

## The Iraqi Novel and Images of Changing the Customary Situations Inherited in The Countryside

By

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### Abstract

The novelists of that period represented the historical and artistic tool to embody the aforementioned transformation of the nature of the prevailing values. Some of the fictional works expressing the totality of the above- mentioned transformations were characterized by artistic quality at that stage. Others were declarative with a purely educational inclination.

**Keywords:** Bedouin culture, urban culture, clear impact, aforementioned transformation

### Introduction

In the recent fifty years of the past decade, the Iraqi countryside witnessed drastic transformations in many of its social and intellectual values and traditions because of the well-known political shifts happened in Iraq. Iraqi novel diagnosed many of the positive changes in the time. This intrigued us to pay attention to many important aspects of it. For example, its narration of situations, events, and fake or real characters through its different conversations. It embodies the basic dimensions for these transformations and through two paths. The first discussed the transformation of the abstract concepts of traditions to modern human connotations. The second section discussed the new level in clinging on the good spiritual values.

It is known that the rural environment in Iraq is the main source for the consolidation of many social phenomena and folk traditions inherited and their frequency from previous generations of Bedouin origins (Ali al- Wardi: 1965). However, what the Iraqi countryside witnessed in the last fifty years of the last century of clear political and economic transformations, the city had a great impact on its emergence, has greatly affected the nature of its social structure, consequently, many of its backward values and habits have changed, which prompted many writers of the realistic (modern) novel in Iraq, especially those who descended from a peasant origin, to address this phenomenon, in an artistic (analytical) manner, focusing on the problems of this society as it faces the developed world of the city, explaining the new images, resulting from the collision of the values of each of them with the other, following with a historical awareness and an artistic study the nature of the movement (the cultural in determining the path of social transformation of the new village community (Alaa al-Din al-Bayati: 1975; Abd al-Ilah Ahmed: 1966).

The modern realistic novel has dealt with these advanced social relations through two tracks. The first of them depicted the process of transformation of the totality of (absolute) self-concepts characterized by the negative nature of inherited traditions into contemporary human connotations characterized by a positive character. While the second depicted the development of relationships (emotional and family), especially with regard to rural women.

***The first section: The transformation of subjective (absolute) concepts of inherited traditions into contemporary human connotations***

The (modern) novel focused its attention in dealing with the inherited concepts on highlighting the positive (bright) aspects of those concepts. The novel spoke about the phenomenon of (traditional battles) that the Iraqi countryside witnessed and still is, through a new concept. The incident of the battle between the persistent farmer (Hashem) and the reluctant (Hussain) in the narration of the thirsty ones by al-Matlabi is considered a manifestation of standing up to the malicious forces in the countryside, especially if we know that Husayn had led the call to emigrate from the land, and mockery of Hashem and his father because of their clinging to their position. And their insistence on digging the well -

the symbol of life and goodness in the village - As well as his moral vulgarity, embodied in the deception of Hasna and Halima, who pushed her to commit suicide because of his abandonment of her and his repudiation of his promises to marry her legally. For all manifestations of selfishness and social injustice, Hashem's battle with Hussein erupted, and it almost led to Hussein's life as punishment for his many evils. He put it in front of him, saying sharply: ((You say what is my business.? O dog. you laugh at people's women. you bastard. You devoured her to leave her.)) (Abdul Razzaq Al-Matlabi: 1967).

For the same motives, the hired farmer (Farhan) in the novel (The Departed) by Qasim Khudair hold The son of the exploited landowner (Thamer) in his hands and wiped the ground with it and threw himself on him and started hitting and kicking him until he almost killed him. Had it not been stopped by the peasants (Qasim Khudair Abbas: 1969).

His patience ran out when he heard Thamer insult him because of Hasna of Farhan's daughter, and this is what prompted the sheikh to expel Farhan from the land without feeling remorse, because he defended human values represented in his freedom, dignity and humanity. If those battles of an "individual character" have derived contemporary connotations, then the phenomenon of "revenge," which has distant historical roots and established customary principles, which has historically been known as a negative manifestation of Bedouin and a witness to the absence of the city, has also been subjected to violent shocks due to intellectual and political development, it was emptied of its traditional (destructive) content and its (fossilized) concept was uprooted from the souls of its owners and transformed into a sublime human concept, represented in uniting efforts to take revenge against the forces of oppression and exploitation, in its various forms and images, especially those that contributed to the oppression of the toiling forces of workers and peasants (( This is because the personality reflects the values, beliefs and civilized development of the era, as is well known) (Suhair Al-Qalamawi: 1975).

Al-Rubaie embodied this transformation in the farmers' vision to banish this phenomenon in his novel (The Moon and the Walls), when he pushed (Sheikh Ali) who has a high position among the peasants - after he gained it from his early departure to the city and his distant travels that provided him with experiences and expertise that dazzled the listeners - to

An attempt to convince the people of his village - who attended the condolence council on the soul of the steadfast farmer (Abd) after he was killed by the feudal (Mansour Al-Radi) - to the necessity of deliberation in taking revenge on Mansour, Reducing their insistence on expediting it. After he explained to them the reality of the corrupt political country in that period, and the location of feudalism in it, aiming to draw their attention to the source of exploitation represented by the system that created feudalism and

committed itself to protecting it, trying to bring down their resentment and directing their hatred towards it, and thus urging them to take revenge on it through revolution, saying:

((When the hour of revenge comes, you will take revenge not only for a Abd, but for all the other peasants he killed)) (Abdul Rahman Majid Rubaie: 1976).

There is no doubt that the narrator was very successful when he made the end of his novel open, assuming optimistic gestures that indicate the achievement of his goals, embodied in a (Kamil) comment on his mother's speech after his release from prison in warning of the ruthless authority indulging in terrorizing people and imprisoning them, saying: ((They want many things from us and we must confront them with what we want and seek, that we are in a battle with them, and we have to fight it to the end, this is what I reached in these four days that I spent in their prison. Then he smiled at Kawthar and asked her:

- Are you with me? She hesitated a little, then answered in a soft, trembling voice:
- You said right. She swallowed her saliva to expel the rest of her voice of hesitation, and she adds:
- Aziz often told me that there was a vendetta between us and them.
- Not one revenge, but many revenge) (Abd al-Rahman Majid al- Rubaie: 1976).
- This clever gesture from Kawthar, confirming what Kamel said, revealed the growing pioneering sense of this phenomenon, employing it for new goals, and transforming it from its negative, private dimension into a general positive framework, full of human longing to build the good world on the wreckage of unjust exploitative systems.

Perhaps the writer's choice of the ruling feudal system, as an alternative to the feudal, to take revenge, was a bit of an exaggeration, especially if we know that the peasants from the village of Abu Haun did not reach - at that stage - the intellectual level that qualifies them to be convinced of this idea at first sight, especially as it touches the core like them.

It is an invitation to remain silent about the crimes of feudalism in the countryside, in anticipation of what the writer hopes for a revolution that will overthrow the system in the city.

Only then do they take revenge on all the peasants, for he strips them of their right to defend themselves, not by killing him, but by more confrontation within the countryside, at least, and thus be honest in recording their historical role in resisting oppression within the countryside, without leaving the issue hanging on the quantities, or the efforts of others. Of the city's residents.

And (Al-Matlabi) brings us to another reality, where the new reality after the July 1958 revolution, as the author finds an opportunity to highlight the contemporary formula of revenge, from feudalism away from murder, where the hard work and heroic determination of the peasants to build a productive reality with a (socialist) orientation faces The interests of the exploiting class in the remnants of feudalism, represented by the exploited owners (Einad) and the subordinate of the reformer (Hamad), and then eliminating them (economically).

Saeed (falling apart) remembers the details of the killing of his father and the father of (Mahdi) by the father of the exploiter (Einad) and the Sarkal (Abu Hamad) and their displacement:

((And his mother curved on him until he became a man. He asks his mother, and she says to him: They killed your father... also they killed Abu Mahdi.

My mother said to me: The land is gone. they took it. and I was crying when I was young.  
Mahdi says: I do not forget, Saeed..and you forgot him? Bullets roll over the ceilings of our house.

Women scream and men shout.

Jaber Abu Hamad was with him.

My mother says, stroking her cheeks: ((It is all from the Sarkal Jaber. Is there no one among you to kill him?

?)). O Mahdi. his father is with his father. and he is with his son.) (Abd al-Razzaq al-Muttalib: 1971).

Abbas Zain says: The days will come and he will see with his own eyes.

They did not threaten to kill the sons of their fathers' killers, but rather threatened them with revenge through their cooperative narrative project, which would destroy their exploitative entity.

As for the storyteller (Qasim Khudair: 1969), he tried to confirm the role of the exploitative forces in the countryside and behind them colonialism in consolidating this habit, and harnessing it in negative, malevolent directions, while making his toiling peasants view it from a contemporary angle, which they acquired through the experiences of the years after the July 1958 revolution.

The farmer (Shakir), who was imprisoned despite his injury as a result of the reckless farmer (Shaalan) aggression against him, contented himself with raising the matter to (Mr. Jaber) of social and religious standing to consider the matter, because the peasants were disappointed in the position of authority, as it actually happened, and avoided the escalation of the conflict to the level of retaliation, as was the custom (Qasim Khudair Abbas: 1969).

He is a member of his class, and he is a victim of backward reality, bearing that sense of humiliation, because forgiveness for the abuser in the Nayef family does not mean anything but cowardice, all for the sake of a further goal, represented by eliminating the (internal conflict) of the same class.

In another place, the storyteller showed us the intransigence of the exploited owner (Abu Thamer), and his insistence on taking revenge for his injured son, despite his conviction that he was the aggressor, so we find him, not even caring about his son's safety because of his interest in knowing the killer.

My son Thamer. Tell me who he is and I know how to deal with him .. I am your father and do not think that I will let your blood go to waste. Just tell me his name and even if he hides in the sky I will take

your revenge on him. I must take your revenge on him. Tell me who he is. Tell me and don't let me suffer?

I must kill him. Uh. Uh, if I knew him, as he did not stop asking about the culprit, as if his son's life was first and foremost related to the culprit (Qasim Khudair Abbas).

The narrator has succeeded in achieving his intellectual goal through a convincing artistic framework, despite his involvement in some (acceptable) exaggerations. Like a father's concern for the killer's knowledge more than his son's safety.

- ***The new level of clinging to spiritual values***

The modern realistic novel dealt with the phenomenon of (clinging to spiritual values) in the countryside, and the shady nonsense that accompanied it with the passage of time, created by colonialism and its helpers from the exploited owners, and some of the preachers claiming jurisprudence in the countryside with a desire to obtain money and food. Exploiting the social and psychological reality of the Iraqi peasant, who is of Bedouin origin, through their sermons and sermons on religious occasions, on the one hand, it presents them with wonderful stories that embody the values of masculinity, courage and chivalry, and evokes in them the tendencies of the Bedouin culture that lurks in the depths of their souls. While on the other hand, it presents them with stories full of sadness and sorrow, allowing them to vent about the diseases, grievances and harassment they suffer in their lives (Ali al-Wardi: 1965).

The modern novel focused its attention on the influential aspects of this phenomenon, which in one way or another indicated the growth of attitudes rejecting its negative effects. and its reactionary concepts, despite the social sensitivity that these attitudes provoke in the countryside.

There is no doubt that the factors of the ignorance, or the hateful illiteracy that prevailed in the Iraqi countryside, until a recent period in its history, were the main reason for the spread of (negative) beliefs among the peasants, strengthening the roots of ignorance in them.

However, the last period of the rural life witnessed some manifestations of rebellion against many rigid templates of backward traditions, and the easing of clinging to their concepts hindering the movement of economic and social development, as well as transforming the implications of some of them into good concepts and values.

The revolution of the twentieth century and its various repercussions had the merit of pioneering in the field of the emergence of signs of social reform, this reform that began to expand with the opening of the rural world to the civilized world of the city. Then came the revolution of July 14, 1958, which caused a violent shock to this backward reality and a deliberate beginning to spread political, economic and social awareness that was destined to change many outdated beliefs.

When the revolution actually began to demolish the old reality, and implement its agricultural policy, aimed at building the (developed) countryside, represented by building the new farmer, armed with cultural awareness, which qualifies him to build his better future, away from all manifestations of social backwardness, represented by myths, legends, outdated beliefs and some tribal concepts and the ossified sectarianism, benefited from the introduction of schools, literacy centers and libraries, and the delivery of radio and television as media aimed at changing many of the backward cultural and social concepts of the peasants in the countryside. Therefore, the novelists were keen to distribute the championship to several personalities, so all of them seemed like mirrors through which small and big events were reflected, especially at the Al-Rubaie (Sabri Muslim: 1980).

The storyteller (Abdul Rahman Al-Rubaie) has dealt with some of these aspects from its positive side, employing its bright heritage connotations to enrich its developed reality, with a contemporary vision that is reflected in the upbringing of the immigrant farmer (Hamid) for his sons and directing them to acquire high ideals of justice and strength in the right, because the phenomenon of forced migration from the countryside To the city, despite



its negatives, had a great impact on the positive transformation for the better in the cultural and humanitarian aspects in general (Riyad Ibrahim Al-Saadi: 1969). Al-Rubaie

embodied this issue through some heritage paintings with religious connotations hanging in the house. That is because the walls of the room were decorated with pictures of Al-Hussein and Al-Abbas fighting their opponents, led by Al-Shammar bin Dhi Josh. There are also other pictures of some of the holy shrines stuck to the mats with dough. Hamid used to prevent his sons from hanging any picture of a woman from those colorful shops filled with (Abd al- Rahman al-Rubaie: 1976).

It is clear that (Al-Rubaie) when he tried to use the folklore with (religious) connotations to enrich his anecdotal experience, he aimed to highlight the positive and constructive side in that historical illustrated battle, by insisting on hanging the image that expresses the rare heroism and courage in the path of truth and freedom and restoring the true face of Islam, aiming To the inspiration of his sons for the ideals carried by that expressive image. At the same time, it was forbidden for them to hang pictures of women spread in magazines, in order to avoid their various harms and the subjective feelings that it might suggest to them, directing them to what he wants for them from a sound morality and conscious insight, to see a happy future for them and their society.

His two sons, Abbas and Kamel, had a progressive national upbringing, due to which they endured the constant arrest of the reactionary security authorities.

Not only did the author draw inspiration from (Heritage) in its positive aspect to deepen his social paintings, but also benefited from the positive connotations of some religious rituals, while condemning the negative connotations that they carried. As Sheikh Ali did with Umm Yasser after she lost her only son to relieve her psychological anxiety, saying to her husband: I will write an incantation for Umm Yasir and advise you to send it to visit Al-Hussein (Abdul Rahman Al-Rubaie: 1976). Therefore, it sincerely aims to try to alleviate the suffering faced by their stricken neighbor (Umm Yasser) using psychological treatment represented by incantation and visiting Hussein (the oppressed) to drown out her grief and affliction over her son with the affliction of Hussein (peace be upon him) in the battle of Karbala.

Perhaps this model of ritual employment has benefited many novelists, using its connotations for good purposes coupled with the condemnation of backward phenomena for its use in the countryside.

The farmer (Zahra) in the novel of the thirsty resorted to God alone in her hope to fulfill her dream of marrying her cousin (Hashem), who fell in love with (Hasana) after she did magic for him in partnership with her mother, but their shameful deed ultimately brought them nothing but (Disappointment) in his possession, he returned to the arms of his cousin (Zahra) (Abdul Razzaq Al-Muttalib: 1967).

As for the narrator (Muhammad Shaker Al-Sabaa), he directly condemned the outdated beliefs after they were exposed, ridiculed, and insulted their owners and promoters in the countryside, represented by Mr. Kazem, the village preacher who told his dream to Razia, telling her the reasons for her husband (Saleh) to stay away from her.

(Razia) asked her husband's friend (Mahmoud) about his deteriorating condition. He told her that because of his work as a fisherman for the exploiter Hajj (Sabti), who was

himself, a fisherman belonging to his father previously. She replied:

(Not right. In fact, one of the righteous saints sent servants of angels to rob a his mind. I am afraid), and she told him a dream (Mullah Kazem). Mahmoud exclaimed:

- Damn him, Mulla Kazem. This man is a phantom factory that never stops.
- Who is he? Is that good man who carries a long sword and prevents
- Saleh from doing what he specified for her?
- (Mahmoud) closed his eyes, waiting for the storm: “Either orchard visitor or Hajj Sebti. The exploiters... The storm came. Razia had jumped violently trembling. She said.
- Oh infidel, how dare you speak of the righteous? ...but Mahmoud caught her and made her sit:
- You are brainless, woman..Do you believe that good men carry swords to threaten poor humans?. who said this? Why are they good, then?)) (Muhammad Shaker Al-Saba’: 1972) There is no

doubt that we see the new method that the novelist used in explaining some of the psychological situations of his characters, he tried to link situations to the economic factor, as it was (Saleh) the hunter in his psychological crisis with the exploiter (Septi) away from the thinking of his deceived wife (the sick) according to the allegations of the village charlatan.

This new trend in condemning the negative manifestations of spiritual belief and spiritual tendency embossed with a framework of myths covered most of the novels of this trend in the novel (Abdul Mohsen Taha Badr: 1963, 1973), in addition to strengthening the call for the rule of practical logic in the interpretation of the new reality, as well as it was able to to consciously achieve a balance between historical facts and technical facts without resorting to exaggeration and fabrication (Baqer Jawad Al-Zahji: 1980, 2016).

## **Research Results**

1. The cross-fertilization of Bedouin culture with urban culture had a clear impact in achieving the desired positive environmental transformation of the new rural values.
2. The novelists of that period who descended from a rural origin represented the historical and artistic tool to embody the aforementioned transformation of the nature of the prevailing values.
3. Productive relations in the Iraqi countryside were affected by the legislation of the agricultural reform law in 1958, which represented the psychological and intellectual motivation of the elite of the educated people from the countryside, to adopt positive transformations in the countryside, especially the talented storytellers among them.
4. Some of the fictional works expressing the totality of the above- mentioned transformations were characterized by artistic quality at that stage, while others were characterized as declarative with a purely educational inclination.
5. The ideological and social aspect of the novel, based on the texts, represented the most influential space in the intellectual aspects of rural people, as it touches the historically rooted psychological nature of the village community.

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