

The Impact of Ideological and Psychological Dimensions in the Novel "Azazel" by Youssef Zaidan

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Abstract

The current research aimed to identify the ideological and psychological dimensions in the novel Azazel by Youssef Zaidan. The events of Azazel's novel took place in a number of cities and towns whose cultural and historical landmarks that the writer intended to show, namely: the city of (Jerusalem), the city of (Alexandria), the city (Assiut), the city (Antakya), the city (Aleppo) and the town of (Samalut), so it is noted that the novelist's place in the novel "Azazel" was distinguished by its diversity and multiplicity, which had the greatest impact on the life of the monk (Heba) during his journey, because his lack of stability in one place indicates his confusion, and it is a reflection of the confusion of contemporary man. The devil "Azazel" in this novel was the instigator of the beautiful evil that will bring Heba out of his silence to tell his many tales about religion, injustice, man, love, oppression, philosophy and music, about imperfect justice and human greed that are boundless, and violence which will not be prevented by the fold of the Lord from being prolonged and entrenched.

Keywords: The Impact, Ideological and Psychological Dimensions, the Novel "Azazel, Evil.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Since the beginning of the last decade of the last century, the Arabic novel has witnessed big development today, a movement of permanent renewal in its forms and contents, which show begging the forms of rebellion against the ready ones from modification, to invent the innovations of others that are capable of diversifying their languages and techniques to depict, transform, absorb and debate the emergency and a new construction for translation and history.

Youssef Zaidan is considered one of the most innovators in the Arabic novel, and the most prominent contributor to make it a peer to the world novel and historical facts as a product of human action through narrative combinations of imaginary worlds that cross the interiors of the characters. Revealing the depth and complexity in them, and delve into the crisis of social reality that governed by false cultural patterns in which the religious, the political and the social are intertwined, to remove the mask and the ideal character that tagged with it.

In this context and the context of experimenting with the capabilities of the narrative text in melting and transforming other epistemological texts from the religious and historical heritage, with their knowledge, experiences, and backgrounds into a narrative cultural text that opens its wide spaces for historical imagination. Self-narration, religious and societal accountability that through it, the great Egyptian novelist wrote his masterpiece "Azazel".

The novel is using a retrospective narration technique, and narrates the life of the monk Heba who came from southern Egypt, and his birthplace is Alexandria. Carrying to her his hopes that he will acquire medical sciences, ascend the ranks and positions of Christian monasticism, and where the sufferings that will fill himself with wounds and cracks, will begin and will take him from them on a spatial and psychological journey to cross monasteries and ideas. His absolute faith turned into doubt and confusion. Their secret was in his heart and mind, heading towards the house of the Lord, Jerusalem, where he would practice medicine for many years and interrupt him to worship, trying to forget the doubts and confusion that had haunted him since he saw the death of the teacher of time, the philosopher Hypatia, the symbol of science and knowledge. As a result of a campaign launched against her by Pope Ecclesiastes in his sermon, and by the hands of the violent monk named Peter, who pulled her from her chariot and made her body permissible for every Christian who attended the Pope's sermon and heard his incitement to kill every pagan in Alexandria. Heba tried to forget the beautiful Octavia, the symbol of femininity, love and life that died over the body of a teacher of time "Hypatia", trying to protect her.

Heba met Nestorius in the Church of the House of God after the wounds and scrapes of the Alexandrian pain had almost healed, and the waves of doubt that resulted from it. So, he woke him up by asking him about Alexandria and what happened there at the time. He almost forgot everything, so they exchanged discussions about issues in doctrine and politics, so Nestorius' answers to Heba's questions agreed with what the latter's mind settled on. This was reflected in his feelings of love and appreciation for Nestorius. Forbidding everything that has to do

with life, and his steadfastness will be defeated and collapsed in front of the charming beauty of Marta and her chaotic singing voice. Then, the novel restores at its end the awe of the human being who desires to become angelic by taking the path of monasticism, hoping to ascend their positions to humanity.

The narration in the novel depends on a linear time course that narrates the private and public from the life of the monk Hiba, establishing a social and historical narrative that does not recognize the distances drawn by the historian and the clergyman between what is psychological subjective and what is historical, social and religious. He invests in many fields of knowledge to reconsider the historical and societal-religious, in penetrating and interrogating the depths of the human soul, in a language that tends sometimes to direct and declare in the narration of events, at other times to the aesthetic and poetic brimming and imbued with the values of love, honesty and serenity. Revealing and acknowledging the depth in the soul of prestige, in the narration of his thoughts and dreams, and his stray reflections, fantasies and delirium to draw paintings that reflect the reality of the psychological and esoteric human being in its various states. To construct new and different perceptions of the dominant and dominant of ideas that make the church and the clergy in general an angelic being, making Zaidan's narrative text an artistic construct that reveals and exposes the reality of the inner and outer world of the main character Heba. A deep research that monitors the relationship of the self with belief and history, and makes room for discussion of the social-religious conflict that the text takes many different forms.

1.2 Research Questions

The general framework of the research is determined by raising the following questions:

- What are the ideological and psychological dimensions in the novel Azazel by Youssef Zaidan?
- What are the manifestations of the ideological and psychological conflict in Azazel's novel?
- How did Azazel's novel treat the ideological and psychological reality of humanity?
- What is the impact of Azazel's novel on Arabic literature?

1.3 Research Objectives

The current research aims to reveal and analyze the ideological and psychological issues in Azazel's novel. In addition, finding out the literary facts that stand behind the novel.

1.4 Research Benefits

The scientific benefit of the research lies in contributing to raise the library of literature with a balance of knowledge that works to develop aspects of research in it.

1.5 Research Methodology

The current research is based on the literary analysis method that explains the ideological and psychological issues in the novel “Azazel” by Youssef Zaidan.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Concept of the Novel in Arabic Literature, and Ideological and psychological Conflict in Social Literature

A novel is a series of events that narrated in a long prose narrative that describes fictional or realistic characters and events in the form of a serial story. With its description, dialogue, and conflict between the characters, and what this entails of crisis, controversy, and nourishment of events, the character in the novel is the one who attracts the reader or listener to them. So, making the right choice for them is very important. To make the right choice, the characters must be three-dimensional like the rest of life's characters: people with fears and hopes, people with weaknesses and strengths, and people with one or more goals in life.ⁱ

La Hero: He is the central figure in a literary work, and his personality is always flexible and capable of change. He is dominated by the following ten features on which the novel is built to its end:

- a) He stumbled into the events because there was a challenge in front of him.
- b) He refused this challenge.
- c) Force himself to accept the challenge.
- d) Traveling the way of attempts.
- e) Gather his powers and allies.
- f) Face the evils that are trying to defeat him.
- g) Periods of self-darkness and despair, after which relief comes.

- h) A strong belief that enables him to face difficult situations.
- i) Facing evil again, then suddenly right triumphs.
- j) The student moves from the stage of their learning to a teacher who teaches other lessons.ⁱⁱ

The opponent: They are the forces with which the hero struggles and who presents the element of evil at the same time. Evil may be presented in a simple or complex form with multiple events and personalities. The opponent is not only a person who is trying to defeat the hero and win over him. It is possible that the hero's struggle is psychological with wrong behavior and decisions that he is trying to overcome.

Both good and evil characters may undergo a better change in behavior, and this is another type of conflict resolution "character change" and not just the victory of the hero over the opponent.

Auxiliary (secondary) characters: If the novel focuses on one or two heroes (the forces of good and evil), several other characters complete the construction of the novel and are called auxiliary or secondary characters. They may not have a major role, but it is essential, and without them, events would not be complete.ⁱⁱⁱ

2.2 The Plot

It is the progression of the story's events towards the solution. There are two types of plot events:

- 1- The typical plot: It is in which the events proceed in the usual manner from the natural beginning of the events, then the natural sequence in the occurrence of the crisis, after that, its escalation and an attempt to solve it.
- 2- The complex plot: It is in which the events begin with the end, and then the events that led to them are

reviewed, that is, the writer begins with the knot and then tries to solve it.

Some critics believe that the plot is an important element without which the novel does not exist. However, it can be dispensed with if the writer does not see the importance of his role, or if he finds an alternative that he can resort to achieve the same goal.

The internal conflict of the novel grows through the narrator who takes a clear ideological position, seeks to consolidate it and demonstrate its strength and quality through events, and the characters in the novel and their sometimes raging struggle. However, the writer's voice in reality or his ideology is present among the multiple opposing voices since the beginning of the novel.^{iv}

However, these voices fade in front of the narrator's voice that identifies with the author's personality, or the author's personality identifies with the narrator's personality, and this is what prompts us to link the two characters in a way that converges with the biography that flirts with the spirit of the novel from afar, but it is not rooted in it and does not go deeper, so we have no evidence. The conclusive claim is that the novel echoes the autobiography, or self-treatment of some of the life events that the writer went through, lived through, or heard about in the town in which the events take place.

The realism that seemed clear in some of the events of the novel and its characters is what leads us to say that there is a rapprochement between the narrator and the author, which makes the novel more like a biography, as many of the events that the narrator recounted took place in his village and the neighboring villages, and this is what makes us say that the novel is closer to

treatment. The ideology of author's reality and vision in life does not initially constitute the writer's opinions only, except one side of the ideological struggle, and the reader does not pay attention to the writer's project until after he has finished reading the work. The author has sought to serve his ideological narrative through the narrative text, employing the omniscient or omniscient narrator technique to express this tyrannical societal reality. Or unintentionally, it was created by the dominant narrative and ideological events and imposed on the novel.^v

He knows what you know and what you do not know and sees what you see and what you do not see, and he is the official spokesman for her, so the reader hears nothing but his voice and does not see things except through his point of view. He tells us what she said, what she saw, what she heard, what she thought, and how she acted. This artistic technique of the narrator's image appears to be an expression of the overlap between the novel as an artistic and aesthetic component and the ideology, which transforms the novel into a vision or a way to create its world. On the violent reality and the only prevailing opinion in society, just as the all-knowing narrator is the best technique to express the idea of nationalizing and domesticating thought that prevailed in the political reality at the time of the novel, and imposed itself as a lived reality.^{vi}

It was the most honest, ideological and artistic expression, as it left its strong presence within the reader who psychologically identifies with the society of the novel and with its reality to collide the reality of the intellectual tyranny that dominates the society through the conflicting ideologies around it at that time. In fact, it is the voice of power, as well as ideologies of violence that are rumored to be the only ones that have the absolute right, absolute truth and absolute faith, as well as the ideologies of the

cultural elites that transcend society and build for themselves ivory towers that lie within them. The vision adopted by the ideological discourse of the novel reveals the lived reality, employing artistic identification with it until the blurring that obscures vision and understanding from the reader collapses. For the novelist's text to reformulate his point of view or his vision of life and society around him, and then try to change this reality that is alien to humanity and free thought.^{vii}

2.3 The Social and Psychological Literature of Youssef Zaidan

As the reason for its appearance appears in the posterior aspect, the narration, the aspect, the apparent aspect, and the human aspect, and the discourse he presents as understudy in the transitional stage between a complex study in a heritage vision, and obtaining a heritage and realizing the future, and gave the future a contemplative background at the highest levels of expression of human existence.^{viii}

In the eyes of many, the novel carries special energy that enables the novelist to adopt it as a means of discourse and communication with others, which makes him resort to it to say things that he cannot say in his direct intellectual speeches, and it sacrifices this as a means of incitement and change to reach a conclusion that serves as indications of the path that it should be imitated. Knowing that the novel in the present day no longer gives an explanation or a solution to the world, as it did at one time, but rather it only sets meaningful questions, even if you do not answer them.

The novelist may look at his literature as part of a political work in its advanced and civilized sense, and he may adopt it as an effective means to make people more aware and sensitive, and

more aware of their reality, which the intellectual discourse may not achieve, because it may not be a sufficient means of persuasion. It is also subject to denial and crushing by the discourse owners. The difference is while the novel takes the character of the story and pretends to be neutral.^{ix}

When the novelist carries a certain intellectual position, he necessarily seeks to use a hidden cover to pass the positions through, otherwise, the structure of the novel disintegrates and becomes defective. Whenever the author penetrates his text from the inside to be understood, the text loses some of its heat. Whenever the author goes too far for fear of confusion, his text leads to destruction, because the literary text does not reveal its secrets, and because its continuity is conditional on the author's ability to refrain from declaring to allusion.^x

Chapter Three: Method and Procedures

3.1 A Glimpse of the Biography of Youssef Zaidan

Youssef Mohammed Ahmed Zaidan is a university professor, writer and Egyptian philosopher, and a specialist in the Arabic manuscript heritage and its sciences. He has several books and scientific research in Islamic thought, mysticism and the history of Arab medicine. He has literary contributions to published novels, and he has periodical and non-periodic articles in several Arab newspapers. He worked as director of the Manuscript Center in Alexandria in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

Youssef Zaidan was born on June 30 in 1958, in the city of Sohag, the center of Saqalta in the village of Al-Awamiya, Nag Al-Sakia in Upper Egypt, and moved to Alexandria with his grandfather when he was a young child and studied in its schools.

He joined the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts at Alexandria University. Youssef Zaidan obtained his scientific certificate, which was Bachelor of Philosophy degree from the Faculty of Arts, Alexandria University in 1980.

He obtained a Master's degree in Islamic philosophy with his thesis on "The Sufi Thought of Abdul Karim Al-Jaili, a Study and Investigation of the Poem of Al-Nadrrat Al-Ainiyyah Al-Jili with the Explanation of Al-Nabulsi".

He obtained a doctorate in Islamic philosophy with his thesis on "The Qadiriyyah Way in Thought, Approach and Behavior, Study and Investigation of the Diwan of Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani" in 1989.

He obtained a professorial degree in Philosophy and History of Science in 1999. It is also mentioned that Dr. Youssef Zaidan established the Manuscripts Department in the Library of Alexandria in 1994 and served as its head. He was dismissed from his job after a dispute broke out between him and Dr. Ismail Serageldin, head of the Library of Alexandria at that time.^{xi}

Youssef Zaidan's critical contribution is represented in his book "The Bahrain Forum", in which he simplifies his critical view of the works of his contemporaries, such as the novelist Jamal Al-Ghitani. He has a fictional contribution to his two novels, "Shadow of the Snake" published in the Crescent Novels series, and the novel "Azazel", which won the most important literary award in the Middle East and the Arab world, which was the International Prize for Arabic Fiction for the best Arabic novel for 2009. It has been printed from Azazel's novel since the time of its publication until now. In Early 2010, 16 consecutive editions were issued by the Egyptian Dar Al-Shorouk, and it is one of the

most important Arabic novels in the history of Christian theology.^{xii}

Shadow of the Snake (novel)

Azazel (novel)

Nabati (novel)

Arabic Theology

Resolve and Travel (a short story collection)

Spirals of Religiosity (collection of articles)

Labyrinths of Illusion (collection of articles)

Jurisprudence of Revolution

Words (picking diamonds from people's words)

Impossible (novel)

Guantanamo (novel)

Solution and Travel (story collection) Spark for publishing and distribution

The Jurisprudence of Love.

Fardakan: The Arrest of the Chief Sheikh (a novel).

3.1 A Summary of the Novel “Azazel”

Azazel’s novel is one of the most famous novels by the Egyptian writer and philosopher Youssef Zaidan. The novel was published in 2008 AD. Youssef Zaidan created it, which was dealing with the Christian religion in the fifth century AD in

Upper Egypt, passing through the city of Alexandria, reaching northern Syria, in which it deals with ancient theological differences between Christians regarding the nature and status of Christ. The Virgin Mary and her status, as it refers to the persecution and injustice that Christians practiced against the Egyptian pagans after Christianity became the prevalent religion in Egypt.

It is a novel translated into English.^{xiii} Azazel's novel is a translation of a group of parchments that is written in the Syriac language, and placed in a wooden box and buried in the area surrounding the Citadel of Saint Simeon Al-Amoudi near the city of Aleppo in northern Syria. The biography of the Egyptian Christian monk Heba was written at the request of Azazel himself. Heba was living in a period of great turmoil in the history of the Christian religion, and this period was followed by huge divisions between the major churches due to the dispute over the nature of Christ himself, despite its importance.^{xiv}

The story begins with the departure of the monk Heba from the Akhmim region in Upper Egypt, heading to Alexandria to study theology and medicine. There, he meets a pagan woman named Octavia who can seduce him, but she expels him after learning that he is a Christian monk fleeing from Alexandria after witnessing the killing of the pagan scholar Hypatia at the hands of a Christian mob at the instigation of the Pope in Alexandria. Then, he heads to Palestine to search for the origins of the religion and settles in Jerusalem and meets with Pastor Nestor, whom he loves very much, and sends him to a monastery near Antioch. The monk Heba's doubts and psychological conflict about faith increase, and he falls in love with a woman named Marta. The novel ends with

Heba's decision that gets out of the monastery and is freed from all his fears without knowing the side from which he came out.^{xv}

In Azazel's novel, Youssef Zaidan, besides the importance of the historical subject, uses a solid, eloquent, and poetic Arabic language in many cases, very close to the mystical character, especially in the monk's monologue with his Lord. Here are some quotes from the novel:

"I realized after a long reflection that the different deities are not in temples and huge buildings, but rather live in the hearts of people who believe in them, and as long as these live, their gods live in them. If those disappear, they are buried."

"The facts that we arrive at with logic and mathematics, if we do not sense them with our souls, will remain cold facts, or we will remain incapable of realizing the splendor of our awareness of them."

"Things are like other things, and nothing is distinguished from them except what we distinguish by what we clothe them with, such as illusion, conjecture and belief."

"We should not be ashamed of something that has been imposed on us, no matter what, as long as we did not commit it."

"Any memory is necessarily painful, even if it is one of the memories of happy moments, it is also painful to miss it."

"This world, with everything in it and everyone in it, does not deserve the believers' concern."

"Sleep is a divine gift, without it, the world would be engulfed by madness. Everything in the universe sleeps,

awakens and sleeps, except for our sins and our memories that never sleep and will never rest.”

“God does not create or do evil, and God is not satisfied with it. All of it is good and love.”

“There is nothing in the world more sublime than repelling pain from a person who cannot express his pain.”

“Certainty will only be by extinguishing doubts, and doubt will not be extinguished except by delegating the matter to the Lord, and delegating the matter to Him will only be by knowing His miracles in the universe, and knowing the miracles will only be by acknowledging the incarnation of God ”.^{xvi}

3.2 The Ideological and Psychological Analysis of Azazel's Novel

The conflict in the novel has many manifestations, foremost of which is the conflict that has sparked widespread controversy in human societies, in which the politician, journalist, clergyman and intellectual participated, and it is the conflict that has existed since antiquity between the religious and the political. It was represented in the text's narration of the Christian ecclesiastical conflict in the fifth century AD, which took the form of a doctrinal conflict exposed by the text through a key figure in the text, and in Christian ecclesiastical history; Nestor says, answering Heba's question: “O Heba, what is happening in Alexandria has nothing to do with religion”. The first bloodshed in this city after the end of the pagan persecution was Christian bloodshed by Christian hands, so do not mix things together, my son, for these are people of authority, not of faith. The second conflict that we find echoes in the novel is the doctrinal conflict over the nature of the Lord

Christ, in which the novel triumphed through internal dialogue narratives, a flame that does not hide its skeptical intellectual questions. The text says in the form of internal dialogue for Heba: “And how did he die... How can you believe, Heba, that the Roman ruler Pilate, who is a human, can kill Christ who is God? That was him. The only way to save man, which is indeed, the only way to rid Christianity of Judaism”.^{xvii}

The conflict that did not receive attention from the text critics, which we consider the most important and central in the text, is the conflict that the novel personifies between the self and its human tendencies, belief and its ideal condition. Praying for statements of certainty at one time, skepticism and accountability for social postulates, and religious beliefs at another time in a refined artistic blend of imagination and intellectual contemplation to embody what Heba’s character knows of an internal rupture between the chains of the ego, which translate reassurance of religious faith and compliance with his orders without being held accountable. The desires of the id in life and the desire for it with all that it means of love and joy, Heba says, “I wish I went to Martha’s hut and tucked myself in her lap, or climbed the pillar on which the abbot of the monastery preaches to the people from above.”^{xviii}

It should also be noted in this context the deep correspondence, which is corresponding to the religious perception that the writer establishes between Al-Hu and Azazel, and between the latter and the practice of writing. As for the first contrast, it is represented in the fact that “Azazel loves life, because it is his comfort, and therefore, he hates those who call for rejecting joys, and he cannot tolerate asceticism and those who are cut off from life” (Novel 362). The second contrast is represented

in the fact that writing is a symbol in the text of life, eternity and immortality, not to mention that Azazel is the motivator for writing. The inner voice / Azazel to Heba says: "Write, Heba, for whoever writes will never die."^{xi}

In the novel, Azazel is the human illusion that desires life, and the love of Octavia and Martha. It is the argument, the axe and the quarrelsome. The question and the thoughts, "the smirk that pulls precipice towards the dark swarm in the hollows of souls. It is the knowledge of Hypatia, whose lectures were deprived, so her blood was shed, and it is the answer that I do not accept. Then, the void enveloped me with a sudden comfort that overwhelmed me, and after a while, my void was covered and I fell asleep.

It is the mind that disturbs the comfort of the heart, the reassurance of emptiness and surrender to sleep. It is the life that contradicts the afterlife.^{xx}

By returning to history, Youssef Zaidan was able to transform it into a fictional artistic construct that carries a new understanding and interpretation of the relationship of the religious, the political, and the psychological, using the narrative spaces extended to the novel and its ability to fuse, integrate, analyzing psychologically the personality and access its depths, and consider its relationships with its surroundings. To make the novel a form of research and analysis, and a cognitive tool that corrects within its imaginative course, the multiple tributaries and references, the image of the canon linked in the imagination of the condemned Arab with a mental system that is bound by an example that separates man and his action from his historical and social conditions and describes him with the values of purity,

honesty, asceticism and sincerity. Drawing for him the image of the pure angelic being who has no place in the history and present of the Arab society crisis, as he was able with his novel to return the critic as the novelist to the investigation of the novelist's relations with the history.^{xxi}

Conclusions

The novel is based on real events, and the writer's language is strong, full of new words and poetic language, which the reader may read for the first time, which may need a dictionary to know their meanings, and he is also able to mix sentences as it results in starkly clear details, and at the same time simple and easily understood, although it was classified among the novels as a historical novel. [3] However, its events were not presented to the reader in a monotonous and boring manner, as well as in the novel touching on sexual issues, but Zaidane's philosophy in his talk about sex, was the main reason for the monk's retirement from life's pleasures, so he is exposed to situations that are difficult, which make him show the natural person within him, who is prone to fall into error and being exposed to problems, and committing sins.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1) Conducting a study aimed at analyzing the critical discourse of Azazel's novel by Youssef Zaidan
- 2) Conducting a study examining the social and cultural effects of Azazel's novel by Youssef Zaidan

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