor a shepherd. No. This assumption, which refutes most of his postulates, is simply in vain, perhaps Adnan appeared to him as a shepherd without a flock - a potential competitor in general - and this cannot be tolerated, or rather a ram flying away from the flock, and this is what cannot be allowed¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 67.

¹²⁰ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*.

¹²¹ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 65.

¹²² Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 246.

¹²⁴ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

From the previous phrase Hashwan is the terrifying curse in Adnan's life, we can predict the fate of Aden's life or guess the upcoming events related to Adnan lost his life at the end of the novel. The writer does not detail the events but hints that Hashwan may be the reason for Adnan's fate. Adnan is Naji's best friend. As for Hashwan, he moved from the countryside to the city during the political turmoil in Aden, and he was jealous of Adnan's knowledge and fame in school and in the city. Thus, this technique invites the reader to predict about upcoming events. The second technique I would like to discuss and analyze is the concept of Flashback or Analepsis-External (Analepse).¹²⁵ The concept of Flashback in the novel is the opposite of the anticipation, and this violation of the flow of the narration and the timeline arises within the novel, a kind of secondary story, that is, a second story within the first.¹²⁶ There is in the novel *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* a secondary story besides the main story about the queen of chess, which is about a love story between the protagonist of the novel, Naji, his new classmate, and the same time his new neighbor.¹²⁷ Soruri recounts the details of this love story, its beginnings and endings, as well as memories and places he visited together, and not only this, but he remembers the time, whether it is night, sunset, day, and month. Here Naji mention that a few months after his first meeting with Ibtihal, he meet her again in the shop.

بعد بضعة شهور ارسلتني امي لأشترى رطلاً من الشاي وخمسة أرطال من السكر و كانت ابتهال هناك وحيدة. وكنت
أحمل منذ يومين كيساً من العنب¹²⁸

A few months later, my mother sent me to buy a pound of tea and five pounds of sugar, and Ibtihal was there alone. I had a bag of grapes two days ago¹²⁹

From the above quote "A few months later," it is easy to note that the writer frequently uses temporal connotations in representing the events of the novel. In addition, Sourir uses the

¹²⁵ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 59.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 60.

¹²⁷ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*. p. 129.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 132.

¹²⁹ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

analepse in several places in the novel. The analepse represents the past events that occurred before the narrative present, as the narrator mentions them during the narration and takes place outside the scope of the first narration with the aim of providing the reader with complementary information that helps him understand what happened and what is happening of events.¹³⁰ The selection of Naji's brother's participation in the Quran memorization competition is considered an example of this technique. Soruri refers to this event so that the reader can understand that Naji's brother has a good memory, and he excels.¹³¹ The aim of this event is an analepse to clarify a specific idea from the writer, which he explained.

After analyzing the elements of the order, in the next part I will study the elements of duration, which are pause, scene, summary and ellipsis. The concept of the pause and the scene are in any way contribute to slowing down the narrative. In the novel, there are many dialogue scenes, where the writer disrupts the narrative time at the expense of expanding the narration time, which makes the course of events slow.¹³² Soruri does this through the use of scene-based narration as well as by introducing narrative pauses. The unit of the scene encourages contrast between the time of the story and the time of writing.¹³³ The technique of the scene is based mainly on a long linguistically expressed dialogue and distributed alternating between the characters as it is known in the dramatic texts.¹³⁴ The purpose of this technique is to take a break between the events in the novel, and to give the reader the opportunity to think and to relate the previous events to the following events. In the following quote, Naji describes the look of Azal, a friend who is also one of the prisoners who struggles before the ruling and seeks liberation from the tyrannical regime. The description here came calm, without movement, because the

¹³⁰ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 75.

¹³¹ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p. 57.

¹³² Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 99.

¹³³ Bahraoui, *al-shakal al-rū'ī*, p. 165.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

narrator wants the readers imagine the features of the fighters and how they are different because of the experiences they went through, even if they were young.

كان أكثر جاذبية من أطفال حينا يتصرف دائماً بهدوء، وبود، وبطيبة وأدب مميزين. وكان لون عينيه أصفى من ألوان عيوننا، وبشرته أصفى من بشرتنا. وكان يتحدث بلكنة خفيفة غير محددة. كان بالنسبة لي سفير العالم الخارجي الذي يبتدىء فيما وراء البحر الواسع حول عدن. أحببت كثيراً ما كان يقص علي من قصص عاشتها أسرته. وشيئاً فشيئاً بدأت أعرف أذواقهم وذكرياتهم وأدهشتني حياة هؤلاء المعتقلين، اتساع ماضيهم وتعبيراتهم ونظراتهم.¹³⁵

He was more attractive than the children of our neighborhood, always behaving calmly, friendly, and distinguished with kindness and politeness. The color of his eyes was clearer than the colors of our eyes, and his skin was clearer than ours. He was speaking with a slight, indefinite accent. He was to me the ambassador of the outside world that begins beyond the wide sea around Aden. I loved the stories he told me about his family. Little by little, I began to know their tastes and their memories. I was astonished by the life of these detainees, the breadth of their past, their expressions and their looks.¹³⁶

This passage slows down narration through detailed description of Azal's features. This technique is in several places in the novel where show the people who were subjected to arrest. From the previous quotations, we note that the writer's style in this technique and describing the scenes was not limited to describing only the city but describing the people as well. This gives the reader a sense of pleasure and variety when reading and expands the reader's imagination.

The last part of the novel, which takes place in the French city of Rouen, is also shaped by Soruri's emphasis on the scene as a narrative unit. The narrator ends the novel in the French city of Rouen, specifically in one of its hospitals. Naji's mother and his brother have travelled to Rouen, France, to receive treatment in one of the hospitals there; Naji himself moved to the

¹³⁵ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p.127.

¹³⁶ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

city earlier. There is a dialogue about his mother's date of birth between Najj and his brother and the nurse, and this dialogue is long and takes up three pages 306, 307 and 308.¹³⁷ We conclude from the foregoing that the length of this dialogue had a significant role, because the writer had made it a means to increase his capacity to slow down the narrative and reduce its movement, thus reducing events. By interrupting narrative time and suspending of the story's course, the descriptive pause directs attention to the imbalance between the time of the story and the time of discourse.¹³⁸ Soruri introduces moments of descriptive pause throughout the entire novel. The novel begins with a description of the city of Sheikh Othman in Aden, where Najj was born and grew up and his childhood and a pause for contemplation in the character reveals to readers her feelings and impressions of the events. At the end of the novel, Soruri describes the French city of Rouen with a comparison between these two cities. He also describes Najj's mother morbid condition and the atmosphere that accompanied it. The narrator shows Najj's memories of his city Aden and the neighborhood in which he lived his childhood in the following quote:

لم يكن في الشيخ عثمان سوى شجرة واحدة تحاول بصعوبة أن تنمو. يشاهد المارة في حينها هذه الشجرة المعلم الأثري، الشجرة الوحيدة في الشيخ عثمان، وسط شارع النصر. أتذكر (وكان اثنتا عشرة سنة) حين بعثنا أبي إلى قرب لحج لجلب تربة صالحة للزراعة¹³⁹

There was only one tree in Sheikh Othman that was trying hard to grow. Pedestrians in our neighborhood see this tree, the archaeological landmark, the only tree in Sheikh Othman is in the middle of Al-Nasr Street. I remember (and I was twelve years old) when my father sent us to near Lahij to bring soil suitable for cultivation¹⁴⁰

The quote depicts a still and motionless scene, because the narrator wants to describe the nature in the neighbourhood. Moreover, Najj did not only live in Aden, but he has another memories

¹³⁷ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p.305.

¹³⁸ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, P. 112.

¹³⁹ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p. 125.

¹⁴⁰ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

in the city in south Yemen, which is Lahj. The next quote is an example of the descriptive pause related to Naji's mother's condition. It also demonstrates how this moment reminds the narrator of the details of his past and specifically of the event during which his chess queen was broken.

أعدت التفكير في اليوم السابق للجراحة ، مساء دخولها المستشفى عندما أرادت فقط أن تجلب الفرح لأرواحنا! هذا المريض الشاحب الباهت، لا يفكر إلا في جعلنا نضحك؛ إلا لمنحنا لحظة مرحة في غرفتها بالمستشفى. بقيت وفية لما يختصر حياتها كلها: لإعطاء السعادة¹⁴¹

I reconsidered the day before surgery, the evening of her hospitalization when she just wanted to bring joy to our souls! This pale and weak patient, thinking only of making us laugh and to give us a hilarious moment in her hospital room. She remained faithful to what sums up her whole life: to give happiness¹⁴²

From the past, Naji remembers the condition of his mother, as he knew her in the past, smiling at life and happy, although the disease took control of her body and she became pale in face, but the disease could not control of her soul, which it spreads happiness to those around her. The narrator uses phrases like “when she just wanted to bring joy to our souls” as well as “she remained faithful to what sums up her whole life: to give happiness” these vibes brought back the memory to Naji and his mother's attempt to bring happiness to his heart and ease his sadness after the chess queen was shattered.¹⁴³

Finally, I will next examine the last two techniques used by the writer in the novel, which are summary and ellipses. Soruri's use of summary and ellipses contribute to compressing events: a small clip can cover a long period of time from the story. The purpose of summary is to focus on important events, and to avoid lengthening the narrative. Summary is a kind of acceleration; it reduces many events into short periods.¹⁴⁴ In the narrative Soruri transforms several days,

¹⁴¹ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra* p. 349.

¹⁴² Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

¹⁴⁴ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 64.

months, or years of existence into a few paragraphs or a few pages, often without details of action or speech.¹⁴⁵ The following is an example of summary in *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, the author summarized what Najji lived through several years of escaping without addressing her in detail. Najji describes these years of escape instructive, as he was able to provide treatment for his mother in France.

أكان ينبغي على ان اضحك حتى ولو كنت حزينا، انا الذي فررت قبل كثير من السنين؟ ألم يتضح اليوم أن هذا الغياب
كان مفيداً؟ أكنت أستطيع استقدام امي للعلاج في فرنسا، حيث العلاج امتياز، دون هذا
الغياب؟¹⁴⁶

Should I laugh even if I was sad, that I ran away so many years ago? Didn't it turn out today that this absence was helpful? Could I have brought my mother for treatment in France, where treatment is a excellent, without this absence?¹⁴⁷

It is noticeable here that Najji wonders about the absence these years, but he did not address what are the events that occurred in these years and what is the reason for this absence. That is, the writer does not want the reader to focus on these events as much as he wants the reader to understand the feeling of a survivor suffering from the long absence from his mother and the benefit of this absence “Didn't it turn out today that this absence was helpful?.”

Novelists use ellipses to bypass certain stages of a story without indicating them. They refer to this technique during using a phrase such as "two years passed", "a least a few days" and so on. Ellipses is a model way of accelerating events in the novel by jumping events forward. There are three forms of ellipses: the explicit ellipses, the implicit ellipses, and the purely hypothetical ellipses.¹⁴⁸ Soruri uses this technique here again to build suspense and tension. He uses these types of ellipses prepared in several places in the novel. Genette defines the explicit ellipses as

¹⁴⁵ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 96.

¹⁴⁶ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p. 351.

¹⁴⁷ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹⁴⁸ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 106.

a specific or indefinite reference to the passage of time, which the writer expresses in very quick summaries or in very quick terms that indicate the passage of a period of time “a few years” “after two years” and then the narration begins again. These characterizing ellipses are one of the resources of novelistic narration.¹⁴⁹ In this type of ellipses, we find that the narrator is satisfied with referring to how long has it been of time without mentioning what happened during this period,¹⁵⁰ and this is what we find in the conversation between Naji and his friend Adnan a few months after of the incident of breaking the chess queen:

بعد بضعة شهور على مجزرتها؛ يوم قلت لعدنان معلماً على حدث من الأحداث الرئيسية في حياتي¹⁵¹

A few months after her massacre (break chess queen), one day, I told Adnan, commenting on one of the important events in my life¹⁵²

In the previous quote, the narrator omits the period after breaking his chess queen, and estimates it has been “a few months.” However, the narrator does not mention how has Naji been in these months and what was he doing during this period, and he just expresses it in one sentence. Soruri employs these phrases such as “two weeks later,” “after years,” “after few months,” in several places in *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*. This is for the purpose of advancing and accelerating events in the narrative as well as this is a way Soruri represents the gaps in memory caused by traumatic experience. As for the second type of ellipses, it is implicit ellipses. Implicit ellipses is not referred to it like using a clear phrase, but the reader can infer only these omitted events through from some chronological lacuna or gap in narrative continuity. That is, the novelist describes an event and then moves on to describe another event in the same sentence. Monitoring this type of ellipses in the narrative is somewhat difficult because it is not publicly announced in the text.¹⁵³ On page 29-30 in *Malika al-Maghdūra*, we find an example of the

¹⁴⁹ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 107.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p. 97.

¹⁵² Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹⁵³ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 108.

implicit ellipses.¹⁵⁴ When Adnan asked his friend Naji about his condition when he was absent-minded, but the narrator does not mention how Naji responded to Adnan's question, and he goes on to describe the place where Adnan and Naji were. In addition, on page 88 there is also implicit ellipses, where Soruri tries to narrate how the chess queen was broken, but he suddenly moves to describe the suffering of Naji's disease in the visual system as well as his suffering in detail, without explaining the incident of breaking the queen of chess took place. The novelist does not use this technique a lot in the novel, but he used it in some limited places only. When we went back to the previous two examples embodying this technique in the novel; it seems that the reader should infer from these implicit ellipses the events that are about to occur or that the author is trying to embody in an unheralded way.

The last type of ellipses is the purely hypothetical ellipses. Genette points out that the purely hypothetical ellipses is a form of implicit ellipses, meaning that the purely hypothetical ellipses is not explicitly stated in the novel. The reader has difficulty determining the hypothetical ellipses because of the ambiguity of his clues and the difficulty of the indications that determine the duration of the ellipses, the reader may need to rely on interruptions in time such as blank pages and silence.¹⁵⁵ The blank pages that the writer intentionally pages blank when moving between the chapters of the novel. And by silence we mean here the typical case in which the novelist stops completing the sentence by using (...) at the end of the sentence. When I examine *Malika al-Maghdūra*, I find that Sourir uses the hypothetical ellipses in several places in the novel. Sourir also uses the technique of the purely hypothetical ellipses in the novel in order to work on accelerating the pace of storytelling, and bypassing some events, and this creates an important space for interesting events. This can be seen, for example, when Naji refers to the

¹⁵⁴ Due to the length of the text, I do not quote these passages but refer instead to page numbers.

¹⁵⁵ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, p. 109.

situation of Hashwan's escaping from Aden after committing several crimes, including a crime against his friend Adnan:

أشاع حشوان أيضاً الشك حول هرب قريب نحو الشمال...¹⁵⁶

Hashwan also spread suspicion about a near escape to the north...¹⁵⁷

This quote focuses on the news of Hashwan's escape, and it is not important how he escaped or where he lives, because the writer does not want the focus to be on other unimportant details and he just adds the ellipsis "silence" at the end of the sentence. In the next quote the narrator gives the opportunity for the reader to imagine what happened or will happen, and it is one of the most used ellipses in this novel, and among the passages that bear this type of ellipses, we also find it in the following example, when Najj imagines and narrates the future situation in Aden as a result of the war at the time:

وسيسفك الدّمُ عما قريب، وتسقط رؤوس...¹⁵⁸

Blood will soon be shed, and heads will fall...¹⁵⁹

Here, Sourir tries to make the reader enter into a cycle of thoughts in which the reader tries to know this tragedy that will take place, in which "blood will be shed" and people will be killed. This also makes the reader confused and curious to complete the novel to know what will happen. In addition, Sourir uses this technique silence in following examples. When Najj asks when he was a child about the fate of children who come to life as a result of an illegitimate relationship. This arouses Najj's curiosity to know the answer to the question, that there was a similar accident in his neighborhood.

أية خطيئه ارتكبتها؟ فليكن مصير الابوين النار، لكن خالد، يا أبي، أية جريمة ارتكبتها؟...¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p. 294.

¹⁵⁷ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹⁵⁸ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p. 83.

¹⁵⁹ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹⁶⁰ Soruri, *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, p. 74.

What sin did he commit? Let the fate of the parents be hell, but Khaled, my father, what crime did he commit?...¹⁶¹

The rhetorical questions here invite the reader to ponder the fate of the children, but at the same time offer no details about the incident that occurred in the neighbourhood. It seems that the writer turns to silence in this problem of children, perhaps to draw attention to it. On top of that, the hypothetical ellipses (The blank pages) is represented in those spaces left before some chapters of the novel, as well as the space that comes immediately after the chapter ends with the page that was not filled. These spaces may perform a function that makes the reader think about previous events, as they constitute a blank separating the drafts that represent. And there are a blank pages between almost every chapter and chapter, which means, the writer used this technique, the blank pages a lot between the chapters of the novel. Thus, Soruri used the element of time in the novel to serve the narrative, and we have analysed the most important anachronies found in the novel, the order, which includes Anachronies (prolepsis, analepses) as well as the duration, which includes summary, scene, pause, and finally the ellipsis.

5. Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to raise awareness of Yemeni literature and draw the attention of researchers or those interested in this field, whose potential has been left largely untapped. There are very few studies on Yemeni literature, and through this thesis I try to give an adequate idea of the development of the novel in Yemen in the Twentieth Century, which may be helpful for reference later for those interested and scholars in this field. There remain many topics for future research, including the study of Yemeni literature during the British occupation period, the Yemeni novel after the Arab Spring, and future prospects for the Yemeni novel. Especially

¹⁶¹ Translations from Arabic are mine, unless otherwise stated.

since the events in Yemen at the present time are many and unexpected, whether on the political or humanitarian level, these events constitute fertile material and content for writers and researchers. Yemeni literature in general, including short stories, poetry, and folk singing, is also all deserving of attention by future researchers.

The second goal of this thesis has been to map the development of the Yemeni novel in the Twentieth Century. The three novels I analyze discuss Yemeni issues in three places, which are in North Yemen (Sanaa), South Yemen (Aden), and the situation of Yemeni immigrants outside Yemen (Java City and French city Rouen). This indicates that Yemeni writers have a high ability to discuss several issues of their country in various ways and employ the novel and its elements to present their ideas and their thoughts, whether these ideas are a call for social reform or a critique of the socio-political situation. From analyzing these three different novels through the lens of character, place, and time, I also show that each narrative is characterized by struggle. In the novel *Fatāt Qarut*, the conflict is a struggle of identity and the search for oneself, while in the novel *Al-Rahīna* it is an internal struggle between accepting or rejecting reality as well as strive to change it. In the last novel *Al-Malika al-Maghdūra*, the struggle is about childhood memories or a struggle to remember the trauma of past childhood through the transition between the past and the present.

By analyzing these three novels together, I show the ability of Yemeni writers to make use of the novel as a genre and gain recognition not only from Yemeni critics and audiences, but also Arab and international readers. Despite the humble beginning of the Yemeni novel, this thesis demonstrates that Yemeni novelists have successfully mastered narrative developments important to the success of the modern novel.

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