

The Defeatist Character in the Arabic and Iraqi Novel.. A Reflection of Crises

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Abstract: *The defeatist character in the Arab novel embodies the deep psychological, social, and political crises in Arab societies. Through the works of many writers, Arabic literature reflects the complexities of the human soul and its struggles with bitter reality. These characters express social and cultural criticism that addresses injustice, persecution, and the conflict between modernity and tradition. Psychologists confirm that understanding this personality contributes to providing psychological and moral support, while literature raises awareness and pushes toward positive change, making the defeatist personality an honest mirror of the challenges and hopes in Arab societies.*

Keywords: Defeatist Personality, Novelist, Literature, Brokenness, Society

introduction:

The defeatist character is considered one of the pivotal characters in Arabic literature, as it poignantly reflects the complexities of the human soul and its struggles with reality. This character often represents a broken soul attracted by internal crises and societal pressures, which makes it a mirror that accurately reflects the social and political circumstances in which it lives.

By reviewing the manifestations of this character in prominent literary works, such as the novels of Naguib Mahfouz, Ghassan Kanafani and others, we can understand the psychological and social factors that shape this character and how they affect the reader. This research aims to analyze the defeatist character in the Arabic novel, and explore the reasons and motives behind its embodiment, and its profound impact on Arabic literature and society.

Manifestations of a defeatist personality:

Manifestations of the defeatist personality vary in the Arabic novel. Sometimes it appears as a person with no will, immersed in a constant feeling of despair, and at other times as an individual who refuses to face reality and flees into worlds of imagination and illusions. This type of character can be observed in many literary works, such as Naguib Mahfouz's novels, where we find heroes drowning in their personal disappointments and falling into a well of frustration.

Analysis of prominent defeatist character:

In the novel "The Thief and the Dogs" by Naguib Mahfouz, we find the character of Saeed Mahran, who embodies defeatism in all its dimensions. Saeed, who starts out as a man looking for revenge after his release from prison, ends up drowning in his own despair and unable to achieve any of his goals. This tragic ending reflects the individual's failure to confront the unjust society and the bitter reality.

Reasons and motives:

The roots of the defeatist character in the Arabic novel lie in a group of psychological and social factors. Political crises, social injustice, and economic changes all play a major role in shaping these characters. In addition, cultural and ideological heritage can contribute to the formation of this defeatist psychology, where the individual is pushed to withdraw into himself as a result of strict societal pressures and expectations.

The effect on the reader:

Defeatist characters in the Arabic novel arouse feelings of sympathy and pity in the reader. By experiencing their suffering and crises, the reader can realize the depth of the psychological pain that these heroes suffer, which opens a window for him to a deeper understanding of the complex reality that surrounds him. Thus, these characters become effective tools to motivate the reader to think about the reasons that led to this psychological and social collapse, and perhaps prompt him to search for solutions to avoid such tragic endings in reality.

The defeatist character in the Arabic novel remains one of the most influential and thought-provoking characters. Through their accurate depiction of internal and external conflicts, these characters present a scathing critique of Arab reality and invite us to reflect on the causes of failure and frustration. It is a sincere call for a deeper understanding of the human soul and our societies, and to search for ways to overcome crises and build a better future.

The novelist's personal motivations:

The Arab novelist tends to portray the defeatist character in his novels for several reasons that reflect the complexities of the social, political and cultural reality in which he lives. A number of these reasons can be identified, including:

Firstly: The political and social reality represented by a number of reasons:

Wars and conflicts: External armed conflicts and ongoing internal conflicts lead to the destruction of human souls and exacerbate feelings of loss and defeatism. Novelists reflect this turbulent psychological state in their characters to highlight the impact of wars on individuals.

Secondly: Poverty and unemployment:

Difficult economic conditions lead to a deterioration in the psychological state of individuals, making them feel helpless in the face of daily challenges. Novelists depict this crisis through characters suffering from poverty, frustration, and poor condition.

Third: Cultural and identity conflict, which is indicated by a number of reasons:

Modernity and tradition: The conflict between adherence to tradition and the trend towards modernity creates a state of tension and loss among individuals. This cultural conflict appears in Arab novels through characters suffering from loss of identity, psychological breakdown, and internal alienation.

Colonialism and Subordination: The experience of colonialism and the subsequent cultural and economic dependency lead to a feeling of inferiority and defeatism. Novelists use these characters to shed light on the impact of colonialism and the psychological wounds it left behind, and novels known as postcolonialism later appeared that revealed this.

Fourthly: Personal and psychological crises:

Traumatic personal experiences: experiences of failure, loss, and disappointment; It contributes to the formation of a defeatist personality. Novelists often draw inspiration from their personal experiences or the experiences of those around them to draw these characters deeply and realistically. Most of the ideas in the novels are based on experiences.

Mental illnesses: such as depression and anxiety, appear in novels as a form of defeatism, which reflects the interest of novelists in dealing with mental health and its importance, and the suicide cases that some novels adopt are only an image of that.

Fifth: Critical message:

Criticism of reality: Novelists use the defeatist character as a critical tool to highlight society's problems. Through these characters, the novelist is able to criticize corruption, injustice, and backwardness, and call for change and reform.

A call for empathy: Defeatist characters arouse the reader's sympathy and push him to think about how to improve living and social conditions. Novelists seek to raise awareness and motivate the reader to interact with the issues of his society.

Therefore, the defeatist character in the Arab novel is a mirror that reflects the complex and tragic reality experienced by many in the Arab world. Through these characters, novelists depict feelings of frustration and despair, and highlight the deep reasons that lead to this psychological state. In the end, these novels aim to motivate the reader to think about the reality of his society and work towards positive change if he is able to do so, and he may never be able to...

Narrative models:

There are many Arab novels that dealt with the defeatist personality and portrayed it in influential and expressive ways. The following are some notable examples that serve as research models and are not necessarily exclusive:

The Thief and the Dogs by Naguib Mahfouz:

Defeatist personality: Saeed Mahran; Saeed Mahran is a man who came out of prison seeking revenge on those who betrayed him. But his attempts to achieve personal justice end in failure, leading to his psychological deterioration and immersion in despair.

The Road to Naguib Mahfouz:

In Naguib Mahfouz's other novel, the defeatist character: Saber; Saber is a young man searching for his father, whom he never knew. During his journey, he faces many frustrations and obstacles that make him gradually lose hope of finding his father and achieving inner peace.

Returning to Haifa by Ghassan Kanafani:

Defeatist Personality: Saeed; Saeed is a Palestinian man who returns to Haifa years after the Nakba, only to find that his house is now inhabited by other people. His defeatist personality is evident in his feeling of helplessness regarding the changes that have occurred in his life and his loss of hope in regaining what he lost.

Men in the Sun by Ghassan Kanafani:

Defeatist personality: Abu Qais, Asaad, and Marwan. The novel deals with the story of three Palestinian men trying to escape their harsh circumstances by traveling to Kuwait for work. They end up dead in a water tank, reflecting their feelings of helplessness and despair about their future and their lives.

Barefoot bread by Muhammad Shukri:

Defeatist personality: The writer himself (Mohamed Shukri). In this autobiography, Shukri presents his difficult and arduous childhood in Morocco, where he suffered from poverty and domestic violence. His character in the novel reflects a deep feeling of despair and frustration.

The novelist's analysis of the situation:

The Arab novelist analyzed the state of brokenness and projected it onto the defeatist character in his novels using a variety of literary tools and narrative methods that highlight the complexities of the human psyche and its interactions with surrounding circumstances. Below are some of the methods used by Arab novelists to analyze the state of brokenness and project it onto the defeatist character:

First: The psychological structure of the personality, which is divided into a group of details, including:

Internal details: Novelists focus on exploring the inner thoughts and feelings of the defeatist character, allowing the reader to understand the psychological factors that lead to a state of brokenness. For example, Naguib Mahfouz in "The Thief and the Dogs" delves into Saeed Mahran's psyche to show his internal conflicts and the psychological pressures he faces.

Memories and the past: Novelists bring up the character's memories and past events to explain how her defeatist psychology was formed. This appears clearly in "Barefoot Bread" by Muhammad Shukri, where the writer presents his difficult past and the poverty he suffered as essential factors in shaping his psychological state and the subsequent repercussions, despite some criticism that addressed the negative aspects of the novel as it promotes - albeit implicitly - the gay community.

Second: Interaction with the environment and society, which is divided into various determinants, including:

Social and political conditions: Novelists reflect the influence of social and political conditions on the defeatist personality. In Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*, the main characters are portrayed as victims of harsh political and economic conditions that push them into illegal immigration.

Social Relationships: Toxic or failed social relationships contribute to deepening the state of brokenness. In "Returning to Haifa", Kanafani highlights the impact of loss and displacement on the character, as Saeed suffers from the irreparable loss of his home and family, which negatively impacts by causing a significant shock.

Third: Symbolism and metaphor, and it depends on the diversity of literary styles that the novelist works on, including:

Spatial symbols: Novelists use places as symbols that reflect a state of brokenness. In "The Thief and the Dogs," for example, the places that Saeed frequents, such as cemeteries and abandoned cafes, are symbols of his inner brokenness and isolation.

Objects and events: Objects or events can be symbols of brokenness. For example, in "The Road" by Naguib Mahfouz, the constant search for the missing father is a symbol of purposelessness and a feeling of loss.

Fourth: The tragic ending: Some novelists use endings that they believe are effective in their work, including:

Open or Tragic Endings: Many novels end with an open or tragic ending to reflect the lack of hope and ultimate frustration of the character. In "Men in the Sun," the fate of the characters ends with death inside a water tank, which expresses despair, failure, and the end of wishes.

Transformation or decline: Some novels depict the transformation of a defeatist personality for the worse, which enhances the feeling of a broken spirit, and thus making many incorrect, and sometimes destructive, decisions.

Fifth: Language and style; Which relies on the narrative method to build an enjoyable and exciting text at the same time:

Description and Details: Novelists use language rich in detail and description to accurately convey a character's feelings. The depressing language, and the very small details of the state of defeatism, make the reader feel the depth of what the protagonist of the novel is suffering.

Internal Dialogue: The character's internal dialogue can explain his psychological conflicts and brokenness. This appears prominently in novels such as "Barefoot Bread," where the reader listens to the writer's inner thoughts and struggles. We see this even with Sarab in the novel "The Diary of Sarab Aftan" by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, where Sarab fluctuates from one character to another while she is experiencing a psychological conflict that she may not have realized, or what the writer wanted it to be like that in order to direct the reader's attention and draw him to the text.

From this, it can be concluded that Arab novelists analyzed the state of brokenness and projected it onto defeated characters in innovative and influential ways, using the psychological structure of the character, interaction with the environment and society, symbolism and metaphor, the tragic ending, and language and style. By using these literary tools, novelists were able to provide profound social and cultural criticism and stimulate readers to think about the challenges faced by individuals in their societies.

The defeatist character in the Iraqi novel:

There are many Iraqi novels in which the defeatist character was embodied, as Iraqi novelists dealt with the psychological and social crises that individuals suffer under the turbulent political and social conditions. We can consider some prominent examples as brief examples:

First: The Palm Tree and the Neighbors, the prominent novel by Ghaib Touma Farman: The defeatist character: Salima the baker, who is deceived by her husband's friend Mustafa and steals her money, in addition to Hussein and other characters. The novel revolves around a Baghdad neighborhood in the forties of the twentieth century. Salima, Hussein and others; Characters mired in poverty and frustration, suffering from exploitation and injustice, and unable to overcome the harsh conditions that surround them, which prompts them to withdraw and surrender to their dark fate.

Second: "Tattoo" by Abdul Rahman Majeed Al-Rubaie: Defeatist Character: The main character, and perhaps the narrator himself. The novel revolves around the narrator's experience in describing the events of his arrest in (Al-Salman) detention center in the words of the novel's hero, Karim Al-Nasseri, where he faces torture and oppression. The main character suffers from an internal conflict between the desire to resist and the feeling of despair, which leads to his psychological breakdown and loss of hope for change, and then he turns to something else, such as an ideological path.

Third: Scattered Fragments, by Mohsen Al-Ramli: Defeatist Character: The main character (the narrator himself). Mahmoud, who was withdrawn from himself and later fled to Spain, and the same author actually fled to Spain and worked as a professor in its universities. In this novel, the narrator suffers from homelessness and loss after the Iran-Iraq war. The character embodies a state of extreme defeatism, as the narrator finds himself unable to adapt to the new life and his constant suffering from loss and alienation.

There is no doubt that the Iraqi novels provided a deep and influential portrayal of the defeatist personality, through which they reflected the suffering of individuals under the weight of social, political and economic injustice and the dictatorial regime. Through these characters, the novelists contributed to revealing the psychological crises that people faced under harsh circumstances, allowing the reader a deeper understanding of the Iraqi reality and its complexities. These novels are not only a mirror that reflects the suffering of a defeated personality, but they are also an invitation to think about how to overcome these crises and strive towards a better future.

The above novels and others are considered works of Arabic literature to be a profound embodiment of the defeatist personality and its struggle with the circumstances surrounding it. By portraying these characters realistically, the novelists sought to shed light on the dark aspects of the human psyche and the challenges facing individuals in their society, making these novels reflect the depth of the human experience.

Psychology vision:

Psychologists view the defeatist personality as a personality characterized by a certain style of thinking and behavior that reflects a feeling of helplessness, lack of motivation, and ability to face challenges. Defeatist personality can be analyzed from several psychological aspects, including genetic, environmental, and social factors. Here are some of the main opinions of psychologists about the defeatist personality:

Psychological features of a defeatist personality:

Excessive pessimism: Individuals with a defeatist personality tend to think negatively and always expect failure, which enhances feelings of frustration and helplessness.

Lack of self-confidence: These individuals often doubt their abilities and potential, and underestimate the value of their achievements, which leads to them avoiding new challenges and opportunities.

Fear of failure: They are controlled by a constant fear of failure, which makes them avoid trying or taking risks, and prefer to stay in the comfort zone even if it is uncomfortable or useless.

Dependence: Defeatist individuals tend to rely excessively on others to make decisions and bear responsibilities, which reinforces feelings of helplessness.

Causes and influencing factors:

Early experiences: Negative experiences in childhood, such as constant criticism, frequent frustration, and exposure to failure without support or encouragement, can contribute to the development of a defeatist personality.

Negative role models: Observational learning from negative role models, such as parents or teachers who display defeatist behaviors, can reinforce these traits in individuals, as in the novel *Barefoot Bread*, for example.

Social and economic pressures: Poverty, unemployment, and social instability can lead to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, which contribute to the development of a defeatist personality.

Psychological and behavioral effects:

Depression: The defeatist personality is closely related to depression, as individuals constantly suffer from feelings of sadness and loss of hope.

Constant worry about the future and the ability to deal with challenges can be a prominent characteristic of these individuals.

Social withdrawal: Defeatist individuals tend to withdraw from social situations and avoid interacting with others, which reinforces feelings of loneliness and isolation.

In short, psychologists believe that the defeatist personality is the product of a complex interaction between biological, psychological, and social factors. Understanding these factors and working to address them can help individuals overcome feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and develop a more positive and effective lifestyle. Therefore, the research revealed the novelist's attempt to deliver a message to his audience through which defeatist individuals can gain self-confidence and learn how to face challenges in constructive ways, as life is a long struggle that is not devoid of problems, difficulties, and challenges.

Interaction between literature and society:

Studying defeatist characters in the Arabic novel can explain how literature interacts with society and how it affects it. Sociologists are interested in how literature influences social and cultural awareness, and how it can contribute to changes in social thinking and behavior.

In addition to individual and group experiences, the defeatist personality is not just an individual condition, but rather an expression of collective experiences. Sociologists view these figures as examples of the collective experiences of individuals in oppressed or crisis-affected societies. Through this brief research, it is possible to understand how collective identity is formed and how literature writes about this identity.

Conclusion:

At the conclusion of this research, we find that the defeatist character in the Arabic novel represents, honestly and deeply, the embodiment of the psychological, social, and political crises that individuals in Arab societies suffer from. By reviewing prominent defeatist figures in literary works, it clearly shows how Arabic literature reflects the complexities of the human soul and its struggles with bitter reality.

The embodiment of the defeatist personality by Arab novelists is not just a description of an individual situation, but rather a social and cultural criticism that highlights the causes of failure and frustration in Arab societies. There are many reasons behind this psychological defeat, ranging from social injustice and political persecution, to economic crises and poverty, to the conflict between modernity and tradition.

Through the analysis of Iraqi novels, it becomes clear that this defeatist personality is not limited to a specific region or period of time, but rather is a phenomenon rooted in the human psyche that faces multiple challenges in different contexts. Arab novelists highlight psychological crises through defeatist characters, which prompts the reader to think deeply about the surrounding circumstances and their role in shaping the psychology of individuals.

Psychologists believe that understanding the defeatist personality and the factors affecting it can help provide psychological and moral support to individuals who suffer from feelings of helplessness and despair. The role of literature in raising awareness of these issues is an important step towards achieving positive change in society. Also, this research is influential for understanding the social and cultural challenges facing Arab societies, and how literature expresses and reflects these challenges.