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Hybridity of Narrative Identity in Post Arab Spring Novels

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Abstract:

The paper examines the contemporary Arab novels that followed the events of the Arab Spring in 2011, where identity becomes a significant concern, in the novel, which invites readers to question fixed definitions of identity and take a journey toward fragmentation and diaspora.

The paper investigates the narration strategies in reshaping the identities that were portrayed, where the changing characters represent a kind of exile and internal alienation that transcends the ethnographic connotation in a way that makes it impossible for the stability of identity, its integration, and the determination of whatever belongs to it, by inventing multiple masks with self-invention, which is always changing in its allegiances and is less defined in its ego assertion. By blurring the line of assimilation and presentation of the multifaceted self, identity perishes absolutely and is exposed to shocks and pressures, which allows us to say that the relationship of the ego with the other is manifested in different narrative and aesthetic ways. We can understand to what extent the narrative discourse succeeds in representing all these identities, and how this can be explained beyond the meaning of the post Arab Spring novels. This research seeks to reveal the dynamics of self-identity that becomes symbolic for the entire society, while being in cultural confrontation between ethnic or religious identities in a way that raises questions about the repercussions of narrative discourse for representation and expression. In addition, by opening the historical record, having a close look at the past and emphasizing the hybrid identity of the city and the characters within a mixed narrative system the aim of this study is to develop the traditional survival strategies of the characters in an act of resistance to the violence of the present and attempt to extrapolate future hybrid identities.
**Keywords:** identity, identity hybridity, narrative discourse, ego, other, post Arab Spring novels.

Arab world countries have witnessed many political, social and cultural changes since the start of what was known as the Arab Spring, where different ethnic and social groups protested against discrimination based on gender or religious and cultural identity. The identity of Middle East countries has become the point of critical division and tension in light of the instability taking place after the Arab Spring, in addition to the emergence of Islamic groups, the civil war in Syria, and the tension of sectarianism in the Arab Gulf States. Thus, understanding identity-related policies highlights the danger of national, religious and sectarian threats.

The emergence of ISIS is the most disturbing example of the defensive identity that has allowed this insurgent group to use propaganda through the reinforcement of opposing and contradictory identities, which often have conflicting interests, to gain support from the peoples of the region and around the world. These events disrupted old centrality in Arab culture and pushed the territories to the center, causing a redrawing of borders between them, leading to serious repercussions as a result of the divisions and fragmentation of Arab identity.

Within these events, the Arab novelist was observing these transformations, being affected by them, living within a group trying to understand what happened and what is happening. The author moves between historical spatial and temporal spaces, with which the self’s locations multiply in a way that motivates the author to engage in meditation and reformulation of their self-narration in a fictional form that deals with those identity crises, which are also existential crises. Here, the novelist becomes a self-narrator by narrating the tragedy of others in a narrative plot that looks for history within a chronological order that creates (historicalism narration). It is this spatial-temporal relationship that forms the complex of personal identity and becomes problematic itself; it is a puzzle that must always be solved, a process that is always unfinished. It is no longer about "building lived worlds" or even about “Paths within the worlds” but rather with “interpretation of the self at the hands of the soul”, the plot of the biographical
narration, “Between history and imagination” (Dupar, 2008, pp. 366-365) where identity becomes like history, as a material for knitting, “There are groups whose particular historical existence is represented only through their own narration or weaving its cultural history, and this interweaving is, in turn - what supports its identity, which is what constitutes the narrative identity” (Kazem, 2006, pp. 118-119).

The French philosopher Paul Ricœur, in his three-volume book Time and Narration (1984-1988), discussed the issue of identity and presented a complex and detailed analysis of the relationship between narrative discourse and human experience, explaining that narration is the distinguished means with which we recreate our confused and unformed temporal experience. Ricœur was interested in searching for an answer to the question: "Who am I?" and came up with a new term (narrative identity), which changed our traditional perception of identity for a world built by narration of events and the different situations in which the self is subject to change, just as others are also subject to change in search of their identity in an attempt to form a complete narrative group of the diversity of events that they experience and are exposed to in their reality. This identity formed by the narrative is an extension of the history of the self in a past time taking on a linguistic form that has the potential to reshape our experience as we construct our personal and collective identities. It is an interpretive process that begins with what Ricœur calls "a reoccurring experience" and ends with a "chronological rebirth" within a "self-narrative". and through a narrative plot in building a realistic and imagined experience of the active self (Ricoeur, 1988). Ricœur (1988) argues that the relationship between narrative and temporal experience is not accidental but necessary to explain the temporal world of human experience through narrative formations formed through pre-narrative experiences, completing its return to the world of the reader. This is the point of the narrative process that mediates tradition and innovation in the practical field of human experience (Ricoeur, 1988, pp.230-233).

Although narrative identity is proposed as a poetic solution to the problems of narrative and experience, "narrative identity is not stable or even smooth” (Ricoeur, 1988, p 248), rather, “it is an incomplete mediation, it is a tangled web of expectation of the future, reception of the past, in addition to the experience of the present, where reason coincides with history and reality” (Ricoeur, 1988,p. 207). Thus, Ricœur’s concept of narrative identity lies in the limitless diversity), in a way that the narrative cannot put it under a unified rule, whereas the question (Who am I?) remains without a clear answer,
for our life stories. According to Ricœur (1988), narrative identities are the incomplete narrative processes of a series of intense events and important and pivotal moments that are exercised by the self with the other in a jointly communicative process, as every search for the self necessarily requires the presence of the other. Narration as storytelling is a linguistic means that expresses the narrative identity, which works on “expressing a text based on the duality of the self and the other, explains the self and he interprets it in a way that defines the other as a party in the process of receiving and understanding, so it is formed within a temporal context according to the formulas of ego and identity as essential challenges through which the self recognizes itself.” (Al-Warfalli, 2009, p. 27). Therefore, the novel paid special attention to the narrative identity and considered it “a formative path formulated with narrative art and an interactive movement between the ego and the other to establish existence” (Al-Warfalli, 2009, p. 6).

The contemporary novels of the novelist Nabil Suleiman, which followed the events of the Syrian revolution in 2011, investigate the dynamics of self-identity, which has become the symbol of the entire community. The cultural confrontation between ethnic or religious identities takes the lead by raising questions about the repercussions of the narrative discourse for representation and expression, opening the historical record, reconsidering the past and emphasizing the hybridity of identity of the place and the characters within a mixed narrative system that seeks to develop the traditional survival strategies of the characters in an act of resistance against the violence of the present and as an attempt to extrapolate the future of hybrid identities.

The narrative space of Nabil Suleiman opens up to worlds of a different narrative that begs history in an attempt to explain the present within a narrative project that he initiated in the Quartet "Orbits of the East" for writing about the war and its history in an imaginary self-narration that combines “the reference and the imaginary: the fictional or fictional biography” (Saadawi, 2016, pp. 15-16). The main question of the novel: What happened? The main themes of the novels are diary narration, memoir narration, epistolary narration and self-imagining. The question then is raised: What happened to the main theme of the novels of Nabil Suleiman after the revolution, starting with the novel “The Walls of Sham... Nmnouma, 2014” and continuing the narration of the story of the revolution in “The Night of the World -2016” and recently in the novel “The History of the Extinguished Eyes-2019”. This question prompted the
novelist to try to find an answer by returning to the history of Syria during the 1970s
and 80s. He monitored the conflict in the novel (Cities of Purple - 2013) between the
Muslim Brotherhood and the ruling Baath Party, referring to a historical accumulation
that led to the current tragic situation. This historical imagination in the narrative
distinguishes the novels of Nabil Suleiman, so he borrows it to create a story and
criticize reality. Abdullah Ibrahim introduced “historical imagination” as “the historical
material formed by narration, and it has been cut off from its documentary and
descriptive function.” Historical imagination functioned as an aesthetic and symbol, as
it does not refer to the facts of the past or decide or promote them but rather inspires
them as explanatory pillars for its events, and it is the product of the interactive
relationship between the narration enhanced by imagination and history supported by
documents, but it is a third structure different from them. ” (Ibrahim, 2011, p. 5).

Identity becomes a major issue in the novel, inviting readers to question fixed
definitions of identity and take a journey toward fragmentation and the diaspora. While
the city of Raqqa was the city of love, tolerance and pluralism, after the revolution, the
city is under the control of armed groups, with space to represent new, extremist and
often violent identities. The city did not recognize sectarianism, where Muslims and
Christians are brothers, “when Father Paolo Dall’Oglio was preaching, saying: “My
brothers, we are brothers, we are all brothers, there is no difference between Syrian and
another Syrian. Pray with me day and night for peace to prevail, and when he declared
that Raqqa is the starting point for the liberation of the capital, what happened?”
(Suleiman, 2016, p. 11). the tolerance among religions is once again regained as it was
prevailing in the past is repeated in the novel (The History of the Extinguished Eyes,
2019), through the speech of Malika's Muslim father, Najm al-Din al-Samadi, who
married Martha a Christian, said: "She remained in her religion after we got married
and added: In our days, such fanaticism we see now was not in our days, neither did I
ask her to convert, nor did she ask me to leave my religion and follow hers, her family
did not intervene and my family did not either" (Suleiman, 2019, p. 140).

After the emergence of (ISIS) and its takeover of Raqqa, the city turned to live in a past
that it did not know, and women were forced to wear a particular dress completely
covering them, and men were required to grow a beard and shorten their mustache. A
resident of the city rejected this, “Shame on you, fear Allah! You brought us back a
hundred years” (Suleiman, 2013, p. 21).
The city has changed, and Christians must either pay a tax or flee to escape the torment of extremism. Is this Christian a mother of Basil? She tells Basil that his colleagues in the hospital no longer greet him or respond to his greeting and that one among them addressed others as he stared at Basil: Shaking hands with a Christian is forbidden for a Muslim; it is like shaking hands with a Jew and the unbeliever. On another day, another colleague threw a piece of paper on Basil's desk, and he brought it to me, and I memorized it: "Do not initiate conversation with Jews or the Christians with peace and if you meet them on the road, force them to the narrowest part. In addition, if they greet us, we say, and on you, and we do not shake hands with them or embrace them" (Suleiman, 2016, p. 12).

There was no Christian left in the city except for Basil’s mother, as most Christians migrated out of it to escape death, “Did I make a mistake because I refused to leave? Being (She was) silent for a while before her voice hardened: Is there a Christian man or a Christian woman in Raqqa other than Basil’s mother? However, how long will I be patient in this prison?” (Suleiman, 2016, p. 12), and after everyone practiced their religion freely, Christianity became an identity that must be concealed. “So we are not Syrian? I am Christian, then, but I am not Syrian, and I am not a citizen!” (Suleiman, 2016, p. 13). Thus, the city turned into a big prison for its people: "You are not alone in prison, Um Basil. Here I am in front of you, is this house a prison or not? The streets, Um Basil, prison or not? Schools, the shops, the squares, the state departments, the Euphrates, the sky, is the chest of each and every one of us a prison or not? Sometimes death is easier than imprisonment.” (Suleiman, 2016, p. 12).

Nabil Suleiman's experience and knowledge of the city of Raqqa made us feel and touch the city's changes in the details of its streets, buildings and bridges, and we know the habits and traditions of its society and tribes, its clans, and its social, cultural and political components, showing more details about the struggles of extremist organizations and exposing the thoughts of their members who stole people's property, dreams and lives in Raqqa.

This distortion extends to other cities that were demolished by war and bloody conflicts and displaced their people, such as Aleppo, Hama and Latakia: “Latakia is not safe?” (Suleiman, 2013, p. 16). Then, he answered: “The bombs that demolished Dhaka blew
up the city, which is no longer safe” (Suleiman, 2013, p. 18). With regret, the narrator decided to transform the safe city and fell into ruin like other cities in Syria. “Latakia was demolished, just like Hama and like Aleppo” (Suleiman, 2013, p. 20). While the cities were present in the two previous novels with their true identities and their explicit names, the cities and countries in his novel, the latter (the history of extinguished eyes), are hidden behind a pseudonym with enigmatic symbolism that alludes to some cities in reality (Kamba, Bar Shams, and Qammourin: “A country they called Bar Shams and a country they called Kamba, and only God knows the secret of these two names, and the same is the secret of the name Qammourin” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 7).

The city here becomes like an octopus with many faces, and its conditions change: “There are many stories about Kamba’s development into what it has become: Octopus city similar to a pockmarked face, because of the ambiguity of its history, the imagination had to run wild, bringing the first families to the plateau from a corner of Mauritania...” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 21). The ambiguity of history prompts the narrator to imagine the origins of this city in an attempt to trace the lineage and the roots in search of an authentic identity for this city, whose lineage extends to Mauritania, as confirmed by one of his sons, Sheikh "Hamid Maa Al-Ainin".

The characters of the novels came shaken, afraid changed, lost and confused between questions that could not find answers. This is Wasif Imran in the novel (Cities of Purple), who started his life as part of the political regime and one of his tools as a security officer working in the security administration; then, he moved to work in the media to organize media coverage of the leader's visits. He then turns against the oppressive regime and harbors some of the political fugitives or those who are wanted by the government, in a clear shift from working with the regime to defending the oppressed and ends up disappearing after his detention. Therefore, his family started searching for him in the regime’s prisons and stations, but in vain. Ultimately, his passing was declared, and there was no funeral or burial. The themes of appearance and disappearance, fall and death, and the spread of blood in everything dominated the novel to signify the brutality of the regime's prevailing policies and conflicts. The narration opens with a scene of blood on purple asphalt and concludes with a scene of a powerful explosion; human body parts are also purple. The story recounts the history
of the sectarian conflict that flared up in Syria between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1980s, where the narrator appears, rejecting oppression and intimidation methods to silence people.

In the novel “Night of the World”, we see fluctuating characters who have no stable identity, as the person no longer knows his friend from his enemy in the shadow of politics with religion and extremism and no longer discriminates who fights who and who defends who. The chaos of war made everyone lose the identity of belonging and pitted the father against his son and the friend against his friend and the lover and his mistress. So we see Islam's father joining ISIS and describing his daughter as an infidel because she refused to marry one of the leaders of the group: "Your infidel sister covered my head with her mud, in my secret I said to him: Your daughter, the infidel" (Suleiman, 2016, p. 46), and this is (Munib) the protagonist of the novel whose father fled from Raqqa to escape arrest and Munib remained far away, working as a teacher until he returned. Munib and his generation witnessed the Baathist Party's accession to power, a generation disputed by multiple party and intellectual affiliations: the Baathist, Nasserite, Marxist, and Brotherhood. A generation whose identity is dispersed between those affiliations that have led many to imprisonment and torture. Here, Munib faces the problem of the past, which threatens his present existence and his life in the future. That past is permanently present before him and does not leave him a chance to start over. He lived another strange life in Raqqa, where everything changed, and even his friend became a stranger after joining the extremists: “The first of them was your best friend: Jaber Al-Khalil, Professor Umm Al-Sheikh, what would you have addressed to him had he not been content with cold peace, and turned away from you? Suddenly, Munib awoke, and he and Abu Luqman were alone. The first thing that alerted him was that Abu Luqman's beard was black. He came back clean, and his eyes had a different sparkle” (Suleiman, 2016, p. 56). Despite all that, Munib remained without affiliation to any party, and his identity was not determined through those trends. When he was asking: Who are you? He replies: “I may not know who I am, or who I will be…” (Suleiman, 2016, p. 210). He lived in fear, running away from the dream and vigilance until he reached madness as if the chaos of war and conflict is nothing but madness that leads to madness.
The question of identity, “What befalls our eyes?” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 25), comes at the beginning of the novel, “The History of the Extinguished Eyes”, and the narrative tries to answer this question in the following chapters through successive stories and images. The story of "Mawlood" tells us about the simple man who loves life, but who is surrounded by fear from everywhere. Characters besieged by nightmares, fear of disease, power and censors. Thus, their lives turned into a tragedy and hell. Many questions surround the personalities, and there are no answers, as everyone is busy answering, “If it were not for the confusion with disease or epidemic, he began to ask strange questions, and perhaps the strangest of them was the question of what afflicts people's eyes these days in Kamba. However, the new military coup soon answered the question.” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 28). The eyes express the identity as we get to know the other through it, its illness is evidence of ill identity or lack of it, and the novel lists the identities of a patient who finds her way with difficulty. This blindness is not particular rather than general, and the doctor decided that it was “hereditary blindness that cannot be cured” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 29). The blindness of insight and vision that afflicted the Arabs in reality, the tragic decades-long aftermath of their defeats after World War II. The lack of vision or the defect in the body is “there whoever lost a hand or a leg in the war” and is also evidence of a lack of personal identity, as the Arabs are no longer the same as they were before the Palestinian war.

The pain and disorientation reach its extreme when the character deliriously searches for her authentic identity: “I am Egyptian, and once: I am Jordanian, and once: I am Syrian, and he will deny himself when he is cleared of his immorality, that he did not once exclaim I am Mauritanian. The narrators agreed that his voice was trembling and that his eyes become uncertain whenever he speaks of his lineage” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 24). This is an indication of the state of the Arabs. (The Lost Days) where the loss of identity coincides with time, so that what surrounds it turns into an illusion and a lie, and images appear to it. Characters appear and disappear, as they shift from one identity to another, the father asks his son: “When did you let this chin grow?” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 30), and he disappears. Months later, then he “appears in military uniform: I am now in the intelligence school, and in two years you will see who I am” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 81).

During the restoration of the past, there is always nostalgia for that beautiful past, which appears through the personality of Mouloud, who is full of joy and feelings of safety.
He brings back memories of the university, yesterday's friends, and old dreams. Mouloud, who was seen through wishes, also does not see himself except through them, so he lets them lead him and make his decisions on his behalf, in addition to considering him as an expatriate, not from a people (Bar Shams) after escaping to it from (Kamba), which he also left in exile to (Qumorin). Therefore, between the old exile and the new exile, he lives without belonging to any of the three countries. The question of immigration and human identity is deeply opened. When restoring a beautiful past, an escape from the heavy reality and its cruelty that exhausted himself in such a way that he no longer knows who he is even when his image is reflected in the mirror, he sees with difficulty. “He closed his eyes long enough to test them and held his breath as he opened them, but he did not see a face in the mirror” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 105).

The face is an identity, and the difficulty of seeing with the disappearance of the image in the mirror is an indication of the loss of the identity and its rupture between the current conditions and a reference to the loss and fragmentation of the Arab identity due to divisions and wars.

The hybridity of identity intertwined between characters, time, and narration in a way that indicates a lost identity that revolves in an endless labyrinth: “I am lost between north and south Yemen. When I returned to Sana’a, I forgot everything that happened to me” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 143). (Najm al-Din al-Samadi) went to Yemen, in implementation of his father's will to search for his lost assets in Yemen, and there is a reference to the Arabs and their origins in Yemen, but when he reached his village after a long effort, astonished by the people's fear of daylight and the blindness of the eyes, young and old, from the sunlight: “People are enemies of the sun, Glory be to the Creator! It is a wonder of wonders, no one can open his eyes in the light of day” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 144). Here, the story is highly symbolic of the tragic situation in Yemen as a result of the political and sectarian conflicts that left enormous destruction to the Yemeni people, which turned them into people who are neither "blind nor seeing". After these sightings, Najm Al-Din decided to return without knowing his origin and stopped searching for his roots: “I forgot about the origin and the roots, and I sought forgiveness from my father, may God have mercy on him. Yemeni, Mauritanian, Iraqi, Sudanese, my son, it does not make any difference with me anyway”
(Suleiman, 2019, p. 145), referring to the similarity of the fate of the Arabs in these countries that have been exhausted by sectarian conflicts, which are sometimes fed by corrupt political regimes.

Contradictions and dichotomies were strongly present in these novels (remembering/forgetting, lying/truthfulness, delirium/awakening, laughter, crying, light/darkness). Fear and silence dominated the spaces of these novels and became a syndrome that afflicted people “in the aftermath, the bloodiest military coup” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 34), in a clear reference to the political conditions that prevailed in the Arab countries, shutting mouths and preventing the freedom of expression. That implicit political question in the novelist's discourse shows a political projection of the difficult situation in which the country is living, which led to blindness, then to the plucking out of the eyes and the extinction of sight and insight, in a way that suggests defeat, betrayal and loss of hope in the future. Therefore, the self-separates from the other, and the ego has its own world that is not similar to others, as it sees what they do not see: “I do not draw your world, or I draw it alone, I do not draw it at all. I have my world” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 76).

The ego that searches for freedom without restrictions and those paintings that stand in halfway or near the end: “Paintings like these are my part, I left them unfinished because they insisted they not be finished. Such paintings insisted on being free” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 77). The story will not be completed as it appears as a series of continuous conflict and violence begets another violence: “The more the opposition becomes darker and more entrenched in Islam, the more you will see that the jailer is stuttering, the more brutal the gunmen, the more they will be brutal. A match in brutality, that is what we are in... Monsters fighting for our chests and for us...we may be at the beginning of the path.” (Suleiman, 2019, p. 71). It is a war that has no identity, no goal, no end and no victorious party, but everyone is defeated: “This war has no victor, my dear Munib, for every Syrian in this war is defeated” (Suleiman, 2016, p. 219).

There are multiple identities in each period to reflect one aspect of the mixed identity that brings together opposites. The identity of the characters, as we mentioned, was not fixed, but it is shifting. The game of names and their connotations reveals, as a function, the meanings of the concept of hybridization, which represents the hybridization of the
no self, reconciled with itself and with the other, the hybridity of religions, the hybridity of ethnicities: Persian, Turkish, Afghani, Indian, Armenian, and the Russian, which mixed with Arab blood in the cities of Syria, which became an arena for strangers: “Because the coming immigrant Mujahideen from all corners of the earth “they are increasing” until “the café is getting crowded with those who flocked from among the Mujahideen immigrants” (Suleiman, 2016, p. 203).

The changing personalities are a kind of negation and internal alienation that transcends the ethnographic significance in a way that makes it difficult to establish identity, as it is merging and defining its affiliation with the creation of multiple masks, with a self-invention that is always changing in its loyalties and less specific in affirming the ego, and by blurring the line of assimilation and presenting the multifaceted self. Identity perishes absolutely and is exposed to shocks and pressures, where its end is drawn by successive defeats admitting blindness:

In any case, if each one of us sees a veil over the eyes of the other, then this means that we are all blind, and my fear of this blindness grows every day. If you had not been deceived from the beginning by the lie of the revolution and the lie of the Arab Spring, we would not have arrived here. And if your sight had not deceived you from the beginning with the eternal power, would we have reached here? Thousands of dead, were missing, handicapped, millions of people were displaced inside and outside the country, and all of this destruction and this division, for what? For one-party power? For the power of dictatorship? For the power of corruption? (Suleiman, 2016, p. 204).

The expression of these hybrid identities, “killer identities,” as Amin Maalouf calls them, came in a way that allows us to say that the relationship of the ego to the other manifests itself in different narrative and aesthetic ways. This hybridity and the chaos of the war were reflected in the identity based on the novel's homogeneity, embraced by “regulatory institutions,” as Foucault puts it.

The novels of Nabil Suleiman express this hybridity of identities and the cases of dispersion and fragmentation through memory, diaries, fantasy, narration, and wonders. We notice the overlap in each part of these narratives and the different levels in which events, places, and times overlap, as well as the multiplicity of narrators’ voices, and
their pronouns overlap between the speaker, the addressee and the absent. The narration opens with luminous thresholds for the text and related to it, fearful introductions and silent conclusions preceded by a sufficient analogy (like introductions, like endings), as if everything was transformed by the war into something similar to what it was and not as it is in reality. These thresholds are texts parallel to the original texts, sometimes carrying metaphors that intensify the significance and refer to the intended meaning brilliantly.

The novelist sometimes used the satirical method to express the depth of the tragedy in the current reality, where history is mentioned in reference to a link between the past, present and future as if what happened and is happening in Syria and the Arab Spring countries was a result of the past and a long period of oppression, marginalization and silence. Here, history becomes a narrative device that the writer employs to criticize reality and pass on what he wants to say without colliding with authority and Sgt. This fictional interweaving that evokes past events and is "based - at the same time – on historical, social and political. "facts". It is a narration that draws attention to its narrative/fictional and historical nature together.” (Kazem, 2006, p. 129).

It may be that the employment of these historical events is an explanation that the narrator is looking for all this chaos around him in an attempt to answer the novel’s question: what happened? Why did it happen?

Thus, Nabil Suleiman demonstrated a different realism, mixing history, narration, and weaving in style through which he sought to critique reality and move the spoken and the unspoken truths within the Arab political system. The narrative speech succeeded in representing these overlapping identities, and we see the novelist moving fluidly from party to party and from one side to the other in a way that can be interpreted in a broader range of post Arab Spring narratives.

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