



Arabic Science Fiction as Vehicle for Criticism

The case of Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah's *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*

Desirée Custers

Presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Arabic and Islamic Studies

Supervisor: prof. dr. Helge Daniëls (promoter)
Co-supervisor: dr. Saraa Saleh (co-promoter)

Academic year 2018-2019

131.946 characters

Cover image © Desiree Custers (Issabramil)



I hereby declare that, in line with the Faculty of Arts' code of conduct for research integrity, the work submitted here is my own original work and that any additional sources of information have been duly cited.

تقوم رسالة الماجستير هذه بتحليل كيف يمكن استخدام الخيال العلمي في الأدب العربي ليعبر على إنتقادات إجتماعية وسياسية. تبدأ الرسالة بتوصيف تاريخ الخيال العلمي الغربي والعربي وتنتقل إلى تحليل أمثلة هذه الرسالة: رواية " حرب الكلب الثانية" لإبراهيم نصرالله، مستخدمة نظرية إيان كامبيل عن الخيال العلمي العربي، نظرية "الإبعاد الثنائي". تقول هذه النظرية إنَّ الإبعاد الأول هو الإنتقاد الإجتماعي والسياسي عبر الرمز بينما الإبعاد الثاني يشير إلى الإنقطاع بين التطور التقني في العصر الذهبي وركود هذا التطور التقنية الحديث في العالم العربي. تستنتج هذه الرسالة أن الرواية تنتقد الطبيعة الإنسانية في العالم العربي بشكل خاص، وفي العالم كله بشكل عام عبر استخدام الإبعاد الثنائي و"عملية الترقيع". إنتقاداتها الإجتماعية والسياسية الرئيسية هي: ميول الإنسان إلى العنف والإستقطاب، والسياسة ما بعد الحقيقة، وتغير التحالف بشكل إنتهازي، والفساد، وتشابه الإنسان في عالم العولمة المعاصر. بالنسبة للمستوى الثاني للإبعاد، فقد استخدام التقنية في الرواية كآلة (أجنبية) لإضطهاد الناس وليس من أجل تقدمه. علاوة على ذلك تستخدم الرواية في بابها الأخير نوعاً من عملية الترقيع عبر لغته الكلاسيكية وصوره القديمة، التي تنفي التطورات التقنية في بقية الرواية.

This thesis analyses how contemporary Arabic science fiction (sci-fi) can be used to express social and political criticism in the Arab world. It starts with describing the history of both the Western and the Arabic sci-fi. It then moves to analyse its case study Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah's novel *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*. In doing this it use Ian Campbell's theory on Arabic sci-fi, that of *double estrangement*: the first layer of estrangement being the use of allegory for social or political criticism, and the second refers to the discontinuity between past technological progress in the Arab- Islamic Golden Age and present stagnation in the Arab world. The thesis concludes that by using double estrangement and *patching* the novel criticizes human nature in the Arab world specifically, and on a global scale more generally. Its main political and social criticisms are: the human tendency towards violence, polarisation and post-truth politics, the changing of alliances based on material interests, corruption, and the similarity of people in the contemporary globalized context. The second layer of estrangement is formed by technology being used as a tool of dehumanization and (foreign) oppression rather than a force for advancement. Furthermore, the novel applies a form of 'patching' through use of classical language and imagery in its last chapter which cancels the technological development in the rest of the novel.

Acknowledgements

I would like to start by sincerely thanking my thesis supervisor prof. dr. Helge Daniëls, whose lectures on Arabic literature formed the starting point of my interest in the topic, and co-supervisor dr. Saraa Saleh, whose enthusiasm made writing this thesis a real joy.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my loved ones and family for believing in me and encouraging me throughout my years of study. Assad in particular. And Kiki the cat, for always keeping me company. Thank you to my colleagues and the staff at ‘Arabic and Islamic studies’, with a special mention to Sarah, Ines and Nicolaas, whose friendship alone makes the years of studying worthwhile.

Finally I would like to thank Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah, author of this thesis’ case study, for his willingness to let me interview him on his novel.

Content

Abstract/ خلاصة.....	iii
Transliteration System.....	vi
I. Introduction	1
Defining sci-fi.....	1
Status Quaestionis	3
Methodology	5
II. Development of sci-fi	7
History of Western sci-fi	7
Conclusion.....	10
III. Development of Arabic Sci-Fi	11
Definition of Arabic Literature.....	11
History of Arabic sci-fi.....	13
The Arab-Islamic Golden Age and proto sci-fi.....	13
The Nahḍa and sci-fi translations	16
Early Arabic sci-fi	17
Twenty-first century Arabic sci-fi	21
Writing sci-fi in the Arab world	22
Conclusion.....	23
IV. Case study	25
The Case: Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllāh - <i>Ḥarb al-Kalb al-Thāniyyah</i>	25
Analysis.....	29
Arab Cultural and Religious Heritage	48
Technology	51
Implications of the war	54
Double estrangement in <i>Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah</i>	55
Conclusion.....	55
V. Conclusion	58
Bibliography	60

Transliteration System

The Alphabet

ا a	س s	ل l
ب b	ش sh	م m
ت t	ص ṣ	ن n
ث th	ض ḍ	ه/ة h/ah
ج j	ط ṭ	و w/ū
ح ḥ	ظ ḏ	ي ī/y
خ kh	ع ʿ	ى ā
د d	غ gh	ء ʾ
ذ dh	ف f	
ر r	ق q	
ز z	ك k	

Short vowels

ا a َ double the radical

و u

ي i

This transliteration system is applied to names and titles that are originally in Arabic. In the case of citing English book or article from an author with an Arabic name, the writing style of the author him/ herself is used.

I. Introduction

Writers in the Arab world have often served as voices that question, criticise, and evaluate society. Their literature offers psychological insight and self-criticism in which various dimensions of alienation, disillusion and disappointment in Arab societies are explored. This is especially true for periods of hardship and of radical and societal change, something the Arab world has consistently witnessed from the beginning of the last century. Literature has also been used in the creation of a shared identity, or collective memory and has functioned as a refuge from violence and war.

However, these voices have not always coincided with the political and social goals of various Arab regimes often resulting in a high level of censorship and many writers face threats, arrests, imprisonment and torture.¹ A creative way in which many writers have been able to avoid confrontation is by using allegory. Allegory can obscure the social, political, cultural and religious message of literature, making it difficult for a regime to accuse the writer 'wrong' and 'un-loyal' writing. There are different ways in which allegory can be used, for example through folklore, fables, mythology, historical novels and, the focus of this thesis, science fiction (sci-fi).

Sci-fi offers a symbolic, hypothetical parallel universe in which writers can think freely when creating their own world which they can then freely criticise. Furthermore, sci-fi allows for experimenting with the boundaries of human beings. Third, the genre allows for predicting the future of humanity. Many technological advances have been anticipated in sci-fi novels. These advances and their relation to humans have also remained an important subject in sci-fi.

This thesis aims to answer the question: how has Arab sci-fi published from 2000 onwards reflect on contemporary Arab societies? It thus questions what the important themes are within Arabic literary sci-fi works and how these themes relate to the social and political context Arab world? The thesis will start by giving a historical introduction to the genre of sci-fi. This will be followed by a description of the history of Arabic sci-fi and a case-study analysis of the Arabic sci-fi novel *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah* by Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah.

Defining sci-fi

The genre of sci-fi knows many definitions varying from narrow to broad. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* defines it as:

¹ Roger Allen. 1992. "The Mature Arabic Novel Outside Egypt." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 193-223, 220

containing a narrative which is set in an alternative or altered reality. This can either contain topics that go beyond the confines of the normal human experience such as aliens, and time travel, but also changes to the familiar human world such as through technology, future war and ecological change.²

This definition emphasizes the environment in which a certain narrative is set, stating that it needs to be either radically or partially different from the current environment humans live in without that change necessarily being ‘technological’. A second definition relates the term ‘science’ with its Latin origin *scientia*, meaning *knowledge*.³ According to this definition sci-fi novels present any form of knowledge, whether technological, philosophical or theological and relates this knowledge on the way society is, was and could be shaped.

When it comes to the relationship between sci-fi and social commentary, Darko Suvin, one of the most influential Western theorists of sci-fi, offers a more comprehensive definition. He argues that the genre should achieve *cognitive estrangement*.⁴ ‘Cognitive’ here refers to the scientific plausibility of world presented in the literary work while ‘estrangement’ means making the familiar unfamiliar to criticise the familiar. This latter is based on the works of the playwright Bertolt Brecht who uses the word *Verfremdung* to refer to a form of alienation from the familiar to provoke a new perspective on reality allowing it to be seen more truthful. According to Suvin estrangement can be achieved by introducing a *novum* in a narrative that differs from the author’s empirical environment. The novum, he states, should be an extrapolation from current science or a rewrite of history using the novum in a time which it was not (yet) invented. As was the case with an altered environment and knowledge in the previous two definitions, the function of the novum in Suvin’s definition is to reflect on the current conditions of a given society. Following this definition, the cognitive value of sci-fi lies in its relationship to the present rather than its predictive value.

The role of technology becomes clear when defining the difference between sci-fi and other genres that use similar elements or alternative environments such as works of fantasy, myths, folktale or even parody. Sci-fi’s novum or alternative reality entails a scientific change which is so *hegemonic* in the story line that it determines the whole narrative logic.⁵

² J.A. Cuddon and M.A.R. Habib. 2013. *The Penguin Dictionary Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 5th edition, Penguin: London, 638

³ Adam Roberts. 2006. *The History of Science-fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan : Hampshire, 9

⁴ Darko Suvin. 1979. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. Kent State University Press: Kent, 10

⁵ Darko Suvin. 1979. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. 70

Status Quaestionis

In 1998 Hannah Arendt, one of the leading political philosophers of the 20th century, wrote when referencing to the first human expeditions out of earth: “newspapers finally brought to its front page what up to then had been buried in the highly non-respectable literature of science fiction”... she adds: “to which, unfortunately, nobody yet has paid the attention it deserves as a vehicle of mass sentiments and mass desires.”⁶

Although research on Western sci-fi has increased since 1998, Arendt’s statement remains true when it comes to Arabic sci-fi, mainly because it was not considered to be real and serious literature (*adab*). Even though Arabic sci-fi has been published since the 1960s, its first analysis was only published in 1982. This was done by ‘Iṣām Bahā who argued that sci-fi was a genre of popular literature coming forth from technological advances and focussing only on technological predictions that are disruptive of traditional Arabic society and its values.⁷ Discussing literature in the modern age of technology, Madḥat al- Jiyār published an article two years after Bahā stating that sci-fi naturally came to being as a consequence of the fast developments in the field of technology. Sci-fi, according to him, helps understand and place these changes. He argues that due to its role in helping to understand the world, sci-fi is indeed a serious new literary form.⁸ He also analyses two novels from a religious viewpoint.

In 1990 the first book-length analysis of Arabic sci-fi was published written by Muḥammad Najīb al- Talāwī. He argued that modern Arabic sci-fi is indeed a valid literary genre and defines it as describing technological developments and their relationship to humankind. But he also states that the genre is immature due to the lacking technological developments in the Arabic world in the twentieth century and the lacking narrative development in Arabic literature itself. This latter he states, is for example shown in the ‘flattened’ characters and the emphasis on technology only.⁹ Analysing a number of modern Arabic sci-fi novels, he argues that although modern Arabic sci-fi focusses on the future, it does so by glorifying the past and is therefore related to the Arab traditional rational mind set and Arabic literary heritage.¹⁰ He shows this in two ways: by the links made between scientific development and past glory, and by the cancelation of the scientific development at the end of the novel thus returning its setting to the traditional order. This latter he terms: ‘*amaliyat al-tarqī*’ (patching).

⁶ Hannah Arendt. 1998. *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2

⁷ ‘Iṣām Bahā. 1982. “al- Khayāl al- ‘ilmī wa al- r’uyā al- mustaqbal.” *al- fuṣūl* 2(2): 57- 65, 57

⁸ Madḥat al- Jiyār. 1984. “Mushkilat al-ḥadātha fī- riwāyat al-khayāl al- ‘ilmī.” *al- fuṣūl* 4(4): 180-184, 180

⁹ Muḥammad Najīb al- Talāwī. 1990. *Qīsas al- khayāl al- ‘ilmī fī al- adab al- ‘arabī*. Dar al- Mutanabbi: Irbid, 8

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13

In 1994 Muḥammad ‘Azzām defined Arabic sci-fi as a reconciliation between literature and science in which writers predominantly describe past and possible future discoveries and inventions.¹¹ His definition of sci-fi is centred purely on technology. A study specific on modern Egyptian sci-fi was published in 2001 by Mahā Maḥlūm Khidr, describing both the history of Egyptian sci-fi and a close reading of examples of modern novels. In the case of history, she emphasizes the role of colonization in the formation of literature on cultural conflict. After Egyptian independence, she argues, sci-fi was used to imagine a new future for the country.¹²

In these early studies sci-fi has thus been described primarily as related to the role of technology and less so as a vehicle for future predictions of Arab societies. In 2007, the literary journal *al-Fuṣūl* published an issue dedicated to Arabic sci-fi.¹³ In it, Muḥammad al-Kurdī reflects on several Arabic sci-fi tropes and their function of estrangement.¹⁴ The fact that the genre of sci-fi was the topic of a special issue shows that modern Arabic sci-fi came to be considered literature.

A study on the construction of character in Arabic sci-fi was published by ‘Iṣām ‘Asāqala in 2011. His contribution added to the above mentioned studies because he clearly relates the definition of modern Arabic sci-fi to issues and problems facing contemporary Arabic society: to the hopes, fears and desires of its people, and to their future.¹⁵ ‘Asāqala also defined sci-fi as being a new type of literature that describes imagined events by using scientific and technological innovation.¹⁶ Furthermore, he emphasises that sci-fi is not only a Western literary genre and downplayed its threat as being ‘a Western invention’, stating that through using specific language, intertextuality and narrative Arabic sci-fi could become very culturally specific.

In the case of non- Arabic language analysis of Arabic sci-fi, Reuven Snir was the first to publish an article in 2000 in *Der Islam* stating that Arabic sci-fi has been ignored because it was not considered to fit into the ‘serious’ genre of literature.¹⁷ Through his analysis of Arabic sci-fi, he concludes that the genre mixes sci-fi with traditional genres of Arabic

¹¹ Muḥammad ‘Azzām. 1994. *al-Khayāl fī al-adab al-‘arabī*. Dār talas al-dirāsāt wa al-tarjama wa al-nashr: Damascus, 10

¹² Mahā Maḥlūm Khidr. 2001. *Binā’ riwāyat al-khayāl al-‘ilmī fī al-adab al-maṣrī al-mu’āṣir*. al-Aāhira: Cairo, 23

¹³ *al-Fuṣūl* 2007. “Milaff al-‘adad: al-khayāl al-‘ilmī fī al-adab al-‘arabī.” 71(3)

¹⁴ Muḥammad al-Kurdī. 2007. “al-khayāl al-‘ilmī: qirā’at li-sh‘ariyyat jins adabī.” *al-fuṣūl* 71(3): 20-28

¹⁵ ‘Iṣām ‘Asāqala. 2011. *Banā’ al-shakḥṣiyāt fī riwāyat al-khayāl al-‘ilmī fī al-Adab al-‘arabī*. al-Azminah: Amman, 11-13

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Reuven Snir. 2000. “The Emergence of Science-fiction in Arab Literature.” *Der Islam* 77(2): 263- 285

literature, especially those related to religious experience.¹⁸ He also states that Arabic sci-fi has not (yet) developed itself as a medium capable of expressing social comment because it is ‘too prone to serve for amusement or didactic aims’.¹⁹ Thirdly, he develops the concept of ‘Islamic- sci-fi’, a form of sci-fi in which Islamic concepts and values take priority in future mankind.

Ada Barbaro published a book in 2013 titled *La fantastica nella letteratura araba* in which she provides an extensive analysis of Arabic sci-fi through the ages, including a close reading of novels through a critical framework she developed herself. This framework centres on time and space and she states that Arabic sci-fi addresses time in two ways: the quest for immortality; and the conquest of the future.²⁰ These two elements are however, dealt with cautiously in Arabic sci-fi because they challenge the Islamic religious notion that the future is already written. Space is divided in Arabic sci-fi taking place in terrestrial and celestial spaces.

Lastly, Ian Campbell published a book in 2018 titled *Arabic Science Fiction* in which he developed a theory on how to interpret modern Arabic sci-fi and analyses several early novels through this theoretical lens. He states that due to the use of allegory in modern Arabic literature in general and the estranging character of sci-fi, Arabic sci-fi functions as a double estrangement to its readers.²¹ This theory will be explained more thoroughly in the next chapters and will be used to analyse the case study of this thesis.

Methodology

The aim of this research is to reflect on how sci-fi in contemporary Arabic literature relates to the social and political issues in contemporary Arab society. To do this, the thesis will first provide an overview of the history of sci-fi, both in and outside of the Arab world. It will then show how contemporary Arabic sci-fi has reflected on the social and political dimension of Arab societies.

Although literature comprises poetry, short stories, novels, and comic novels, this novel will primarily focus on novels. The starting date of modern Arabic literature is generally agreed upon as 1913, when Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykil published his famous novel *Zaynab*. This is the date this research refers to when mentioning *modern* Arabic literature. This thesis however, uses the word *contemporary*, with which it refers to the date of 2000 onwards. It

¹⁸ He also describes the existence of ‘Islamic Science Fiction’ which will be described in the section on ‘Arabic sci-fi and religion’.

¹⁹ Reuven Snir. 2000. “The Emergence of Science- fiction in Arab Literature.”, 280

²⁰ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. Palgrave MacMillan: London, 82

²¹ *Ibid.*, 9

makes this distinction for two reasons. First, because it aims to fill a void in current academic literature on Arabic sci-fi. Although not much research has been done on Arabic sci-fi, most of what has been researched are novels from the start of modern Arabic sci-fi (approximately 1950s) until around the 1990s. This thesis, concentrating on the most recent generation of literary publishing and on the recent social and political developments in the Arabic world, chooses as its starting date the turn of the millennium. Second, the period following the year 2000 has had profound impact on the Arabic world: it re-introduced Western, especially American, imperialism in the form of occupations and interventions. Although Western influence in the region dates from the previous two centuries, the 9/11 attacks of 2001 justified damaging and intruding military occupation and in many cases the installment or support of Arabic regimes that supported the Western interests of modernity and globalism, not necessarily their own people. The general overview given in the second and third chapter of this thesis allows for the drawing of a general conclusion how Arabic sci-fi relates to the social and political context of the Arab world.

The selection of sci-fi works described in the third chapter of this research (on the development of Arab Arabic sci-fi) is done by taking the examples of the above-mentioned books on modern Arabic literature, academic articles, and online sources. While the first two sources are useful for in-depth analysis and description, the latter source allows for this thesis to include recent publications that have not yet found their way to academic journals.

In the fourth chapter, 'Case Study', will look at the novel *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah* by Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah through the theoretical lens developed by Ian Campbell in 2018. This theory entails that modern Arabic sci-fi has two levels of estrangement: the first referring to the use of allegory in critiquing its social and political environment; and the second in the tension coming forth from the use of technology and its relation to scientific and technological stagnation in the Arab world since the glory days of Arab/Muslim dominance. The theory will be further described in the fourth chapter. The thesis is both quantitative because it provides an overview of contemporary Arabic sci-fi works, as qualitative because it provides an in-depth analysis. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah* will be analyzed by looking at quoted paragraphs from the novel. The quotations will be in Arabic with a translation into English. All translations are made by the author.

II. Development of sci-fi

The history of sci-fi is often a topic of debate seeing as much disagreements exist on its exact origins. Many different works are cited as ‘the start’ of sci-fi and what one considers to be correct or not depends heavily on one’s definition of the genre. What is clear however, is that sci-fi as a literary genre has mainly been developed in the West and has from there expanded to other regions of the world. It is for this reason that this section of the research will provide a short history of sci-fi in its broadest sense.

History of Western sci-fi

The author most cited when referring to the history of sci-fi in both the Euro-American as well as the Middle- Eastern tradition is Lucian (AD 120-190). Two of his works could be considered proto sci-fi: *Ikaromenippos* and *Alethes Historia* which were both written between AD 160-180. In the first, the hero of the novel travels to the moon where he surveys the earth beneath him. In the second, a ship is sucked into the sky after which it lands on the moon.²²

Literary output in Europe was paused during its ‘Dark Ages’ (5th until 15th century). But the emphasis on science in European society during the Renaissance (14th until 17th century) made way for literature exploring scientific and technological developments. The undoing of Copernicus of the scientific authority of the Catholic Church when he proposed that the earth and other planets rotated around the sun, provided an important turning point in this respect.²³ Furthermore, utopian and dystopian novels accompanied the European (colonial) journeys to other parts of the world in the 17th century. These novels reflected on ‘otherness’ in material terms: ‘lands that might actually be reached by a voyager, strange but material new forms of human life and society and so on’.²⁴ John Rieder argues that Western colonialism, the imbalance of social power and the Social Darwinist ideologies that justified colonialism present themselves in sci-fi writings.²⁵ The ‘Other’ that the westerners meet during their sci-fi voyages are framed to be ignorant natives with low levels of technology are therefore at low levels of human evolution and power.²⁶ 18th century Europe also inspired the emergence of scientific poetry and prose.²⁷ Two key texts in this genre were *Gulliver’s Travels*²⁸ (1726) by

²² Adam Roberts. 2006. *The History of Science-fiction*. 29

²³ *Ibid.*, 36

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 54

²⁵ John Rieder. 2008. *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*. Wesleyan University Press: Middletown, 2-3

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2

²⁷ meaning the 18th century philosophical consensus on the primacy of reason and the importance of experimental and evidential science which challenges older religious myths and superstitions

Jonathan Swift and Voltaire's *Micromégas*²⁹ (1750). Both these texts expanded the field of imagination far beyond conventional thought and are examples of extraordinary travels which reflected the emerging Western culture of expansion and conquest.³⁰

The tendency to write about the future and the relationship between sci-fi and colonialism continued during the 19th century, a period which was dominated by two Anglophone writers: Mary Shelley (1797-1851) and Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849). Shelley has often been credited with providing the first modern sci-fi novel: *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818).³¹ Poe's major work is *Eureka: a Prose Poem* (1849), a lengthy prose disquisition that combines contemporary science and astronomical knowledge with a quasi-idealist religious sensibility.³² In second half of the 19th Jules Verne published many *voyages extraordinaires* (such as trips to the core of the earth and the moon) and H.G. Wells introduced the movement away from utopia sci-fi with his many novels, among them *The Time Machine* (1895).

The 20th century and its technological advancements brought sci-fi to a cultural dominance.³³ Sci-fi was present as both 'high art' and popular culture: the former focusing on the aesthetic of modernism and on form and style while the latter existed out of a large group of writers providing popular narrative for a new audience created by mass literacy. Furthermore, a distinction could be made between sci-fi opposing and supporting technological advances. Opposition feared that the individual would be reduced to a mechanical element with no spiritual or intellectual value, a fear that was related to the political developments in Europe that led to second world war. Dystopian novels such as Aldous Huxely's *Brave New World*³⁴ (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*³⁵ (1949) explored this theme.

The Christian religion influenced sci-fi in this period, despite the 20th century becoming more secular. Examples include novels on religious figures, novels set in a specific religious community, or societies dominated by a specific religious structure. Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959) for example, is set after a devastating nuclear war when

²⁸ The story of Gulliver who's desire to travel brings him to strange places where humans take different forms (such as 12 times their usual size) and embarks on exciting adventures.

²⁹ Two aliens find a ship of philosophers on earth who they are surprised to learn, know much about science, but are essentially ignorant on matters of the soul.

³⁰ Adam Roberts. 2006. *The History of Science-fiction*. 68

³¹ In this novel Victor Frankenstein creates a creature who mirrors himself, but his creation unintentionally becomes tragic, malign and murderous because of the way society reacts to him. Through history, the 'creature' has come to represent any kind of extra-bourgeois group: a group that has the potential for good but is thwarted and turned to destructive ends.

³² *Ibid.*, 95

³³ *Ibid.*, 175

³⁴ in which human happiness is a defying quality and citizens merely serve the communities' capitalist interests

³⁵ set in a future of constant war between three world states governed by an absolutist regime

civilization has collapsed, and the Catholic Church organizes a spacecraft to travel to create a new world elsewhere. Furthermore, many superhero comics expressed the role of a ‘saviour’ deviated from a religious (‘Christ-type’) or mythological (for example ‘Hercules’) framework.

The successful launch of the Sputnik in 1957 by the Soviet Union realized what many sci-fi novels anticipated: travel through space. It was followed in 1969 by NASA’s Apollo mission to the moon: the future that was so often speculated about was coming true. A sci-fi trend following these developments was termed ‘New Wave’ and was characterised by a focus on content and ‘ideas’ rather than form, and avoided the ‘standard’ topics of sci-fi such as interstellar travel, extra-terrestrial life forms and galactic wars.³⁶ It was also influenced by the threat of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War, take for example the Algerian/French writer Robert Merle’s *Malevil* (1972) which was set in the aftermath of a nuclear war.

From the Russian perspective, the Strugatski brothers published their novel *Trudno byt’ bogom* (‘Hard to be God’, 1964). It depicts humans from a communist earth helping an alien world to modernise, but because the humans are considered as Gods by the indigenous population, they become corrupt.³⁷ New Wave novels also included mysticism and the use of psychotropic drugs as a passage to a transcendental transformation.³⁸

Post 1960s women’s movements led to the creation of ‘feminist sci-fi’, using sci-fi metaphorically to deal with specific topics such as gender (roles) and sexuality as social constructs. It has been suggested that the first feminist sci-fi predated this era and was written by a Bengali Muslima writer and activist, Rokeya Sakhawat. Her short story ‘Sultana’s Dream’ (1905) takes place in the mythical realm of Ladyland in which women use science to overpower men.³⁹

What can be noted on post-2000 sci-fi is the increased attempt at reconciling religious views with modern developments such as technology and increased secularisation of the public life. Many parts of the world, including the Arab world as we will see shortly, often conceived sci-fi as related to Western science and western hegemonic aspirations. Some

³⁶ Ibid., 231

³⁷ Ibid., 261

³⁸ An example is Frank Herbert’s *Dune* (1963-5), an environmental sci-fi novel in which earth is a desert and the Dune’s sandworms produce an addictive drug to enhance human capacities. Due to this drug the earth becomes valuable and the novel portrays a power conflict over its ruling.³⁸ The desert setting and the rightful leader of earth, Paul, reminds of the ‘Mahdi’ in Islamic tradition. In the sequels to *Dune*, Paul dies a martyr and his son, Leto who is shaped as a giant worm, rules the earth in a dictatorial manner, eventually gaining total knowledge of the cosmos. The novel renders the coming of the messiah in a political context to show how close it can be to fascism.

³⁹ Muhammad Aurangzeb Ahmad. 2017. “Sci-Fi and Speculative Fiction in the Muslim Tradition.” *The Wire*. 28 June 2017 (<https://thewire.in/culture/sci-fi-speculative-fiction-muslim-tradition>) .

writers have therefore preferred to focus on their folklore heritage.⁴⁰ In the 20th century however, a few African writers are making their mark on the sci-fi literary tradition such as the Ghanaian writer B. Kojo Laing. Sci-fi is thus increasing its geographical space.

Conclusion

Although Western sci-fi focusses on the future, we can see in the development of western sci-fi is shaped by three elements: cultural element (such as religion and literary heritage fables); political developments (such as colonisation and the cold war); and technological developments (such as space travel and machines). In the next section the definition and development of Arabic sci-fi is central.

⁴⁰ Adam Roberts. 2006. *The History of Science-fiction*. 344

III. Development of Arabic Sci-Fi

Now that the previous chapter has described the general history sci-fi it will take a closer look at the development of the Arabic sci-fi genre. To do this correctly, it is important to define 'Arabic literature' and explain the way in which literature and writing is perceived in the Arab world. This section of the thesis will start by defining Arabic literature followed by a closer look at the characterises of writing and reading modern Arabic literature. Finally, it will describe the development Arabic sci-fi from a historical perspective.

Definition of Arabic Literature

The 'Arab world' to which this thesis refers is made up of more than twenty Arabic-speaking countries that each have their own dialect(s), culture, and political context. To better comprehend the role of sci-fi in Arab societies, a few comments should be made on what writing and reading in modern Arab society means. Writing in the Arab world can be characterized by two elements. First, writers face limitations and censorship, and in the worst cases also arrest, imprisonment and torture. Second, writers in the Arab world seldom earn enough from their literary work to make a living. Even Najīb Maḥfuḏ, for example, who won the Nobel prize for literature, had to remain a public servant throughout his life.⁴¹

Ambiguity, allegory and symbolism are often used to conceal social and political critique to provide plausible deniability if confronted by scrutiny. As such, allegory is a dominant mode in modern Arabic literature.⁴² For readers unfamiliar with this characteristic of modern Arabic literature, the literature can seem simple or flat, especially when it concerns a translation. Its characters are often intended to represent demographic groups within the society that is being critiqued rather than psychologically realistic individuals.⁴³ Writers' self-imposed censorship and methods of narrative codification also often led to the wider public feeling alienated from their work.⁴⁴ Arab readers have however, become used to 'reading between the lines'.⁴⁵

An example of the use is allegory, is by setting a certain storyline in the past but making its characters or circumstances resemble the contemporary situation. Alfred Faraj's play *Suqūṭ*

⁴¹ A bureaucratic job is not a strange choice, seeing as most of the jobs that permit writers to pursue their craft are in state cultural bureaucracy (editors of newspapers and journals for example). See Roger Allen. 1992. "The Mature Arabic Novel Outside Egypt." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 193-223, 220

⁴² Hilary Kilpatrick. 1992. "The Egyptian novel from *Zaynab* to 1980." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 223-270, 254-8

⁴³ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 93

⁴⁴ Sabry Hafez. 1992. "The modern Arabic short story." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 270- 329, 325

⁴⁵ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 7

Fir‘awn (‘The fall of pharaoh’, 1957), for example, describes the inner conflict of the Pharaoh *Ikhnaton* between his new pacifist religion and his duties as monarch of the state, which involved action and violence. The Pharaoh abdicates the throne to his son and devotes himself to teaching his new religion. The political message of the play is the need for the state leader to take responsibility and act.⁴⁶ Another example is Jamāl al-Ghīṭānī’s *al-Zaynī Barakāt* (1985, English trans. *Zayni Barakat*, 1988). The novel records the disintegration of the Mamluk Sultanate in the years 1507-18 through the accounts of several characters grouped around the powerful figure of al-Zaynī Barakāt. Zaynī, by carefully combining Machiavellian and populist methods, survives the fall of the Mamluk throne and joins the ranks of the new Ottoman rulers. The novel can be read as a critical assessment of the Nasserist era in Egypt. Nasser (Jamāl ‘Abd al-Nāṣṣir) came to power in Egypt after the Free Officers revolution of 1952. He was a pan-Arab nationalist and one of the most important Arab political and cultural figures of the previous century. While Egypt during the start of his rule looked at its own future with élan, it eventually became disillusion when Nasser’s regime became more and more totalitarian. al-Zaynī’s preoccupation with internal security and his neglect of the external threat resulting in the catastrophe of 1517 resembled Nasser’s unpreparedness during the Six-Day war in 1967.⁴⁷

Mythology and folklore are also used allegorically. Take for example adaptations of the Greek story of Oedipus.⁴⁸ Alī Aḥmad Bakāthīr’s adaptation of the play titled *Ma’sāt Ūdīb*, (‘The tragedy of Oedipus’, 1949), reflects the historical and politically influenced conflict between Islamists and the growing Marxist movement in the Arab world in the 1940s. Oedipus, a Marxist in this play, fails to achieve social justice while his enemy, Tiresias, does succeed by suggesting that social justice can only be reached by the will of God.⁴⁹ Reading, that is, the understanding of fiction in the Arab world, thus differs from its Western counterpart.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Mustafa Badawi. 1987. *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 171-2

⁴⁷ Richard van Leeuwen. 1995. “Love and the Mechanisms of Power: Kamāl ‘Abd al-Jawwād and Sa‘īd al-Jahaynī” in *Love and Sexuality in Modern Arabic Literature*, eds. Roger Allen, Hilary Kilpatrick, and Ed de Moor. Saqi Books: London, 91-106, 93- 4; and

Aida O. Azouqa. 2011. “Gamāl al-Ghīṭānī’s ‘Pyramid Texts’ and the Fiction of Jorge Luis Borges: A Comparative Study.” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 42: 1-28, 4

⁴⁸ This play was written by Socrates and performed between 430 and 426 bce. It examines the story of Oedipus Rex, the king of Thebes who unwittingly killed his father and married his mother.

⁴⁹ Mohammad Almohanna. 2016. “Greek Drama in the Arab World.” *A Handbook to the Reception of Greek Drama*, eds. Betine van Zyl Smit. John Wiley & Sons: Chichester, West Sussex, 370

History of Arabic sci-fi

In the 1970s the Arabic term *al-khayāl al-‘ilmī* was developed to denote Arabic sci-fi. Translated to English the term means something like ‘the scientific imaginary’. What is lost in this translation however, is the many connotations the word ‘ilmī has, for it is not only associated with science. The root of the word is ‘-l-m meaning to know, to perceive, or to learn.⁵⁰ The word ‘ilm can mean science, as in ‘political science’ but can also mean religious or mystical knowledge. As such, Arabic sci-fi can not only refer to a rational, secular form of science, but also holds a religious, mystical association. This will be further developed in the next section of this thesis.

The Arab-Islamic Golden Age and proto sci-fi

For over 1,000 years after the collapse of the Hellenistic and Roman culture (‘the Dark Ages’, 5th until 15th century AD) sci-fi in Europe disappeared as a literary form, as did literary cultural in general (see previous chapter). In this same period, between the 6th and the 12th century, the Arab- Islamic world experienced what was later called the ‘Golden Age’. In this period the Islamic empire spread vastly and eventually included a territory that expanded from Spain to Italy. Arabic literature reflected the vast array of cultures and people. The literary output of this period addressed the religious, philosophical and scientific discourses existing in the different regions and interwove them with fiction narratives. Furthermore, the Islamic leadership in this Golden Age, the ‘Abbāsīd leadership, made the uptake of knowledge from all regions their state policy and many Muslims writing in Arabic undertook their own scientific developments.

Modern Arabic sci-fi finds its roots in four genres of classical and medieval Arabic literature: ‘*ajā’ib* or *mirabilia* and folklore tales, philosophical works, utopian works and works on technological marvels.⁵¹ The first, ‘*ajā’ib* or *mirabilia* literature, refers to stories of extraordinary journeys and extraordinary human feats of a semi-mythic stature drawn from both Hellenist learning, the Qur’an and the religious tradition of Islam and popular fairy-tales and beliefs.⁵² The root of ‘*ajā’ib* translates to ‘to be astonished, to wonder, to [take] delight’. An example of an author from this tradition is the thirteenth-century astronomer and physician from Baghdad Zakarīyyā’ al- Qazwīnī who is famous for his cosmography ‘*ajā’ib al-*

⁵⁰ The Arabic language is, as are other Semitic languages, organized by a 3, sometimes 4, letter root-system. Words with the same root have different meanings depending on the arrangement of the vowels or the added consonants before and after the root.

⁵¹ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 49, he is using Ada Barbaro’s 2013 study *La fantascienza nella letteratura araba*. Carrocci editore: Rome

⁵² Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey 1998. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*. Routledge: New York, 65

makhlūqāt wa gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt ('Marvellous things of creation and wondrous things of existence'). His tale *Awaj bin Anfāq* (published around 1250), for example, depicts a man who travels to the earth from a distant planet. This story is set in the fantastic but refers to rational and cognitive phenomena to expand the reader's awareness of the complexity and depth of creation.⁵³ It is the marvellous in these tales that make this genre of classic literature a precursor to Arabic sci-fi.

Early elements of sci-fi can also be found in folktales and popular literature. These tales often combine the fantastic with historical details. The tales of *Alf Layla wa Layla* (translated to English as *1001 Nights* or *Arabian nights*) are probably the most famous.⁵⁴ Many of its tales depict advanced technologies such as 'The Ebony Horse', a story about a mechanical horse capable of flying to outer space.⁵⁵ Other stories use imaginative communities such as an underwater civilisation in 'Julnar of the Sea' and in 'Abdallah the Fisherman'. The estrangement in these tales provide an anchor for modern Arabic sci-fi.

The third category, philosophical works, use voyage and/or unusual places or situations as a means of posing an argument.⁵⁶ There are two examples often referred to in relation to modern Arabic sci-fi: that of Ibn Ṭufayl (1105-1185 CE) and of Ibn al-Nafīs (1213-1288 CE). The first, an Andalusian philosopher, wrote *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān fī 'Asrār al-Ḥikma al-Mashriqiyya*, (English trans. *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzān, A Philosophical Tale*, 2009) often referred to as 'The Self-Taught Philosopher'. It was translated to Latin in 1671 as *Philisophus Autodidactus* and widely read in Europe. The story depicts an infant boy on an uninhabited island who is raised by animals. The boy, Ḥayy, uses observation and logic to achieve a rational and complete understanding of his environment before he is introduced to a Muslim environment as a grown man by Asal. Asal is subsequently astonished to find that Ḥayy has the same understanding of the world as the principles of Islamic theology.⁵⁷

⁵³ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 52

⁵⁴ Although not originally Arabic but Persian, *Alf Layla* was translated and adapted for Arab readers. The frame narrative of *Alf Layla* consists of Shahrazād telling stories to distract the king Shahriyār to prevent him from killing her and other women, something he does to revenge his wife's infidelity

⁵⁵ Bhargav Rani. 2015. "Science Fiction in the Arab World: Tawfiq al-Hakim's Voyage to Tomorrow." *Arab Stages* 1(2), 2

⁵⁶ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 49

⁵⁷ The specific Islamic theology referred to in this work is a combination of the Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah school and the mystic elements of Sufism. Mu'tazilah (those who withdraw or stand apart) is a school of Islamic theology that is considered politically or religiously neutral. Influenced by Greek philosophical thought. They emphasize the unity of God, free will of humans, and the use of reason ('*aql*). The Ash'ariyyah school also supports the use of reason and rational argument, but they were accused by the Mu'tazilah school of believing in predestination because of their claim that the human capacity for action was acquired only at the very moment of action. Sufism is a mystical belief in Islam in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct experience of God Sources: *Mu'tazilah*, Encyclopaedia Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mutazilah>, last accessed 24 August, 2018), *Ash'ariyyah*, Encyclopaedia

Essentially, Ibn Ṭufayl showed that creation is fundamentally rational and cognitive, and that inductive reasoning will lead to the same understanding of the world as theological study.⁵⁸

Ibn Nafīs wrote a fantastical-philosophical treatise titled *al-Risālah al-Kamaliyyah fī al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah* ('The complete tale of the prophet's biography') which is generally assumed to be a reaction to Ibn Ṭufayl.⁵⁹ This literary work is considered the first philosophical and theological sci-fi novel. The story is about Kamīl, an autodidact feral child born on a secluded island who eventually encounters the outside world. Ibn Nafīs weaves into the story discourses on philosophy, theology and medicine and proposes a scientific theory of metabolism and pulmonary circulation of blood to explain resurrection. He also introduces the idea that someone's body can be restored from a single part (like cloning) and ends the novel with one of the first fictional accounts of the apocalypse.⁶⁰ This doomsday ending can be linked the fact that the work was written not long after the Mongol invasion of Bagdad in 1258.

The fourth genre relevant for modern Arabic sci-fi are utopian novels which envisioned the future of the Islamic empire as being a perfect Islamic society. Implied in these works is the critique of the society at that time for not being Islamic enough, presupposing a decline in perfection from the ideal Islamic community existing during with the community of the prophet in Madīna.⁶¹ In the 9th century the philosopher and logician Al- Fabāri (872-950/951 CE) in his *al- Madīna al- Fāḍila*⁶² ('The virtuous city') described a perfect society ruled by Muslim philosophers influenced by Plato's *Republic* (dated around 380 B.C.).⁶³ In the virtuous city, it is the structure and development of each of the inhabitants' happiness that is key.

The last category of classical Arabic discourse is that of technological innovation, that is, of ingenious devices that appear to do something supernatural but in fact its functions are based on gears, water pressure or gravity.⁶⁴ An example is al- Jazari's 12th century *Kitāb fī Ma'rifat al-Ḥiyal al-Handasiyya* (English trans. *The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious*

Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ashariyyah>, last accessed 24 August, 2018), and *Sufism*, Encyclopaedia Britannica (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sufism>, last accessed 24 August, 2018)

⁵⁸ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 57

⁵⁹ The novel was written somewhere between 1268 and 1277 and was translated as *Theologus Autodidactus*

⁶⁰ Charlie Jane Anders. 2012. "The Philosophical Roots of Science Fiction." *Gizmodo*, 8 August 2012 (<https://io9.gizmodo.com/5932802/the-philosophical-roots-of-science-fiction>, last accessed 23 March, 2019)

⁶¹ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 67

⁶² The full title is: *Mabādi 'Arā' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila* ('The Principles of the Views of the Citizens of the Virtuous/Best City')

⁶³ Muhammad Aurangzeb Ahmad. 2017. "Sci-Fi and Speculative Fiction in the Muslim Tradition." *The Wire*. 28 June 2017 (<https://thewire.in/culture/sci-fi-speculative-fiction-muslim-tradition>)

⁶⁴ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 72

Mechanical Devices, 1973). These works were not novels but attempted to explain through drawings and descriptive texts the workings of mechanical devices. They are a forerunner to modern Arabic sci-fi because they show how the seemingly miraculous is in fact based on scientific laws and can be understood on a cognitive level.⁶⁵

While many of the world's scientific and technological advancements came from the Arab world in these centuries of the Golden Age, its role on the global stage declined in the centuries following the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258. Added to this is the fact that writing in Arab societies has and continued to be subject to strict censorship, making especially social and political critique impossible. This in combination with the fact that from the thirteenth century onward until approximately halfway the twentieth century the Arab world was colonized by different foreign powers, explains why the period between the Arab-Islamic Golden Age and the Arab Nahḍa (see below) saw relatively little literary output.

The Nahḍa and sci-fi translations

The age of the Nahḍa (the Arabic word for 'renaissance') preluded the modern era in Arabic literary output. It began around the year of 1789 when Napoleon and his French army invaded Egypt bringing with him modern print technologies. While Napoleon was eventually defeated, the leader of Egypt, which was under Ottoman rule, Muḥammad Pasha, kept the modern printing technology and used it to spread literature. This period saw the cultural exchange between the Arab world and Europe. Firstly, many students, mainly from Cairo, travelled to Europe for educative purposes. Secondly, many European works were translated to Arabic, including sci-fi novels, which contributed to knowledge of different literary styles and the development of Arabic literature.⁶⁶ An example of a translated sci-fi novel is Ibrāhīm 'Abd al-Qādir al-Māzinī's translation of H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* first published in English in 1895. al-Māzinī's translation differs from the original novel because, as it seems, he omits words for which there were no suitable Arabic translations, interpolates many terms on his own, and uses words and meanings that differ from the original storyline.⁶⁷

Despite the period of the Arab world under the Ottoman rule being one of economic and cultural decline, there was an increase in available literature. This led to feelings of Arabic nationalism and pan-Arab sentiments under the Arab population of the Ottoman empire that started to write and publish on their own cultural heritage. Several utopian Arabic novels

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Soraya Morayef. 2014. "Arab Science Fiction: Thriving Yet Underappreciated." *al-Fanar*, 1 December 2014. (<https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2014/12/arab-science-fiction-thriving-yet-underappreciated/>)

⁶⁷ Matti Moosa. 1997. *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*. 2nd ed. A Three Continents Book: London, 116-7

based on the utopian novels written in the Golden Age period were published in this period which dealt with the future of Arabs in relation to the Ottoman empire. An example is the Syrian 'Abd al- Raḥmān al-Kawākibi who wrote *Umm al-Qurā* ('Mother of villages', 1902-3), describing a conference wherein Arab leaders undertake an international effort to overcome the political, moral and religious decadence of the Arab world.⁶⁸

Early Arabic sci-fi

Literature under foreign occupation

Even though the period of the Nahḍa led to the development of the Arab world, the introduction and use of Western science and technology and culture was seen by some as a destabilizing foreign threat.⁶⁹ From the decline of the Ottoman empire (starting in 1830) until approximately halfway of the twentieth century many Arab countries fell under the colonial rule of European states. France for example, took control of a large part of the Maghreb region and had a strong impact on the Maghreb's cultural and intellectual life.⁷⁰ Modern literary genres took shape under the commanding influence of French culture, a phenomenon that became known as 'acculturation'. In some cases, authors continued writing in Arabic but used European literary tradition, while in other cases they used the French language. By the 1950s and 1960s the Maghreb started to experience the emergence of a copious Francophone literature. The development of modern Arabic poetry and prose was retarded by the lack of audience, for many educated Maghribīs did not know literary Arabic.⁷¹

Utopian novels, as was the case in the Nahḍa period, kept focusing on the future of Arabs, but in this case in relation to the European colonizers. The Moroccan writer Muḥammad ibn Abdallāh al-Muwaqqit al-Marrākūshi published a novel titled *Ahl al-Safīna* ('People of the Ship', 1935). Its story depicts a group of Arabs on a future ocean journey who encounter a grander ship under European command. A clash of civilizations is the result of this encounter. Barbaro interprets this novel as a harbinger for dystopian literature, but for Richard van Leeuwen it is a warning by the author to Arabs to not adopt Western ways because these lead to a loss in moral values, domination by foreigners, and the fragmentation of Muslim society.⁷²

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 6

⁷⁰ Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. France colonized all these countries with exception of Libya

⁷¹ Julie Scott Meisam and Paul Starkey ed. 2010. *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*. Routledge: Oxon, 484-7

⁷² Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 6, citing Ada Barbaro *La fantascienza nella letteratura araba*, page 51 (2013) and Richard van Leeuwen. 2009. "The Narrative of the Ship: al- Mu' aqqit, Maḥfūz and Jabrā."

Arab independence and original Arabic sci-fi

The interwar period saw a substantial change in the political and social situation in the Arab region. The end of the war led to the demise of the Ottoman period but did not lead to the promised independence for Arab states. Although nationalistic feelings already existed before the war, they intensified during the war leading to the nationalist struggle and the rise of plurality in political thinking and party formation.⁷³ It was however only from the 1940s onward that the novel, evolving from short stories, came to be considered as a serious literary form: writers had an audience in a new generation of educated people who sought for an adequate analysis of the social and political order, and writers had more opportunities to publish their work, such as in magazines.⁷⁴ Paradoxically, modern Arabic literature could develop more under colonial domination than the decades after colonialization because the censorship of works written in Arabic was less oppressive than what would later be experienced under postcolonial regimes.⁷⁵

In the 1950s and 1960s many Arabic societies became independent. It was also around this time that original Arabic sci-fi novels started to be published, mostly in Egypt and mostly as series or mass-market novels. Most of these novels were not completely sci-fi, but fell into other genres and added many sci-fi elements.⁷⁶ They focused mainly on the Arab-internal social and political issues, not with the colonial encounter, but also with the technological advancements taking place in the Western world.⁷⁷ Arabic sci-fi using the elements of the western sci-fi genre, but was rooted in the classic Arabic literary tradition, in specific the four literary traditions mentioned above and in the literary styles that developed during the Nahḍa.

Examples of early Arabic sci-fi include Tawfīq al- Ḥakīm's 1958 play *Riḥla 'ila al-Ghad* ('Voyage to tomorrow') which describes the Convict who agrees to participate in a space mission to avoid the death penalty. He is placed with a second Convict in a spaceship and while the first Convict despite being away from earth holds on to earthly morality, the second Convict insists on a loss of humanity with the loss of the earthly context. In the play's final part the two return to earth 309 years after their departure and find the earth completely

In *Intertextuality in Modern Arabic Literature since 1967*, ed. Willy-Luc Deheuvelds, Barbara Michalak-Pikulska, and Paul Starkey, 13-32. Durham University Press: Durham

⁷³ Sabry Hafez. 1992. "The modern Arabic short story." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 270- 329, 282

⁷⁴ Hilary Kilpatrick. 1992. "The Egyptian novel from *Zaynab* to 1980.", 235-6

⁷⁵ Jāsīm Muḥsin Mūsawī. 2003. *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence*. Brill: Leiden, p. 36-40

⁷⁶ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 73

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 22

automated. The play questions the balance between technological advancement and the elements of life that make it human.⁷⁸

In the years following independence Arab nations looked forward to the future with a sense of optimism and élan. They pursued a course of social change under the ecstasy of the collective pan-Arab dream, that had Nasserist Egypt at its center.⁷⁹ This resulted in an optimistic literary output by a young new generation of writers later known as the sixties generation. However, despite its euphoric start the 1960 saw a great defeat of Arab states after the six-day war in 1967 and several civil wars (such as the inter-Arab war in Yemen, 1962) and inter-Arab hostilities.⁸⁰ Furthermore, many nations saw their revolutionary new governments turn into brutal regimes, justifying their rule with the anticolonial struggle and forbidding any criticism for their failures and methods. It was in these turbulent years that the Arab world started to see much of their citizens move into exile. Many Arabs became part of a diaspora group, often in the countries of the ex-colonizers such as France and Britain.

In the case of Egypt, the newly government under Nasser seemed at first to head towards social justice with its initiatives to break the power of great landowners and intention to rid of British bases and end foreign domination.⁸¹ However, the pan – Arab ideology and the emphasis on a homogenous and hegemonic national culture in post-colonial Egyptian also resulted in the marginalization or exclusion of regional identities and cultural forms from the national imaginary.⁸² It did not take very long before this tendency to authoritarianism created large-felt disappointment and disillusion and aroused the misgivings of those who valued intellectual freedom and political pluralism.⁸³ *Qāhir al-Zamān* ('Conqueror of time'), a 1972 sci-fi novel by Nihād Sharīf, can be read as an allegory and critique of the Nasser period in which scientific and technological development was stagnant and Egyptian society suffered under its ruler's totalitarian and despotic manners.⁸⁴ The novel's story is about Kāmil who works with a megalomaniac scientist, Ḥalīm, who invented a process to cryogenically preserve and revive animals and, as he later discovers, also secretly applies that process to humans.

⁷⁸ Bhargav Rani. 2015. "Science Fiction in the Arab World: Tawfiq al-Hakim's Voyage to Tomorrow." *Arab Stages* 1(2)

⁷⁹ Roger Allen. 1992. "The Mature Arabic Novel Outside Egypt." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 193-223, 216

⁸⁰ Sabry Hafez. 1992. "The modern Arabic short story.", 315

⁸¹ Hilary Kilpatrick. 1992. "The Egyptian novel from *Zaynab* to 1980.", 248

⁸² Christine Gilmore. 2015. "A Minor Literature in a Major Voice: Narrating Nubian Identity in Contemporary Egypt." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 35: 52-74, 60

⁸³ Hilary Kilpatrick. 1992. "The Egyptian novel from *Zaynab* to 1980.", 248

⁸⁴ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. Palgrave MacMillan: London, p. 119-20, 143

The Egyptian philosopher, journalist and author Muṣṭafā Maḥmūd, who is considered as the ‘Father of Arabic sci-fi’, reflected of Nasser’s politics and the future of Egypt in his *Rajul taḥt as-Sifr* (‘The man with a temperature below zero’, 1965). It focuses on a university professor, Shāhīn, who travels to London to give a lecture on his ideas on the future, more precisely his predictions for the year 2067. Among others, he sees a third world war happening between the United States and Russia, the ability for people to keep living after they have been frozen and the ability of the human body to turn into waves. This last process he himself made possible by creating a machine that turns biological beings into wave forms. The professor predicts that in the future human life controlled by materialistic interests and forecasts that people will only be able to turn to God for redemption.⁸⁵ Through living past lives, the protagonist of this novel relates ancient Egyptian history to its contemporary society.

Islamic Sci-fi

Reuver Snir has described Muṣṭafā Maḥmūd’s abovementioned novel *Rajul taḥt as-Sifr* to fall within a genre he termed ‘Islamic sci-fi’, which he defines as a genre promoting Islamic concepts through sci-fi because of its ‘great impact on the masses of readers as well as its ‘utopian’ nature’.⁸⁶ Islamic concepts can entail promoting certain religious views and using terms common to Islamic theology, two things that were/are viewed as an alternative to nationalism, liberalism and other dominant political discourses in Arab politics. The ‘utopian’ nature referred to in this definition is based on the classical Arabic utopian novel envisioning a future Islamic empire of which Al- Fabārī’s 9th century *al- Madīna al-fāḍila* is one example. The call for Islamic values in modern Arabic sci-fi can be brought into relation with the dehumanizing effect the ‘foreign’ technology has on Arab society.

Take for example Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Salām al-Baqqālī’s *al- Ṭūfān al-Azraq* (‘The blue flood’, 1976). Its story is centred on ‘Alī, a Moroccan anthropologist living in the west, and Tāj, a famous physicist. It critiques traditional religious and cultural values. Both characters vanish from a transatlantic flight and eventually meet each other again at a Jabal Jawdī, where, as Tāj explains to ‘Alī, many of the world’s scientists retreat to. However, the artificial intelligence that has become salient on the oasis started claiming that humanity should be destroyed, a claim that the scientists secretly conspire against.⁸⁷ The possible allegorical warning to be

⁸⁵ Further reading: Walīd al-Nu‘aymī. 2015. “Riwāyat rajul taḥt as-sifr li-Mustafa Maḥmūd”, *al-wasaṭ* 4830, 28 November 2015

⁸⁶ Reuver Snir. 2000. “The Emergence of Science- fiction in Arab Literature.”, 272

⁸⁷ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. Palgrave MacMillan: London, 219

read in the novel is that of the danger of replacing traditional or Islamic values with modernity while also critiquing the patriarchy of traditional society.⁸⁸ The genre of Islamic sci-fi is not limited to publications in the Arabic language. The Ethiopian Muslim sci-fi writer Mäkonnen Endalkaččāw for example portrays “reality” in his stories as both terrifying and awe inspiring (both workings of Allah). Endalkaččāw works were mostly published in the mid of the previous century in Amharic.

Modern Arabic sci-fi and technology

Other modern Arabic sci-fi works frame technology as the means to the future and advocate its embrace, or at least partial embrace, and the adaption of traditional and/or religious ways. Nabīl Farūq’s sci-fi series titled *Milaff al-Mustaqbal* (‘The future file’, 1980s) resemble a detective series but included sci-fi elements. They now include more than 100 books and depict the crew ‘High Command of Egyptian Scientific Intelligence’ which works for the “protection of the scientific secrets that are the guarantee for the progress of nations”.⁸⁹ Another example is Ṣabrī Mūsā’s novel *Sayyid min Ḥaql al-Sabānikh* (‘The gentleman from the spinach field’, 1987) which portrays the story of a person living in a 23rd century society wrecked by environmental catastrophe in which the totalitarian leadership provides its citizens with all necessities of life while at the same time surveilling their every movement. Although spiritual and intellectual developments of the population are non-existent, a return to nature is impossible: human kind doesn’t know how.⁹⁰ The novel thus calls for an embrace of modern technology.

Twenty-first century Arabic sci-fi

Since the development of original Arabic sci-fi its production has increased, several novels have even been translated to English and other languages. Furthermore, in the Arab world itself it has become more and more considered as a form of canonical literature dealing with questions of modernity and imported technology but has also reflecting on the violence and conflicts that have tormented the Arab world since the end of the twentieth century.

War, devastation, and foreign interventions

Much of these conflicts stem from foreign interference, a topic popular in much of recent Arabic sci-fi. An example is Aḥmad Khalid Tawfīq’s *Ūtūbā* (2008, English trans. *Utopia*,

⁸⁸ Ian Campbell. 2017. “False Gods and Libertarians: Artificial Intelligence and Community in Ahmad ‘Abd al-Salām al-Baqqāli’s ‘The Blue Flood’ and Heilein’s ‘The Moon is a Harsh Mistress.’” *Science Fiction Studies* 131: 43-64, 43

⁸⁹ Reuven Snir. 2000. “The Emergence of Science Fiction in Arab Literature.”, 270

⁹⁰ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. Palgrave MacMillan: London, 185-6

2010). Set in 2023, this novel portrays the present-day Arabic cultural environment in future Egypt where society is divided in two separate territories: the US Marine protected colony and land of the rich, Utopia; and the land of the poor ‘Others’. The main protagonist of the story leaves Utopia with his girlfriend searching for adventure but need to be rescued in the land of poor by the second protagonist, Gaber.⁹¹ Furthermore, Hassan Blāsim’s initiative titled *Iraq +100* is an interesting example reflecting on the consequences of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. In it, he collected 10 short works of sci-fi in which different writers describe how they think Iraq will look like 100 years after the US- led invasion, in the year 2103. The US- led invasion is also the subject of another often referred to Arabic sci-fi work by Aḥmad Sa‘dāwī titled *Frānkishtāyn fī baghdād* (2013, English trans. *Frankenstein in Bagdad*, 2018). It uses Mary Shelley’s original Frankenstein story to portray the horrors that have wracked Iraq since the 2003 invasion. Hero of the story, Hādi al-Attaj wonders the streets during the Iraqi war looking for body parts of those killed to sew them together and create a terrifying creature revenging the murders of ‘all his parts’.

When explaining the reasons for war some novels look at human nature and its tendency towards war and violence. Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah’s *Ḥarb al-Kalb al-Thaniyyah* (‘Second War of the Dog’, 2016). This novel will be analyzed as a case study in the next chapter. Other contemporary Arabic sci-fi literature combines environmental and political issues as being the reason for conflicts. The Egyptian Ganzeer (Muḥammad Fahmy) in his graphic novel titled *The Solar Grid* (2016-) addresses water shortages. It is set far into the future, hundreds of years after the earth has suffered an environmental catastrophe and it is sucked dry by the inhabitants of the global North. These inhabitants have in the meantime migrated to the plains of Mars but still control large corporations that mine the clouds of Earth for remaining stores of moisture. Two children from the Earth planet come across something that will disrupt the Earth/Mars co-dependency. Ganzeer started publishing his graphic novel online in 2016. Through crowdfunding the novel will be published in hardcover by June 2019.

Writing sci-fi in the Arab world

Sci-fi, as we have seen previously, is inherently estranging or alienating. Its setting, subjects and narratives are a scientific alteration of contemporary life and earthly experiences. It is through this distortion that a mirror is held on contemporary society. Added to that is the fact that, as described in the previous chapter, modern Arabic literature generally uses allegory.

⁹¹ Dinar Rafisovich Khayrutdinov. 2014. “Ahmed Khaled Tawfik’s Novel ‘Utopia’ as an Important Example of the New Wave of Science- fiction in Arabic Literature.” *World Applied Sciences Journal* 31(2): 190-192, 191

This has led to what Ian Campbell has termed *double estrangement*.⁹² The first layer of estrangement is thus the socio-political estrangement present in the use of allegory. As Campbell notes:

ASF (Arabic Science Fiction), (...) tends to engage in this sort of socio-political estrangement as a means of signalling that it's intended to be perceived as serious literature. At the same time, works of ASF often engage in a second later of estrangement that draws attention to the drop-off in scientific and technological innovation in the Arab world since the glory days of Arab/Muslim dominance.⁹³

In this last sentence Campbell refers to the fact that the Arab world between the 6th and 12th century experienced a 'scientific golden age' the likes of which it never saw again but. He continues:

The specifics of the first layer of double estrangement will vary greatly from one novel to the next, as the first layer tends to focus on conditions specific to a given country or regime; the second later tends to be more consistent in drawing attention to the discontinuity between past progress and present stagnation.⁹⁴

Conclusion

As much of the Arab world finds itself at the intersect of many different cultures, religions and philosophical traditions, it incorporated all of these in the development of its sci-fi. Early examples of Arabic proto sci-fi are built upon both the European, Arabic and Persian heritage which was written in five main genres: '*ajā'ib* or *mirabilia* and folklore tales, philosophical works, utopian works and works on technological marvels. While the rational element in Western sci-fi only developed after the Renaissance, classic Arabic literature already combined the fantastic with the rational to reflect on the complexity and depth of creation.

Contemporary Arab sci-fi still addresses these early themes but added to this are novels dealing with the political, social and economic malaise many Arab countries have faced in recent history. These include foreign occupation: in the 20th century by colonization and in the 21st by globalization and foreign military intervention, and the disillusioning and dictatorial internal political regimes.

Modern Arabic sci-fi is characterised by the element of *double estrangement* in which the fist layer criticizes a specific social or political situation often using allegory which is a characteristic of modern Arabic literature in general due to the censorship policies in many

⁹² Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 9

⁹³ Ibid., 10

⁹⁴ Ibid.

Arab countries. The second layer is related to the stagnation of process in the Arab world, or the conflict between technological modernization and technology being interpreted as both dehumanizing and foreign (Western) while also associated with the scientific return of the Arab Islamic scientific Golden Age.

Nevertheless, there is no strict dichotomy between Western and Arabic sci-fi. Not all Arab writers glorify the past, and not all Western writers do not. The following chapter will analyse a contemporary Arabic sci-fi novel and look with more detail at the characteristics of modern Arabic sci-fi described in this chapter by focussing on the case study and analysing three themes: political and social criticism, Arab cultural and religious heritage and technological advancements.

IV. Case study

While the previous section of this thesis described and defined modern Arabic literature, the way it is written and read, the history of Arabic sci-fi and how all of these relate to the political and social context of Arab societies, this section will take a closer look how contemporary Arabic sci-fi relates to three themes: political and social criticism, Arab cultural and religious heritage, and technological advances. As a case study this thesis will analyse the contemporary Arab sci-fi novel *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyya* ('Second Year of the Dog', 2016) by Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah.⁹⁵

The Case: Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah - *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*

With his dystopian sci-fi novel published in 2016 Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction in 2018. The novel has in the two years after its publication already reached its fourth edition. The writer Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah has written on sci-fi and its use in the Arab world in an article for the online newspaper *al-Quds*. In it, he reflects on the question why the Arab world has not produced much sci-fi, to which he proposes two answers.⁹⁶

The first is that the Arab world has not known the same scientific environment that encouraged the development of sci-fi in the Western world, especially in the 19th century and the start of the Nahḍa in the 20th century. The second point he makes is that even though the Arabic novel has not lacked imagination it has been used to portray 'earthly' issues, such as the independence struggles of the previous century and the many economic and social issues present in the Arab world. When asked about his novel *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, Naṣrāllah said that writing a sci-fi novel for the first time made him trigger new areas of his imagination and made him ask himself questions he never did before.⁹⁷ With his novel, he states, he aims to answer certain questions about humanity and its relationship to the future, as well as questions on the issues humanity is faced with such as wars, love, possession and greed.

⁹⁵ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. 2016. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*. al- Dār al- 'Arabiyyah lil- 'Ulūm Nāshirūn: Beirut

⁹⁶ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. 2018. "an al-kharīf wa al-riwāyah al-būliṣiyyah wa al-riwāyah al-khayāl al-'ilmī." *Al-Quds al- 'Arabī*. 3 Oktober 2018 (<https://www.alquds.co.uk/%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7/>, last accessed 25 November, 2018)

⁹⁷ Al- Jazeera. 2018. "Ḥarb al-Kalb al-Thāniyyah' nuz'ah al-tawaḥḥush al-latī tubarrar kul shay'." *Al-jazeera*, 4 April 2018 (<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/cultureandart/2018/4/25/%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B2%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%83%D9%84-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1>, last accessed 5 December, 2018)

The novel's story

Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah is set in a nameless future country in which the 'qal'a', or 'Fort' controls society through its agents with enhanced visual power and its technological advancements such as camera's that are linked to machine guns. The main plot of the story is that the inhabitants of this country mysteriously start to look alike which eventually leads to the Second War of the Dog. The First War of the Dog erupted for the opposite reason: societal differences in ideology and religion. The main goal of the novel is to reflect in the 'natural human tendency to violence'.⁹⁸

Hero of the novel is Rashīd who used to be an opponent of the totalitarian regime until he himself became a materialistic and unscrupulous extremist. For in the time-period after the First War of the Dog, he sets up a business-like hospital enterprise controlling all the ambulances and allowing patients in only based on the benefits they can offer him. Other characters in the novel include Rāshid's wife Salām, with whom he has two young children: a boy and a girl. Together they live in an apartment complex and while Rāshid is away much for his work, Salām seems to primarily live a household-life. Salām's brother is an officer for the qal'ah. He is simply referred to as 'al- dābiṭ' ('the Officer'). The relationship between Rāshid and the Officer is somewhat troubled because, although the Officer respects him in the present context of the story, he used to torture Rāshid when Rāshid was still an opponent of the regime. His gained respect for Rāshid's comes forth from his ability to hold himself up during torture.

An important role in the novel is also given to Rāshid's secretary (referred to as 'the Secretary') at his hospital office, a woman who he has an affair with and whom he forces to live in the office for his pleasure and ease, something she has no trouble accepting. Three other side-roles are the General Director, or 'al-mudīr al 'āmm', and the Driver, referred to as 'al- sā'iq'. The first is also affiliated with the Fort and is responsible for the hospital but mainly spends his time implementing Rāshid's brilliant and profitable plans. The Driver is Rāshid's driver from and to the hospital, a character that through his many talks with normal people in the street has a very realistic and wise grip on the world. Rāshid finds him one of the only people he can talk to. The third major side-character is the Weatherman referred to as 'al-rawāṣiḍ al-jawwī', who is one of the first characters begin to look like Rāshid. He is the upstairs neighbor of Rāshid, Salām and their two children and presents the weather forecast on the national news, which is unfortunately almost always wrong. The Weatherman uses his similarities to Rāshid to sleep with Rāshid's wife. Rāshid, without knowing that this incident

⁹⁸ Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

took place, tries to hunt him down for the fact that he hugged one of his children pretending to be Rāshid.

Despite the whole city being managed by the latest technology, strange things happen for no apparent reason one example being the spread of mold in hospitals. More importantly however, people seem to slowly look more and more alike either naturally, or through a machine that is located ‘hunāk’ (‘over there’). The similarities are both physical and in a persons’ characteristics. It does not mean that everybody looks alike, but that one group of people looks more like others, creating social polarization and conflict between those who ‘look like others’ and those who ‘others look like’. The Officer for example, starts to look more and more like Rāshid. The similarities lead to paranoid behavior and lack of trust between people. One of the things causing this is the intentional and unintentional marital infidelities. Rashīd for example, changes his secretary’s features to correspond to those of his wife, Salām, so that he can freely have an affair with her. However, this backfires when Salām starts becoming suspicious after several angry phone calls by her friends asking her why she ignored them (when her friends in fact saw the Secretary). She pays a surprise visit to Rāshid’s office discovering the secretary. Salām herself accidentally makes love to the weatherman who pretended to be her husband. The storyline also hints at the officer having an affair with Rāshid’s secretary (despite her looking like his sister) after Rāshid shifts his romantic focus to the wife of the Driver. The Driver himself had been murdered for looking like Rāshid, which made Rāshid’s job of convincing the unknowingly widowed wife that he was her husband, much easier.

The similarities between people and the resulting paranoia and polarization eventually lead to the Second War of the Dog.⁹⁹ With the eruption of violence Rāshid sees a profitable business opportunity next to his hospital-enterprise. He suggests to the General Director a project called ‘mashrū‘ usrāt al- amal 2’ (‘project prison of hope 1’) which entails building a prison to where they take those hurt by violence instead of the hospital they expect to go to when picked up by one of Rāshid’s ambulances.¹⁰⁰ The prison thus fills up with people accused of being a ‘look-a-like’ who are then tortured.

The continuing conflict leads to different gangs taking hold of different parts of the city and a night-curfew. After a rumor started to spread that the leader’s (referred to as ‘ḥaddratahu’ meaning ‘his Highness’) mirror-image is walking around, the Fort intensifies its

⁹⁹ ‘Adnān Ḥusāyn Aḥmad. 2018. “Ḥarb al-kalb al-thāniyya, maṣīr al-Insān fī zil al-taṭawwūrāt al-‘ilmiyya.” *Al-Sharw al-Awsaṭ* 14344, 7 March 2018

¹⁰⁰ Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 48

control on the country. Among others it makes use of its camera/machinegun installation that fires at any suspicious movement. Furthermore, it installs many 'check-points' where people are mercilessly killed if they cannot prove that they are who they say they are and not somebody else's mirror-image. The novel final pages depict total mayhem and the eventual arrest for Rāshid when he is thought to be the Driver posing as Rāshid. Rāshid at first tries to use his contacts to get out of going to prison, but it is the Officer who is called and discovers that Rāshid has been cheating on his sister. At first the Officer tries to fool himself by convincing himself that it is the Driver. He takes 'Rāshid' to the dungeon and tortures him. But, as 'Rāshid' holds strong during the torture, he understands that it is really the real Rāshid, only then it is too late.

Writing style

The story is written with a tone of irony and humor which gives the heaviness of the topic discussed (war, conflict, torture) a light touch. The relationship between light/ heavy is the motif of the novel. It regularly refers to fine-line between something being considered an anecdote, something insignificant on the whole scheme of things, or a tragedy. Take the following example in which the narrator addresses the reader and critic directly after saying that it is good to leave them guessing a little bit:

طبعاً، يأمل الراوي العليم أن يأخذ النقاد الأذكياء هذه الملاحظة، باعتبارها طرفة، وألا يحولوها إلى مأساة،
بعد قراءهم لهذه الرواية!¹⁰¹

Of course the knowing narrator hopes that , by considering it an anecdote, and they do not turn it into a tragedy after reading this novel!

This novel falls within the category of sci-fi because it portrays the future in which technology plays an important role in alternating the world we know around us at this moment. Furthermore, its storyline can be used to interpret the current situation in the Arab world in an estranging manner shedding new light on certain phenomena.

¹⁰¹ Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 12

Analysis

Having described the storyline of the novel taken as a case in this thesis, the following section will thematically organize quotes from *Ḥarb al-Kalb al-Thāniyyah* to show how its political and social criticism, its relationship between Arabic cultural and religious heritage, and its view on technology.

Political and Social Criticism

Human nature and tendency towards violence

Ḥarb al-Kalb al-Thāniyyah's main political and social criticism is the human tendency towards violence. The fact that the First War of the Dog is caused by societal differences and the second war is caused by the fact that people look alike in their characteristics, beliefs and appearance, shows that whatever the case is, humans fight. The novel asks why humans resort to violence, and answers that it can be any reason, however trivial. Take for example the following passage from when Rāshid watches a forbidden documentary about the first war of the dog:

كان الحديث الطويل عن علامات ما قبل حرب الكلب، لمن لا يدرك الأمر، مسائل بسيطة، بل عابرة، لكنها لم تكن كذلك، فلا أحد يعرف كيف يُراكم العقل البشري مشاهد العنف ويجمّعها يوماً بعد يوم إلى أن تصبح شراراً قاتلة قادرة على إشعال الحروب: كان يُطلق أحدهم النار على الآخر، أو يسحله في الشارع العام، بسبب إختلاف على أولوية المرور، أو الحصول على علامة غير مُرضية في امتحان جامعي أو مدرسي، أو معركة بسبب وقوع طالبة في حبّ طالب آخر، أو نشوب شجار، ينتهي بجريمة قتل، بين صديقين، لإصرار كلّ منهما على أن يدفع الحساب بعد العشاء الطيب (...).¹⁰²

Long was spoken about the signs before the Second War of the Dog, for those who did not realise, simple fleeting questions, but not really. Nobody knows how the human mind takes in and collects violent scenes day after day until they become evil killers capable of launching wars: one of them would shoot at another, or fight another in the main street because of some dispute over who may cross first, or getting an unsatisfying grade in school or university, or a fight because of a female student falling in love with someone else, or the outbreak of a quarrel between friends over who will pay for a lovely dinner (...)

In another example the novel describes the triviality of the events leading to the first war of the dog:

(...) مثل قيام أحد نواب الشعب بإشهار مسدسه داخل أستوديو تلفزيوني، وعلى الهواء مباشرة، في وجه زميل له، بسبب الاختلاف في وجهات النظر. وقد استطاع مخرج البرنامج أن يتحرّك، في الحلقة التالية، مستفيداً مما حصل، فأحضر حمارين إلى الأستوديو وأجرى حواراً مستفيداً معهما.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah. *Ḥarb al-Kalb al-Thāniyyah*, 13

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 14

(...) such as one of the representatives pulling out his gun in the television studio during a live show and pointing it at the face of his colleague because of a difference in opinion. The program director learned from what happened and in the next episode invited two donkeys to the studio and held a useful conversation with them.

A television discussion-show titled *Kull al- Itijāhāt* ('every direction') plays an important role in the novel as tool to depict the mass emotional tendencies in the country.¹⁰⁴ One night, Rāshid and his Secretary watch this program when the show-host presents two professors who will discuss the war while making jokes to make the tragedy of the war seem like a light anecdote:

نرجو أن يكون ضيفانا هذا المساء هما الأصل بالطبع، وليسا شبيهين لهما!¹⁰⁵

Let's hope are guests tonight are the originals, and not their look-a-likes!

One of the Professors in the program argues that the violence erupted as a punishment on humanity because of the way humanity has treated the earth:

لا ننسى أن الطبيعة غاضبة، غاضبة تماماً منا: فما نراه من طول الليل وقصر النهار، واختلاط الفصول، كلُّها دلائل على ذلك: فإذا كانت الفصول قد اختلطت في فصل واحد، فما الذي يمنع أن يصبح البشر كلهم على صورة رجل واحد؟!¹⁰⁶

Let's not forget that the environment is angry, very angry at us: for what we see with these long nights and short days, and the blending of the seasons, it is all proof. If seasons blended into one season, what prevents people from blending into one man?!

According to this professor, human nature is not violent, but it is in the human nature to create the conditions that lead to violence and war. And despite all the technology that the modern age has brought, this human tendency cannot be erased:

(...) ورغم كلِّ محاولات إخفاء حقيقتنا خلف الأشياء الجميلة التي ندعي أننا ابتكرناها، هذه الأشياء التي لم تكن سوى تقليد مكشوف من قِبلنا لتلك الكائنات (...)¹⁰⁷

(...) And despite all our attempts to hide our truth behind the beautiful things we claim to have created, these things are nothing other than an imitation revealed through us to those beings (...)

And

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 232

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 233

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 235

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 235

(...) وفي أقل من مائة عام دمر الإنسان الكثير مما بنته.¹⁰⁸

(...) And in less than a hundred years mankind destroyed much of what it had built.

In a third television program another professor compares humans and animals, concluding that animals have become corrupt because they have taken on characteristics of humans, an idea that corresponds with the fact that the first war of the dog started with the disloyalty of a dog:

كثيرًا من الحيوانات والحشرات باتت تقلد البشر وعاداتهم وأخلاقهم بصورة من الصور، وأن هذا الأمر إذا ما تأكد فعلا، فإننا سنكون أمام ظاهرة جديدة فعلا، هي ظاهرة تحلّي الطبيعة عن براءتها ونظامها.¹⁰⁹

Many animals and insects imitate mankind and their customs and morals in one way or another. If this is realised all the way, we will see a completely new phenomenon, and that is nature losing its innocence.

These debate-programmes on the television during the first and the second war of the dog are a reference to current Arabic discussion programs which are famous for the heated verbal and sometimes physical fights. One example is Al Jazeera's *al- Itijāh al- Mu'ākis* ('opposite direction'), a title that resembles the novel's *Kull al- Itijāhāt*. On *al- Itijāh al- Mu'ākis* current events in the Middle East and the Arab World are debated. Most of these are political, economic and social topics but at times they also include religious topics.¹¹⁰ Naṣrāllah's exaggerated and humorous way of describing these programs is thus a criticism of the fact that real Arab tv programs sometimes indeed lead to livestreamed-violence.

The first war of the dog erupted because a man bought a dog from another man but did not pay the second half of the price. When the buyer went to collect the remaining money the noticed the dog turned on him, bit him and killed him. A dispute followed between the family of the seller and the buyer, which spread into the whole country. While the reason for the first war were differences, the reason for the second are similarities, leading Rāshid to think:

(...) وهذا هو أشد الأمور غريبة بالنسبة لي، لأن البشر لا يريدون المختلف ولا يريدون الشبيه، وعلى أحدهم أن يقول لنا بوضوح ما الذي يريده الإنسان!¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 236

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 266

¹¹⁰ see for episodes: <https://www.aljazeera.net/program/opposite-direction>

¹¹¹ Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 205

That to me is the strangest thing, because people do not want differences and do not want similarity. Someone needs to tell me clearly what it is that humans want!

The human tendency towards violence is thus portrayed in this novel as an unescapable fact of human nature: if people do not fight for one reason, they will for the other. The question this poses is: what is it that humans want? Through describing the violence that humans cause and the all-encompassing war that follows, the novel hints at the danger of the Arab world falling into complete destruction if its current violent conflicts continue.

Naṣrāllah himself describes his novel as being a warning for the near future of Arab countries and the world in general.¹¹² The war described in the novel resembles for example the situation in Syria and Iraq, and the role ISIS played in these wars.¹¹³ However, in an interview with the writer, he states that he senses a refusal of general Arab society of extremist religious thought that the novel warns against. The novel also makes a philosophical point: a result of the human tendency towards violence is the fact that human beings are considered as tradable goods, at the mercy of state power. Or as Michel Foucault wrote when describing his concept of 'biopolitics': 'for millennia man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics calls his existence into question'.¹¹⁴ His theory examines the strategies and mechanisms through which human lives are managed under authoritarian regimes, which is similar to the way Rāshid treats his patients and later prisoners. Furthermore, the novel emphasizes that however bad a situation may seem, in the end they will get used to it. As Rāshid thinks in the novel:

(...) أن الناس يمكن أن يتأقلموا مع أسوأ الظروف في النهاية (...)¹¹⁵

(...) In the end, people can accommodate to the worst circumstances (...)

And:

¹¹² Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹¹³ Wāsīnī al- A'raj. 2018. "Ḥarb al-kalb al-thāniyyah/ mustaqbal al-rammād wa ḥarb al-istinsākh." *Al- Quds*, 6 March 2018

(<https://www.alquds.co.uk/%EF%BB%BF%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%AD%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%B1/>, last accessed 16 December 2018)

¹¹⁴ Michel Foucault. 1978. *History of Sexuality*. trans. Robert Hurley. Random House: New York, 143

¹¹⁵ Ibrāhīm Naṣrallah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 90

لو كانت أمه على قيد الحياة، ورأت الليل الحجري الذي يراه، لأعدت ذلك المثل القديم: لقد وقع الفأس في الرأي.¹¹⁶

If his mother was still alive and saw the stony night that he saw, she would have repeated that old saying: the ax has come down.

In the end, they may even profit from the chaos and violence. As was the case with Rāshid who installed a profitable hospital after the first war if the dog which he changes into a profitable prison after the second war dog. Not only Rāshid benefited from the chaos. Many people took the chaos of war as an opportunity to kidnap people they wanted to look like, and continue their lives in their places:

بعض من الناس الذين لم يكونوا راضين عن أشكالهم استغلوا تلك الفوضى واختطفوا بعض الناس الذين يحبون أن يكونوا على صورتهم.¹¹⁷

Some of the people who were not satisfied with their appearance used the chaos and kidnapped others whom they wanted to look like.

Furthermore, maybe people took family members and other people they didn't like to the prison and claimed they were look-a-likes. As the General Director notes to Rāshid:

بهياً لي أن كثيرون منهم وجدوا في مشرونا فرصة للتخلص من آبائهم وأخواتهم وحتى أمهاتهم!¹¹⁸

It seems to me that many found in our project a chance to get rid of their parents and siblings, even their mothers!

Social polarisation

A second criticism refers to social polarisation and how this is created and used by politicians. As the summary mentioned, a division is made between 'those who look like others' and those who 'others look like'. This polarisation corresponds with the paradox in much of Arab society that minorities are more and more vocal while at the same time there is a heavy polarisation between different religious sects and ethnic groups.¹¹⁹ The combination of these two elements leads to a form of polarisation in which individuals show blind imitation and adherence and violence in the name of the idea or ideology of a group. The Wars of the Dog

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 225

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 275

¹¹⁹ Rachel Shabi. 2014. "Battling perceptions: Minorities in the Arab world." *Al-Jazeera*, 10 April 2014. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/04/battling-perceptions-minorities--20144965348535478.html>, last accessed 27 May, 2019)

reflects this paradox in the fact that the first war was created by differences after which the creation of ‘one group’ is strived. However, even in the created of the ‘society of the same’, differences exist or are made.

A second polarisation is made between those who work for the Fort and those who are normal citizens. The following example is the reaction of Rāshid during a conversation with the Officer in which they discuss whether it is Rāshid who looks like the Officer or the other way around. The Officer says that none of ‘us know how much you (referring to Rāshid) changed’¹²⁰, to which Rāshid answers:

كنت أعتقد أننا لم نعد مختلفين على شيء لتحذّقي و (كأنكم) فريق أنا فريق آخر!¹²¹

I thought that we no longer differed so that you could be considered a group and I would be considered a different group!

Furthermore, the novel describes the country’s dogmatic and polarizing ideology in the following example:

كانت البلاد قد استسلمت لتلك القاعدة التي يمكن وصفها بالفاشية: من ليس معي فهو ضدي (...).¹²²

The country had succumbed to that formula that can be described as fascist: who is not with us is against us.

This quote also refers to a shaping speech in international polarisation: the famous sentence ‘you’re either with us or you are with the terrorists’ from George W. Bush Jr.’s speech that launched his anti- terrorism campaign and its invasion in Iraq in 2003.¹²³ It puts this type of dogmatic thinking on the same line as fascism. But according to Naṣrāllah, despite Bush being the one who clearly formulate this thinking, it is used by other politicians one recent example being Sisi in Egypt.¹²⁴

An important way of portraying polarisation in the novel is through disinformation and rumours. Truth is thus not what is real, but what people believe to be true. The fact that the current era is one of post-truth politics that leans heavily on ‘fake-news’ and social media bubbles makes this criticism is not only relevant for the Arab world, but for the whole

¹²⁰ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 130

¹²¹ Ibid., 131

¹²² Ibid., 45

¹²³ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹²⁴ Ibid.

world.¹²⁵ In line with this criticism, rumors play an important role in the development of the Second War of the Dog. It is through rumors and stories that the war intensifies. The ‘post-truth’ idea can also be read in the fact that after the Secretary’s operation to look like Salām, Rāshid notices that people start to gather around her and she attracts attention in a way his wife never did. As he thinks in the novel:

وفجأة أطلّ ذلك السؤال الغريب وأطبق على جمجمة راشد: لماذا لا يتجمّع الناس حول سلام، وهي الأصل،
كما يتجمّعون حول السكرتيرة، وهي الصورة؟¹²⁶

And suddenly that strange question appeared that ... in the skull of Rāshid: why do people not collect around Salām while she is the original, like they do around the Secretary, who is the look-a-like.

And:

هل سيكون الأشباه أكثر قدرة من الأصل على جذب الجنس الآخر؟!¹²⁷

Are look-a-likes more capable of attracting the opposite sex than the original?!

An interpretation of this phenomenon is that people prefer to see the fake version of things rather than the true or original version. Even the Officer, supposedly a man with a strict moral code, finds himself attracted to the mirror-image of his sister, that’s how compelling the fake can be. The following passage depicts the Officer’s feeling when he sees the secretary in Rāshid’s office:

(...) فوجد الضابط نفسه وجهاً لوجه مع شقيقته. تراجع خطوتين، وقد لفحه ذلك الإحساس الحارق بها،
الإحساس الذي بات يخشاه، ويجعله يخشى نفسه!¹²⁸

(...) and the Officer found himself face to face with his sister. She stepped two steps backwards and that burning feeling scorched him. The feeling that scared him, and made him fear himself!

A feeling that becomes more intense during the novel:

¹²⁵ The term ‘post-truth’ refers to a situation in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and personal beliefs, rather than one based on facts. The term was the Oxford Dictionaries word of the year in 2016 when it was frequently used in the context of ‘post-truth politics’ in relation to the Brexit and the Presidential election in the United States that led to Trump.

¹²⁶ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllāh. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 141

¹²⁷ Ibid., 200

¹²⁸ Ibid., 174

(...) ولأول مرة أحسّ بأنه يشتهيها، يريد لمسها. إنها أجمل ألف مرّة من صديقتة، جمال أسطوري، ولكنها على صورة شقيقته.¹²⁹

(...) And for the first time he felt that he desired her, that he wanted to touch her. That she was a thousand times more beautiful than his girlfriend. A mythical beauty, but she looked like his sister.

Another interpretation to this phenomenon is given in the section about ‘technology’ of this thesis.

Ma‘hum Ma‘hum wa ‘Alayhum ‘Alayhum

A third political and social criticism is the changing of alliances according to changing interests, showing that it is not actually belief that drives belonging to a group or sect but rather ordinary materialistic interests. This attitude has even earned its own dialectal saying in the Arab world: *ma‘hum ma‘hum wa ‘alayhum ‘alayhum* (literally: ‘with them, with them and then against them and against them’). Take for example this following passage that describes how Rāshid switched from being an opponent to the totalitarian regime to wanting to work with them:

على رغم من أن راشد بدأ حياته ملتزماً بقضايا البشر، ليس في وطنه فقط، بل في كلّ البلدان، إلا أن التغيّرات الكثيرة التي عصفت بالعالم، وشبه الإجماع البشري على إلغاء الماضي وذاكرته السوداء، بما يعنيه ذلك من انقلاب كونيٍّ للمرة الأولى في المعتقدات، جعلته يُقنع نفسه، خلال وجوده في السجن، بعد حادثة الفيلم، بأن تجد لها، ونعني نفسه، مكاناً في هذا العالم الجديد. (...)
أول شيء فعله، بعد أن أطمأن إلى أنه ودّع ماضيه دون الإحساس بأي شكل من أشكال العار الذي يلحق بأولئك الذين يغيّرون قناعاتهم! تقدّمه لطلب يد شقيقة ضابط طموح يعمل في (القلعة)، أقوى سلطة في البلد.¹³⁰(...)

Even though Rāshid began his life dedicated to the issues of humanity, not just in his country but everywhere, the many changes that raged across the country and the as good as unanimous human consensus to erase the past and its dark memories, and the global revolution in beliefs that it spiked, led to him convince himself during his time in the prison after the seeing the movie, to find for himself a place in this new world. (...)

The first thing he did after being sure he said his past goodbye without feeling any form of shame that followed those who changed their views! He asked the hand of the Officer’s sister hand, with the ambition of working in the Fort, the most powerful force in the country (...)

Rāshid observed many of his ‘comrades’ make the same switch in alliance. The following quote is Rāshid’s answer to the Officer when this latter asks him about who ‘they’ are whom Rāshid had hope for and fought for, but now feels betrayed by:

¹²⁹ Ibid., 223

¹³⁰ Ibid., 20

أولئك الذين كنتُ أحتمل التعذيب من أجلهم، لقد كنت أراهم يتحولون إلى موظفين يوماً بعد يوم، ويتخلّون عن تمرّدهم! لقد صغروا كثيراً في عيني!¹³¹

Those who I suffered torture for, day after day I saw them change into employees, and abandoning their rebellious ways! They really lost respect in my view!

These two examples also allude to the fact that whatever someone's standpoint was in times of war, when peace comes all citizens must find a way to live with each other again. One might, the way Rāshid did, end up having to do business with the person who was once their enemy. This is not a criticism of current society, but a future prediction for an issue post-war Arab society (or any post-war society) will face. One result of this fact is people holding grudges towards their former torturers. This can be seen in the novel when Rāshid runs late for a meeting but reminds himself that he does not need to apologize because the people he has a meeting with never apologized for torturing him:

(...) أنتابه شعور قوي، بأنه ليس مضطراً لأن يعتذر عن أيّ شيء، بل وأنتب نفسه على أفكاره اللينة، بل الرخوة، حين تذكّر أنه رغم كونه واحداً منهم تقريباً، إلا أنهم لم يلمّحوا ولو بطيف اعتذار عن تعذيبهم له في الماضي.¹³²

(...) Rāshid became aware of a strong feeling that he is not obligated to apologize for anything. He scolded himself for his soft, flabby ideas when he remembered that, even though he was now almost one of them, they never alluded to, not even in their fantasies, an apology for torturing him in the past.

In the novel, those who 'have their skulls filled with different colours' thus those who switch alliances, are more dangerous than those who are filled with 'black', the extremists. This latter group is convinced by a clear ideology and not driven by other interests, making the extremists more predictable, and thus less dangerous:

علنا أن نخاف من أولئك الذين تمتلئ مجملهم بألوان أخرى غير الأسود. أما المتشددين، فلا تخف منهم، لأن تشدّدهم، الذي يعتقدونه علماً، أو يقيناً، هو السبب الأمل الذي يقدّمونه لك لكي تسحقهم: ففي النهاية، الجميع يفضلون قتل الوحش!¹³³

We should fear those who fill their skulls with different colours other than black. Do not fear radicals however, because their radicalism, that they consider knowledge or certainty, is the optimal reason for you to crush them: in the end everybody prefers to kill a monster!

¹³¹ Ibid., 72

¹³² Ibid., 146

¹³³ Ibid., 24

Furthermore, the fact that the First War of the Dog was caused by an ‘disloyal dog’, can be read as those who switch alliances being dangerous. The novel writes about the dog in the first war:

لكن ما لم يتنبّه إليه الناس حينها، وإلى زمن بعيد، بداية اختفاء ظاهرة الوفاء عند الكلاب.¹³⁴

But what the people did not notice at that time, and for a long time after that, was the beginning of the loss of loyal dogs.

Associated to the phenomenon of switching of alliances is also the hypocrisy with which many characters in the book act. Rāshid himself is an outstanding example, wanting for himself what he does not allow others, such as having an affair, and being corrupt. At the end of the book he even tortures two of his look-alikes while he himself experienced torture.

Oppression and post- truth politics

Fourth, the Fort itself is an allegory for many Arab regimes as well as foreign powers that intervene(d) in the Arab world. This was already hinted at by the above-mentioned example of paraphrasing Bush Jr.’s speech that predated the US’s invention in Iraq and involvement in many other Arab countries effectively destroying their political, social and economic infrastructure and using advanced technology in warfare. Examples are drones with camera’s connected to arms and highly detailed observational material. The novel brings the Fort in line with Arab regimes by having some characters referring to it as government (*ḥukūmah*). One example is Rāshid’s mother:

كانت أم راشد تطلق على القلعة اسم: حكومة، متأثرة بخبراتها عن الزمن القديم.¹³⁵

Rāshid’s mother used to call the Fort ‘government’, influenced by her knowledge of the old days.

What is often a characteristic of these regimes is corruption, a phenomenon which is mentioned in the novel as unavoidable. See for example Rāshid’s answer to the General Director when this latter mentions cases of corruption by Rāshid’s ambulance-drivers:

من تجربتي، يمكنني القول لسيداتك، كلّ المشاريع، وأياً كانت شريفة، لا بدّ أن يتسلل إليها الفساد بطريقة أو بأخرى.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Ibid., 126

¹³⁵ Ibid., 28

¹³⁶ Ibid., 53

Gentlemen, I can tell you that in my experience in one way or another projects are always penetrates by corruption, however noble they are.

The fact that citizens ‘mice’ (the novel uses the word *fa'r: fi'rāt*¹³⁷) and implement oppressive techniques including technical means to suppress citizens. Naṣrāllah mentions in specific the oppression of Arab regimes towards leftists and Islamic fundamentalists who have been imprisoned and tortured like Rāshid in the novel.¹³⁸ Imminent to this oppression is the fact that the people hate those working for the Fort, as the Officer observes in the following example during a conversation with Rāshid:

رغم أن كثيراً من الناس يحبون العدالة، إلا أنهم يكرهونها إذا كان عليهم أن يدفعوا ثمنها، بل يفعلون المستحيل لتجاوزها وخرقها (...)¹³⁹

People love justice, but also hate it when they need to pay its price, they do the impossible to keep away from it.

Rāshid however, disagrees stating that the hatred of the people comes forth out of a wish to look like the security forces and leaders. Hatred for the oppressor by the people is thus according to Rāshid not necessarily for the fact that they are oppressed, but because they want to be the oppressors themselves. This returns to the main criticism of the novel: the human tendency to violence. He says the following to the Officer:

ولكن هؤلاء يحبونكم أيضاً لأنهم يكرهونكم، لأنهم يريدون أن يكونوا مكانكم! وإذا ما نجحوا في ذلك فإنهم سيتخلصون منكم بصور قاسية، بل جهنمية في رأيي! هل تذكر كيف كان قادة الجيوش في الماضي يقومون بانقلابات على الرؤساء؟! لم يفعلوا ذلك لكي يشبهونهم فقط، بل للتخلص منهم نهائياً، أليس كذلك؟¹⁴⁰

But they also love you because they hate you, because they want to be like you! And if they fail, they will get rid of you in a harsh manner, no a hellish manner in my opinion! Do you remember how the army commanders used to commit coups on their presidents?! They did not only do that to look like them, but also to yet rid of them for ever. Is that not so!?

Rāshid's observation seems to come true when rumor start to spread around one-thirds of the novel that:

سرت شائعة بأن هناك محاولة للسيطرة على البلاد، وأنها نجحت، حيث تمكن أحد المراقبين ل(حضرته) أن يكون صورةً عنه (...)¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Ibid., 34

¹³⁸ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹³⁹ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 227

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 227

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 231

A rumour appeared that there was an attempt to take over control in the country, and that it succeeded. One of the companions of his Highness had possibly become his look-a-like(...)

Leader of the Fort is the anonymous his Highness. It is when his Highness is threatened that the Fort seriously starts to intensify its control in the country through technological surveillance and security forces. The borders of the country are closed, thus implicating that the land of the Fort is not the only country in the novel. The other places are however simply referred to as being 'hunāk'. Rāshid explains the fact that the war does not move to other countries by the following:

(...) السبب الوحيد الذي منع انتقالها إلى الخارج بصورة شاملة هو الأنانية، الأنانية الإيجابية لأن من تربطهم صلات بأناس هنا، ممن يقيمون هناك، كانوا قد قطعوا هذه الصلات بأقربائهم ومعارفهم تماماً بعد حرب الكلب الأولى.¹⁴²

(...) the only reason why it didn't move to the outside is selfishness, a positive selfishness. Whoever had ties to people here and live over there, had completely cut the ties to their close ones and acquaintances after the First War of the Dog.

Another important element in the novel that criticises the corruption of many of the current political regimes and society in general, is the moral and materialistic corruption of Rāshid. This characteristic of his is clear in his womanizing manners, his unwillingness as a hospital director to help those in need, and his turning a blind eye to the corruption of his employees. When addressed to these issues Rāshid simply makes up a clever story denying everything or does not even bother and ignores what he is accused of. Take the following example when Salām accuses Rāshid of cheating. He simply ignores her and goes to sleep, after which Salām thinks:

فأصبحتُ على يقين من أن رجلاً مثقلة روحه الذنوب والأخطاء، لا يمكن أن ينام بكل هذا العمق وهذا السلام!¹⁴³

She became convinced that a man with a guilty conscious would not be able to sleep such a deep, peaceful sleep!

The same thing happens when Rāshid makes up a story after Salām discovers the secretary and her affair with Rāshid. Rāshid makes up an elaborate story in which he is innocent.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid., 315

¹⁴³ Ibid., 66

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 203-4

Ignoring wrongdoings and presenting a truth that is completely different from reality is not strange to many Arab regimes. Take for example the great defeat of Arab nations in the 1967 war with Israel which came as a great surprise for the Arab population who was made to believe through state media that they were advancing strongly and defeating Israel. Related to this is the fact that political regimes, similar to Rāshid in the novel, do not take responsibility for their damage and wrongdoings and do not even apologize for them.¹⁴⁵ Naṣrāllah emphasizes that the problems in the Arab world are shared responsibility of Arab regimes and foreign regimes that control parts of the Arab world.¹⁴⁶

Similarity

Fifth, the fact that the people of the unnamed country start to look alike forms a criticism on the fact that in the contemporary globalized world people do become culturally homogenous and start to look alike, especially taking the example of America.¹⁴⁷ The resulting denial of individual identity is described in the novel in the following quote:

من دراسته لطبائع البشر، لاحظ راشد شيئاً آخر مهماً: أن ليس هناك من إنسان إلا ومصاب بمرض ما، أو أمل ما، وأن كل واحد منهم يريد أن يكون مثل فلان، والواحدة مثل فلانة (...).¹⁴⁸

From his studies on human nature, Rāshid noticed something else important: there is nobody who hasn't been struck by some sickness or form of hope, and each man and woman wants to look like so and so (...)

As Naṣrāllah notes, on an individual level nobody wants to be themselves anymore and nobody appreciates their own exceptional features anymore.¹⁴⁹ This idea that people want to look more and more alike was the starting point for writing this novel, he states.¹⁵⁰

The Weatherman, the Officer and the General Director all start to look like Rāshid during the novel. The Officer and the General Director continue to argue with Rāshid on who is looking more like, either they look like Rāshid or the other way around. The General Director insists that it is Rāshid who looks like him, but Rāshid being officially lower in rank, cannot backtalk the General Director. Saying to somebody that they started to look like you has become an accusation. Take for example the following:

¹⁴⁵ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. and Aḥmad Fayṣal. 2018. "Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah : As'ā li-kitābah riwāyah sākhirah 'an al-mustaqbal.. wa al-taḥḍīr li-a' māli yahtāj li-awqāt ṭawīlah." *Al-Bawwābah*, 29 November 2018. (<https://www.albawabhnews.com/3389803?fbclid=IwAR0d7XEVMoL46Dlc5T9FarOvm0VT9QOyFhsM1jBN5WY3opkctc6jF8YEvfHg>, last accessed 16 December 2018)

¹⁴⁸ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 48

¹⁴⁹ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

فتح راشد فمه ليقول: بل أنت الذي أصبحت تشبهني. ولكنه استطاع بسرعة ابتلاع تلك الكلمات الخمسة اللعينة، فقد كانت عينا المدير العام، بما فيهما من طيور بوم لا يعرف راشد عددها، مطبقتين عليه كفخ جهنمي.¹⁵¹

Rāshid opened his mouth to say: it is you who started to look like me. But he was quickly able to swallow those five wicked words, for the eyes of the General Director and whatever būm was in them, Rāshid didn't know, were set on him like a devilish trap.

And a friend of Salām explains the following to her after she has been confronted with an angry family member who thought Salām ignored her, when in fact she saw her look-a-like ganger, the Secretary:

(...) فالأشبهاء ياتوا يظهرين في أماكن كثيرة، وإن كان بعض الناس يتكلمون عن هذا كطرفة، ولكنني بصراحة، بدأت أرى فيه ملامح مأساة ما، لم أفهمها بعد. وهناك أناس لا يتكلمون، وأحسّ بأن لديهم ما يخفونه، وبصراحة، أشعرُ أن هؤلاء قد اختصروا الطريق وتعاملوا مع الأمر كمأساة منذ البداية، وإذا ما أردت رأيي، فإنني أصدّق صمت هؤلاء لا ضحكات أولئك.¹⁵²

(...) look-a-likes started to appear in many places and while some people talked about it as if it were an anecdote, honestly, started to see the characteristics of a tragedy in it that I didn't yet understand. And there were people who didn't speak. I felt that they were hiding something and honestly, I felt like they had cut right to the chase by from the beginning dealing with the situation as a tragedy. If you want my opinion, I believe their silence and not the laughter of those others.

The motif of tragedy/ anecdote and the fine line between both is brought in relation to the growing oneness of society. It also points to the paranoia that comes fourth from the different ways people react to the phenomenon. It is not only people who start to look alike in the novel, but also fruit and animals. A vegetable vender, who also sees a tragedy in the similarities, explains to Rāshid that rabbits have come to look like dogs!¹⁵³ In the case of Salām, it is not only the Secretary who resembles her. When she visits a restaurant, it turns out that the waitress is her mirror-image, which leads to a fight and the arrest of Salām. Total chaos takes a hold of the restaurant and everybody starts to blame each other for being a 'criminal', meaning a copy or a fake:

وما هي إلا لحظات حتى عمّت الفوضى، فقد كان الناس يركضون في الاتجاهات كلّها، وأصوات أطفال ومُسَيِّين وشباب، وحتى رجال أمن، يصرخون الصرخة ذاتها:
- مجرم، مجرمة، أمسكوا به، بها...

¹⁵¹ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 158

¹⁵² Ibid., 165

¹⁵³ Ibid., 168

وما هي إلا لحظات حتى راح الأشباه يتطايرون في باحات المبنى الضخم وممراته كالشرر!¹⁵⁴

It only took a few moments for the chaos to spread completely. People were running in all directions and the sound of children and of young women and men, even the security men, all screaming the same:

- He is a criminal, she is a criminal, arrest them...
- And it only took a few moments until the look-a-likes scattered like sparks in the open spaces and hallways of the big building.

The resemblance of the Weatherman to Rāshid leads to a vendetta by Rāshid. Throughout the novel Rāshid pursues the Weatherman who regularly disappears and appears. According to one of Rāshid's neighbors, the Weatherman wants to revenge all the victims of war by showing people their 'real faces'.¹⁵⁵ Eventually however, Rāshid's whole neighborhood starts to help him with his prosecution of the Weatherman. Especially when they accidentally walk into each other in the street and Rāshid is upset because they are both wearing a red shirt.¹⁵⁶ Rāshid's neighbors get involved in the dispute and force the Weatherman to buy new clothes in one of the neighbors' shops, who of course makes a profit out of that.¹⁵⁷ But Rāshid is still not satisfied, believing that the Weatherman is mocking him. This results in a terrible fight that colors the street red with blood.¹⁵⁸

The Driver resemblances to Rāshid are, in contrast to the other case, described as a sad, almost poetic tragedy. Rāshid is fond of the Driver and the Driver does not want to look like Rāshid. Their first car ride Rāshid notices that he has removed all the mirrors from his car. Furthermore, the Driver asks Rāshid not to look at him. During this car-ride Rāshid learns a lot from the conversation with the Driver while he recalls what he himself has learned from the observations of what he calls 'al-ṭabaqah al-'āmilah' ('the working class').¹⁵⁹ The Driver observes:

كان الواحد منهم يريد أن يكون الناس كلهم مثله، مثله تماماً، أو كما قيل: على شاكلته! يفكرون كما يفكر، ويعملون ما يعمل، والآن، تفضّل وانظر لما يحدث، لقد أصبحوا يشبهونه، فماذا فعل، هل احتضنهم؟ لا، بل قتلهم!¹⁶⁰

They wanted everybody to look like them, look exactly like them. Of the same kind, as they say! Them to think as they do, have the same job, and now? Go ahead, look at what is

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 189

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 296

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 298

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 300

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 301

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 195

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 196

happening. They started to look alike and what do they do? Do they embrace one another? No, they kill one another!

After Rāshid discovers that the Driver looks like him, he was surprised to discover later that he returned to his old features.¹⁶¹ He figures out that every morning the Driver's wife puts a mask and make-up on her husband. When the Driver and Rāshid are stopped at one of the roadblocks that are installed as checkpoints for look-a-likes, the Driver's mask he is accused of being a 'mutanakkir' ('someone in disguise'), pulled out of the car by armed men and murdered.¹⁶² The fact that the Driver started to look like Rāshid pleased the Drivers wife because he now looked like a hospital director. While the Driver was happy that he could remain himself during the day by wearing the mask, he was also pleased and confident because his wife saw him as a man of power.¹⁶³ This implies that in the novel people start to look like those who are more powerful than themselves. The gravity point to which others start to look like are thus the decision makers. This is also implied by Rāshid's statement that people do not only want to overthrow the oppressor, but also want look like him and become the oppressor themselves. As Naṣrāllah states you will know the true nature of an individual in times of war when he holds a gun in his hand.¹⁶⁴ He gives the example of Syria where peaceful teachers suddenly became murders when the war erupted.

Rāshid refers to Socrates' famous sentence 'know thyself' when explaining why it is so difficult for humans to come face to face with themselves saying that despite the fact humanity has come so far scientifically, the biggest challenge is still knowing themselves.¹⁶⁵ What amazes Rāshid furthermore is that a person is capable of accepting somebody resembling somebody else, but kills whoever looks like themselves.¹⁶⁶ This forms an allegory for an identity crisis in which people do know who they are themselves, and instead take on the identity of someone else, but refuse their own mirror-image. In the context of globalisation this can be interpreted as a denial of one's own cultural identity. This sentiment can be seen in the Arab world through the denial of Arab cultural heritage by importing foreign culture.

An example not accepting one's own look-a-like is given in one of the end scenes of the novel when the General Director and the Officer surprise Rāshid for his birthday by arresting

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 219

¹⁶² Ibid., 240-1

¹⁶³ Ibid., 244

¹⁶⁴ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹⁶⁵ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 204

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 205

him for being a look-a-like of himself and bringing him to his own prison. Upon arrival Rāshid is brought to the prison's cellar which smells incredibly bad, where he saw many people who "to a frightening degree looked alike".¹⁶⁷ These prisoners ask Rāshid the following sequence of questions:

- هل قامت الحرب؟ سأل أحد الأسرى
- هل انتهت الحرب؟ سأل آخر
- هل سقط الدكتاتور؟ سأل آخر

- Did the war start? Asked one of the prisoners.
- Did the war end? Asked another one.
- Did the dictatorship fall? Asked another one.

In these questions it is made clear that the prisoners want the 'dictator' to fall. The fort has nowhere else so explicitly been linked to dictatorship. Rāshid first spends some time in in a prison cell which he shares with an arrogant dog who won't share his bed. He is teased by the Officer who pretends not to know him before he is moved to the torture room which smells even worse than the prison's cellar. But Rāshid soon discovers that it is not him who will be tortured. The Officer brings two of Rāshid's look-a-likes into the room and orders Rāshid to torture him. Rāshid initially protests to which the Officer says:

سنضربهم، وستكون سعيداً لأنني سمحتُ لك بذلك.¹⁶⁸

You will beat them, and you will be happy that I allowed you to beat them.

However, when Rāshid starts to beat up the look-a-like, he cannot stop. Especially when the Officer tells him that one of them is the Weatherman even though he later denies that he can prove that it is him¹⁶⁹:

انحني راشد الذي اجتاحتته هستيريا جامحة، بعد سماعه لذلك، تناول المنديل، ووضع على عينيه، واندفع بضربه بقوة أشد.¹⁷⁰

Rāshid, who was struck by an untameable hysteria, stood up after hearing that. He took out a handkerchief, blindfolded his eyes, and started to beat him even harder.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 278

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 286

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 290

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 288

At the same time, the desire to kill the look-a-like can be interpreted as an allegory that the Arab world is killing itself in recent and current wars.¹⁷¹ However, at the end of Rāshid's beating of the two men they take of their masks:

- امتدّت يد الشبيه إلى وجهه، فانتزع قناعاً متقناً كان يرتديه، فإذا به شخص آخر.
لقد استطاع أن يخدعك، اعترف، قال الضابط لراشد.¹⁷²

The look-a-like raised his hand to his face and removed the mask he was wearing. He as somebody else.
- I fooled you, admit it, the Officer said to Rāshid.

This scene points to the fact that Rāshid does not actually know who it is that he is beating and torturing. This is also the reason that eventually leads to Rāshid's death: when he learns that the wife of the Driver is beautiful, he pretends to be her husband and driving away from her house he is stopped at an identity-checkpoint and accidently hands over the wrong I.D.:¹⁷³

كانت تلك الطرفة هي أوسع بوابات المأساة. إذ اعتقد راشد أنه ناول الشرطي هوية السائق بدل هويته، فاعتذر للشرطي الذي فوجئ بالأمر، وامتدّت يده بسرعة، فتح جيب السيارة وأخرج قناه السائق وارتداه.¹⁷⁴

That anecdote was a true tragedy. For Rāshid thought he had given the police the I.D. of the Driver instead of his own I.D. and so he apologized to the two policemen, something that surprized them. He quickly reached for the mask of the Drivers' face in cabinet in the car and put it on.

The guard suspects that he is the Driver who murdered Rāshid and the Officer is called to the scene. He takes Rāshid to the prison and proceeds to torture Rāshid but when Rāshid resists he thinks:

ثم ضربه. يحمر وجه الضابط أكثر، يهمس لنفسه: إنه راشد، لا أحد يمكن أن يصمد مثله! ثم يعود ويهمس لنفسه: ليس هو، وسينهار بعد ضربتين.
ويضربه، تنتفخ أوردته: إنه راشد وعليه أن يعترف. ويضربه، ينفجر قلبه..
إنه...
ويض.. ر..
... ..
يسقط ميتاً..¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Lamis Andoni. 2015. "The Arab World is at war with itself." *Al- Jazeera*, 16 November 2015 (<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/11/arab-world-war-151125115525462.html>, last accessed 27 May, 2019)

¹⁷² Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllāh. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, p. 291

¹⁷³ Ibid., 316

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 328

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 335

The he beat him. The Officer's face colored redder while he whispered to himself: its Rāshid, nobody could hold one's ground like except for him! Then he whispered to himself again: it is not him, he will succumb after two hits.

He hit him, and his veins swelled up: its Rāshid and he needs to admit that. He beat him again while his heart was exploding...

- Its...

He hi... t

... ..

He fell dead on the floor.

Arab Cultural and Religious Heritage

Oblivion

The novel starts with Rashīd getting a hold of a documentary on the first war of the dog through his friend. This is somewhat tricky because the Fort has forbidden any information on the past. Take for example the following answer of Rāshid's friend when Rāshid expresses his fear about the documentary:

لا، أنا لا أخيفك، فالفيلم الوثائقي الذي ستراه، عن الماضي، وأنت تعرف أن القليل القليل من الأشياء المتعلقة بالماضي يمكن الوصول إليها هذه الأيام (...)¹⁷⁶

No, I am not scaring you. It is a documentary about the past that you will watch, and you know that there is little, very little about the past that we can find nowadays (...)

In the conversation that follows, his friend expresses the importance of the past in understanding past mistakes and avoiding future wars:

أجل، حرب الكلب، التي لو لم تقع، لما تمّ وضع سلسلة القوانين الرّامية لمحو الماضي، بعد أن توصلّ الحكماء إلى حكمة جديدة تقول: إن الإنسان لا يتعلم من أخطائه، وإن فناءه لا بدّ سيحدث ما دام مصراً إلى هذا الحدّ على تكرارها... أعني الأخطاء.¹⁷⁷

Yes, the War of the Dog. The war which, if it hadn't taken place, wouldn't have led to the string of policies to erase the past after the wise men reached an new agreement saying: humans do not learn from their mistakes, and his destruction is bound to happen as long as he is so insistent on repeating them... the mistakes I mean.

Not only the First War of the Dog is forgotten. The novel refers to many other historical wars which it brings in relation to the war of the dog and uses to reflect on human behavior. The wars that are referred to are both international and Arab. An example mentioned in this first category is the shortest war marked in history, the Angelo- Zanzibar War between the United Kingdom and the Zanzibar Sultanate on August 27, 1896 which lasted 38 minutes.¹⁷⁸ Another example is the 'Football war' between Honduras and El- Salvador that began in 1969 and lasted for six years. Tensions between the two countries had to do with reasons other than football, but the war erupted during a 1970 FIFA world cup qualifying football match.¹⁷⁹ The

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 11

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 12

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 124

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 137

novels also mentions the tribal wars that took place in the Arab world such as the Basus war that started in 494 CE and lasted for around forty years.¹⁸⁰ About these wars the novel states:

(...) وهي أكبر دليل في ظني، أعني هذه الحروب، كما قال أحد الروائيين القدماء، على أن التاريخ لا يعيد نفسه، بل إن البشر يكررون الأخطاء!¹⁸¹

(...) it is the biggest proof I believe, I mean these wars, as one of the old writers said, that history does not repeat itself. Rather humans repeat their mistakes.

Forgetting history, whether collective or personal, is presented by this novel as a grave mistake. It leads to the repetition of war and conflict. By forgetting the past humanity does not learn from its previous mistakes. This criticism is not only applicable to the Arab world, as Naṣrāllah argues, but to the whole humanity.¹⁸²

Global and Arab culture

The novel is a warning and a description of both the global and Arab world. It therefore refers to the cultural heritage of both. The Arab cultural heritage is referred to by mentioning Arabic songs from the “beautiful period”, as the novel terms it, sung by for example Muḥammad ‘Assāf Washīrīn.¹⁸³ Furthermore, Arabic actresses are mentioned such as Nādiyyah Luṭfī and Madīḥah Kāmil.¹⁸⁴ Referring to the global culture, the novel includes many discussions that Rāshid has with other characters about Hollywood films, actors and actresses. Examples include Nicole Kidman, Naomi Watts, and Tom Cruise. But not only modern culture is mentioned. It also refers to philosophers and doctors. The Greek philosopher Socrates’ famous sentence ‘know thyself’ is quoted and the Indian physician Susrutha is mentioned as being the first person in human history to have done plastic surgery.¹⁸⁵ The reason why both the global (western) and Arab cultural heritage are mentioned can be interpreted as reason for the ‘world of sameness’ that globalization has created. It can also be read as an optimistic and unifying truth that humans do enjoy the same cultural art forms.

Classical Arabic language

While the whole novel is written in MSA Arabic, there is a difference to be noted in the language of the last chapter and the rest of the novel. The last, two pages which together form

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 124

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 125

¹⁸² Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹⁸³ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, p. 138, Muḥammad ‘Assāf is a Palestinian pop singer who won the tv- show Arab Idol in 2013

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 152, Nādiyyah Luṭfī and Madīḥah Kāmil were both Egyptian actresses. Luṭfī was very popular in the final phase of Egyptian cinema’s ‘Golden Age’ (1960s).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 23, 204

the last chapter, contain many lexical and imagery references to classical Arabic literary tradition, whereas the rest of the novel is written in modern fuṣḥa.

An example of classical vocabulary is the following anachronism which finds its roots in the time of the jāhiliyya¹⁸⁶:

ثكلتك أمك يا ابن العبراء، ما الذي أعادك إلينا؟!¹⁸⁷

You bring sorrow to your mother, you low-life, what brings you back to us?!

In the case of imagery used, the novel refers to tradition Bedouin live-style:

قرب باب جيّمته كان الرّجل ذو القميص الأحمر واقفاً، كما يفعل كل يوم، محدّقاً في الجهات المقفلة، محاولاً بصعوبة مراقبة الدّاخلين والخارجين، حين ظهرت ناقة في الأفق الأعمى، دون أن يظهر بوضوح من فوقها.¹⁸⁸

Close to the tent door was standing the man with the red shirt, as he stood there every day, staring at the closed directions trying with effort to watch who was entering and leaving, when the female camel appeared on the blind horizon without showing clearly what was on its back.

Furthermore, by describing two monkeys, the last chapter ends with something more like folktale or fable, than sci-fi. Take the following example when the Weatherman, who is sitting on the female camel referred to above, descends from his camel:

بثقة مبالغ فيها، أنزل الرّاصد الجوّيّ قفصاً كبيراً مصنوعاً من أعواد القصب، في داخله قردان، فأدرك ذو القميص الأحمر في الحال أنهما ذكر وأنثى: استدار برعب نحو خيمته، وهو يصفع نفسه بقوة لأنه رأىهما بكل ذلك الوضوح، وبعنون أغلق بابها الواهن الذي يعصف به سواد جرح كالإبر.¹⁸⁹

With an exaggerated self-confidence the Weatherman took out a big cage made from bamboo with in it two monkeys. The man with the red shirt realized that they were male and female. Frightened he turned to his tent while he slapped his own face for seeing both of them with such clarity. Like a madman he shut his feeble door that was shaken by a darkness as sharp as a needle.

Naṣrāllah alludes to Einstines quote ‘I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones’, with which he refers to the

¹⁸⁶ Jāhiliyyah (‘time of ignorance’) is a designation for the pre-Islamic period, commonly known to refer to the period immediately preceding the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad

¹⁸⁷ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah . *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 340

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 339

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

overall annihilation of human kind.¹⁹⁰ If humanity really reaches the point of conflict described in the novel, it will return to the time of life in caves and tents: the third war of the dog will be a return to zero. Thus, in a way the last chapter applies what Muḥammad Najīb al-Talāwī in 1990 describes as ‘*amaliyat al-tarqī*’ (patching), the cancelation of the scientific development at the end of the novel thus returning its setting to the traditional order.

Technology

Control

Technology in *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah* is primarily used by the Fort to exercise control over its citizens. One of its tools is the enhanced vision that its army has artificially gained, the ‘būm’. The following footnote in the novel explains the enhanced vision capacity:

بسبب اضطرار الأجهزة الأمنية للعمل في فترات ظلام أطول، تم تطوير قوة إبصار العاملين في الجيوش وللاستخبارات والشرطة لتمكينهم من السيطرة على الأوضاع الجديدة، بعد أن استطاع العلماء فك الشيفرة الوراثية لعين طائر البوم وقدرتها على الإبصار ليلاً، وكان تعديل قدرة العين على الإبصار يتلاءم صعوداً مع الرتبة التي يصل إليها الجندي أو رجل الأمن، في وقت تُرك للناس أن يطوروا قوة إبصارهم بشكل طبيعي، إن استطاعوا!¹⁹¹

Because the security services were forced to work long hours in darkness, the vision strength of those working in the army, intelligence and police was enhanced after scientists succeeded in deciphering the owl eye’s ability to see at night, enabling them to control any situation. Enhancing the eye’s vision correlated with the rank of the soldier of security man, while all other people were left to enhance their eyes naturally, if they could!

This būm vision is considered an army-secret, but people do know about it, as the following passage shows:

التحدث حول قوة الإبصار مُحَرَّمًا تمامًا، لأنه سرٌّ عسكري، هذا ما كانت تراه القلعة، ويؤكدّه الناس بصمتهم.¹⁹²

Speaking about the būm vision is totally frowned upon because it is an army-secret. That’s how the Fort saw it, and the people confirmed it with their silence.

The enhanced vision through which the Fort can retrieve the most detailed information about an individual, strikes similarity with the way social media and data collecting in general works all over the world. But data collection in the Arab world is used to collect information

¹⁹⁰ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllāh , personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹⁹¹ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllāh . *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 24

¹⁹² Ibid., 38

on possible enemies of the regime. Another example of technology are the regime's 'smart-cameras' that are connected to automatic weapons. Any suspicious movement and they shoot:

(...) كانت عدة كاميرات مراقبة تحدّق فيه، وعدة رشاشات تعمل تلك الكاميرات معيون لها.¹⁹³

(...) several surveillance cameras were watching him, and several machine guns were operating as eyes for those cameras.

Both the enhanced vision and smart-cameras are connected to machineguns bears strong resemblance to the advanced technical arms that are/were used by foreign entities in their 'war against terror', namely the drone. Here we can use Foucault's biopolitics again, which describes technology as one of the means through which oppressive regimes discipline the body of an individual who is made to blend in to a mass of bodies that is 'to be kept under surveillance, trained, used and... punished'.¹⁹⁴ In biopolitics this is referred to as 'anatamopolitics': atomization of a collectivity for the purpose of control.

Estrangement

In this dystopian novel technology has taken the place of education and studying in the sense that children are engraved with information rather than them having to work to obtain it. Take for example the following passage:

فإدارة مدارس النُخب أصبحت قادرة على إضافة أيّ معلومات، أو حذف أيّ معاومة من أدمغة الطلبة، مستخدمة أجهزة بالغة التطوّر.¹⁹⁵

The management of the elite schools can add any information, or erase any information, from the mind of the student, by using an advanced machine.

Even though it is technically possible to give every child the optimal amount of education it is not done. But due to their intense use of technology, youngsters in this novel estrange from their environment:

لكن أكثر ما كان يقلق الأهل، أيّ أهل هو الحديث المستمر لأولادهم مع الأجهزة الموجودة في البيت، حيث كانوا لا يوافقون عن طرح الأسئلة عليها (...)¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Ibid., 273

¹⁹⁴ Michel Foucault. 2003. "Lecture 11, 17 March 1976", in *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France* ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana. Picador Press: New York, 239-264, 242.

¹⁹⁵ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllāh . *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 84

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

But the thing that worried the parents the most, whoever they are, is that the children constantly spoke to appliances in the house. They never stopped asking them questions (...)

And Rāshid thought about his youngest daughter who talked more to the ‘electric wall’ than her brother:

(...) وإن كانت أوقعتها أكثر من أخوتها في ما يمكن أن نطلق عليه البله الاجتماعي.¹⁹⁷

(...) because she suffered, more than her sister, from what we could call social awkwardness.

Naṣrāllah predicts that this effect of technology will increase, and with it the isolation of the individual from the social world.¹⁹⁸

Personal benefit

To a lesser degree technology is used by individuals to advance their private material interests. The main example is the machine that is located ‘hunāk’, in a foreign country, which Rāshid uses to make his mistress look like his wife. The machine can duplicate all the cells in a person’s body and mirror it on somebody else. Rāshid says about the machine:

أظن أن هذا أعظم انجاز طبي حتى الآن: يدخل الإنسان من فتحة، ويخرج من الأخرى إنساناً آخر، بل على صورة أي إنسان آخر يريد أن يكون مثله!¹⁹⁹

I think that is one of the greatest medical accomplishments: a person enters the machine from one side and comes out the other as a different person, any person he/she wants to be!

After the adjustments to his mistress’ body, Rāshid’s feeling of guilt when being with her completely disappears, begging the question: if the sin is unseen, is it still a sin? Not according to Rāshid who considered the two women as one as he remembers the following line of poetry:

وهل يصبح النهرُ نهراً إذا ما تجمّع في ضفةٍ واحدة؟²⁰⁰

Is the river a river if it has one bank!?

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 85

¹⁹⁸ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah, personal interview, December 22, 2018

¹⁹⁹ Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*, 103

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 110

As mentioned earlier, after the ‘operation’ Rāshid notices that people start to gather around the mistress. She attracts attention in a way his wife never did, even though this latter is the ‘original’ body. This could be an allegorical way of criticizing the materialistic desire with which humans run after the latest technology without appreciating or respecting earlier models of effectively the same thing. Despite Rāshid using this machine, he opposes the use of modern technology such as smartphones and modern self-driving cars.

Implications of the war

When Rāshid speaks with the Driver about possible solutions for the similarities between people and the war it led to, his suggestion rewinding of technology. According to him, citizens should be banned from exiting their houses during daytime and the government should prevent people from using lights in the evening and if they need light should be limited.²⁰¹ For example:

(...) فبدل أنوار السيارات نستخدم مناظير ليلية من الطراز القديم، أيّ تلك التي تسمح لنا بمشاهدة ما أمامنا، لكنها ليست كافية لمشاهدة الملامح بدقة.²⁰²

(...) instead of car headlights we could use old types of night goggles, those that allow us to see what is immediately in front of us, but not in detail.

Technology is seen as negative by the Driver. He proposes that the conflict will be resolved if people limit their view to themselves. The novel notes however, that the younger generation of children is not bothered by the war of the dog in the same way as older generation is. As Rāshid observes:

ما أثار استغرابه هدوء الأولاد، وتعاملهم مع ظاهرة التشابه كما لو أنها غير موجودة. وهو يعرف أنهم يعرفون، فكل وسائل الاتصالات التي بين أيديهم وحولهم، وفي أجسادهم، تؤكد له أنهم يعرفون.²⁰³

What surprised him was the calmness of the children in dealing with the look-a-like phenomenon as if it didn’t exist. He knew they knew because of all the means of communication that was in their hands and their bodies and all around them.

A second solution to the war is to change it from being a tragedy to being anecdote, which according to the novel can be done when one has full knowledge:

²⁰¹ Ibid., 196

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 210

لم تكن الحكمة الكاملة سوى الخيط الدقيق الفاصل بين طُرْفَة نبتتْ في أرض البراءة ومأساة تتطَلَع جائعة
الأرض الخراب!²⁰⁴

Complete wisdom was the only delicate thread separating an anecdote that grows in the land of the innocent, and a tragedy that gazes with its hungry eyes at the destroyed land!

Double estrangement in *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah*

In summary, we can see that the first layer of Campbell's *double estrangement*, which refers to the use of sci-fi as an allegory for social or political criticism, is shown through a description of the loss of Arab identity and fall of the Arab intellectual in a world in which material interests and the human tendency to violence have become the defining factor in people's behavior, and people have become so removed from themselves their cannot stand their mirror-image.

The second layer of *double estrangement* is related to the stagnation of process in the Arabic world, or the conflict between technological modernization and traditional cultural and religious values. It is linked to technology being interpreted as both dehumanizing and foreign (Western) but at the same time associated with the scientific return of the Arab Islamic scientific Golden Age. In the novel technology is indeed framed as being an oppressive and corrupting force that dehumanizes the citizens living under the rule of the Fort. It is not however, linked to the return of the Arab- Islamic Golden Age. A rewind of technology and the future generations are what can lead to a revival of the dystopic world described in the novel.

Conclusion

Campbell's theory argued that modern Arabic sci-fi has two levels of estrangement: the first referring to the use of allegory in critiquing its social and political environment; and the second in the tension coming forth from the use of technology and its relation to the discontinuity between past progress during the Arab- Islamic Golden Age and the present technological stagnation in the Arab world.

Concerning this first level of estrangement, this thesis has shown that *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah* critiques its social and political environment through the main question that it asks: is there a human tendency towards violence?²⁰⁵ The answer it gives is 'yes', because whether humans differ or look exactly alike, they will be in conflict with each other. Second, the novel

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 219

²⁰⁵ Muḥammad 'Ajlān. 2018. "Ḥarb al- kalb al- thāniyyah"... al- insān fī muwājihat dhātīhi." *Al- Falq*, 10 July, 2018. (<https://www.alfalq.com/?p=10304>, last accessed 27 May, 2018)

portrays how polarisation is used for personal benefit, whether by politicians or the citizens themselves. Two examples in the novel are a division between ‘those who look like others’ and those who ‘others look like’ and between those who work for the Fort and those who are normal citizens. Third, the novel criticizes people changing alliances when it suits their interests, showing that it is not actually belief that drives their belonging to a group or sect but rather ordinary materialistic interests. Fourth, the Fort itself is an allegory for many Arab regimes as well as foreign powers that intervene(d) in the Arab world and a criticism of political and social corruption and the use of technology to oppress citizens. However, the novel states that citizens, if they have the chance, would themselves also become oppressors. Fifth, the novel criticizes the similarity of people in the contemporary globalized and the fact that the characters kill their mirror-image can be read as an allegory for the difficulty humans have coming face to face with themselves, despite having come so far scientifically.

The social and political environment that the novel critiques is thus not specific to any Arab regime or country, as Campbell described in his theory.²⁰⁶ Rather the novel’s message or ‘warning’, as the author put it, is relevant on a global scale. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the location described in the novel resemble those of dictatorships, be it inside or outside the Arab world.

The second level of estrangement, the discontinuity between past and present technological development, resonates with what Muḥammad Najīb al- Talāwī concluded, namely Arabic sci-fi tends to glorify the past and is therefore related to the Arabic traditional rational mind set and Arabic literary heritage.²⁰⁷ The novel refers both to global and Arab and Islamic cultural heritage but mentions recalling the historical past is forbidden and therefore the past is denied and forgotten. Technological advances in the novel are a weapon of the Fort to oppress its citizens. Furthermore, young people in the novel are estranged from their environment because they intensely use technology and individuals use it to advance their private material interests. These combined criticisms show the loss of Arab identity and fall of the Arab intellectual in a world in which material interests and the human tendency to violence have become the defining factor in people’s behavior, and people have become so removed from themselves they cannot stand their mirror-image.

Technological development is thus not necessarily seen as a positive development. Therefore the novel does not glorify the scientific developments of the Arab- Islamic Golden Age. But a return to the past’s lack of technology is offered as one of the solutions to the

²⁰⁶ Ian Campbell. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. 10

²⁰⁷ Muḥammad Najīb al- Talāwī. 1990. *Qiṣas al- khayāl al- ‘ilmī fī al- adab al- ‘arabī*. 13

Second War of the Dog, particularly by the Driver. Seeing technology as negative does point to stagnation in the Arab world, where technology is used as a force of oppression rather than advancement.

Furthermore, a return to the past plays a role in the last chapter of the novel, the two last pages forming what al- Talāwī termed ‘patching’: the cancelation of the scientific development and returning to the traditional order. This is done both through the use of classical language as well as its Bedouin imagery and folkloristic thematic, alluding to the thought that if humanity really reaches the point of conflict described in the novel, it will return to the time of life in caves and tents.

The social and political criticism that the novel offers, in combination with its double estrangement, contradicts the statement made by Reuver Snit 19 years ago, that: ‘Arab sci-fi has not (yet) developed itself as a medium capable of expressing social comment because it is ‘too prone to serve for amusement or didactic aims’’.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Reuven Snir. 2000. “The Emergence of Science- fiction in Arab Literature.”, p. 280

V. Conclusion

This thesis has described the history of both the Western and the Arabic sci-fi, which are both shaped by their own literary, cultural, political and social heritage. We can see in the history of western sci-fi how it is shaped by three elements: cultural element (such as religion and fables); political developments (such as ideology and international relations); and technological developments (such as space travel and machines).

Arabic sci-fi is based on early examples of Arabic (proto) sci-fi are built upon both the European, Arabic and Persian heritage which was written in four main genres: *'ajā'ib* or *mirabilia* and folklore tales, philosophical works, utopian works and works on technological marvels. While the rational in Western sci-fi only developed after the Renaissance, classic Arabic literature already combined the fantastic with the rational to reflect on the complexity and depth of creation. Contemporary Arabic sci-fi still addresses these early themes but added to this are novels dealing with the political, social and economic malaise many Arab countries have faced in recent history. These include foreign occupation: in the 20th century by colonization and in the 21st by globalization and foreign military intervention, and the disillusioning and dictatorial internal political regimes.

Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah's novel *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thāniyyah* interacts with the early proto Arabic sci-fi by asking philosophical questions about humanity such as 'what is human nature'? The novel's main political and social criticism is the human tendency towards violence, social polarisation and post-truth politics, the changing of alliances based on material interests, corruption, and similarity of people in the contemporary globalized world people. These criticisms combined form the first layer of Campbell's *double estrangement*, which refers to the use of sci-fi as an allegory for social or political criticism.

The novel does not glorify the scientific developments of the Arab- Islamic Golden Age nor call for the return to its scientific development, but does mention a return to the past's lack of technologic development as a possible solution to the Second War of the Dog. Seeing technology as a force of oppression it also links technological development to stagnation in the Arab world rather than an advancement. The second layer of estrangement is thus the conflict that erupts from using of technology as a tool of dehumanization and (foreign) oppression.

Furthermore, the novel applies a form of 'patching' it its last chapter where the narrative through use of classical language and imagery cancels the scientific development in the rest of the novel alluding to the thought that if humanity really reaches the point of conflict described in the novel, it will return to the time of life in caves and tents.

This thesis has added to the larger field of research on Arabic sci-fi because it looked at contemporary Arabic sci-fi while much of former research looked at Arabic sci-fi from the previous century. Furthermore, it contributed to theory development within the field of Arabic sci-fi by applying a recently developed theory in a case study, through which a conclusion could be drawn on the relationship between contemporary Arabic sci-fi and social and political criticism. The description of the history of Arabic sci-fi and the case study have verified that there are indeed characteristics that set contemporary Arabic sci-fi apart from other forms of sci-fi writing, namely the effect of double estrangement and use of patching.

However, comparative studies in this field are still lacking and it would be beneficial in determining further these characteristics to compare contemporary Arabic sci-fi novel with each other. An interesting novel to compare *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thaniyyah* with would be the similarly dystopian *Ḥikāyah al- ‘Arabī al- Akhīr* by Wāsīnī al- A‘raj. Arabic sci-fi could also be compared to contemporary sci-fi from other parts of the world that to a certain extent deal with similar social and political issues, an example could be sci-fi from Latin America or African countries. Furthermore, this thesis has focused specifically on written contemporary Arabic sci-fi and has linked this to the Arabic literary heritage. Future research could focus more specifically on comparing the use of double estrangement and patching within literature and other forms of media such as sci-fi movies.

Bibliography

Arabic sources

Primary sources

- Naṣrāllah, Ibrāhīm . 2016. *Ḥarb al- Kalb al- Thaniyyah*. al- Dār al- ‘Arabiyyah lil- ‘Ulūm Nāshirūn: Beirut

Articles

- Aḥmad, Adnān Ḥusāyn. 2018. “Ḥarb al-kalb al-thāniyya, maṣīr al-Insān fī zil al-tatawwurāt al-‘ilmiyya.” *Al-Sharw al-Awsaṭ* 14344, 7 March 2018
- al- Jiyār, Madḥat. 1984. “Mushkilat al-ḥadātha fī- riwāyat al-khayāl al- ‘ilmī.” *al- fuṣūl* 4(4): 180-184
- al- Kurdī, Muḥammad. 2007. “al-khayāl al- ‘ilmī: qirā’at li-sh‘ariyyat jins adabī.” *al- fuṣūl* 71(3): 20-28
- Bahā, ‘Iṣām. 1982. “al- Khayāl al- ‘ilmī wa al- r’uyā al- mustaqbal.” *al- fuṣūl* 2(2): 57- 65

Books and Book chapters

- al- Talāwi, Muḥammad Najīb. 1990. *Qiṣas al- khayāl al- ‘ilmī fī al- adab al- ‘arabī*. Dar al- Mutanabbi: Irbid
- ‘Asāqala, ‘Isām. 2011. *Banā’ al-shakhṣiyāt fī riwāyat al-khayāl al- ‘ilmī fī al-Adab al- ‘arabī*. al-Azminah: Amman
- ‘Azzām, Muḥammad. 1994. *al-Khayāl fī al-adab al-‘arbī*. Dār talas al-dirāsāt wa al-tarjama wa al-nashr: Damascus
- Khiḍr, Mahā Mazlūm. 2001. *Binā’ riwāyat al-khayāl al- ‘ilmī fī al-adab al-maṣrī al-mu ‘āṣir*. al-Aāhira: Cairo

Online sources

- ‘Ajlān, Muḥammad. 2018. “‘Ḥarb al- kalb al- thāniyyah’ ... al- insān fī muwājihāt dhātihi.” *Al- Falq*, 10 July, 2018. (<https://www.alfalq.com/?p=10304>)
- al- A’raj, Wāsīnī. 2018. “Ḥarb al-kalb al-thaniyyah/ mustaqbal al-rammād wa ḥarb al-istinsākh.” *Al- Quds*, 6 March 2018
(<https://www.alquds.co.uk/%EF%BB%BF%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%AD8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%B1/>)

- Al- Jazeera. 2018. “‘Ḥarb al-Kalb al-Thānniyah’ nuz‘ah al-tawahhush al-latī tubarrar kul shay’.” *Al-jazeera*, 4 April 2018
(<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/cultureandart/2018/4/25/%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B2%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B1-%D9%83%D9%84-%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A1>)
- Fayṣal, Aḥmad. 2018. “Ibrāhīm Naṣrāllah : As‘ā li-kitābah riwāyah sākhīrah ‘an al-mustaqbal.. wa al-taḥḍīr li-a‘mālī yaḥtāj li-awqāt ṭawīlah.” *Al- Bawwābah*, 29 November 2018.
<https://www.albawabhnews.com/3389803?fbclid=IwAR0d7XEVMoL46Dlc5T9FarOvm0VT9QOyFhsM1jBN5WY3opk6jF8YEvfHg>
- Naṣrāllah, Ibrāhīm. 2018. “‘an al-kharīf wa al-riwāyah al-būlīsiyyah wa al-riwāyah al-khayāl al-‘ilmī.” *Al- Quds al- ‘Arabī*. 3 Oktober 2018
(<https://www.alquds.co.uk/%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7/>, last accessed 25 November, 2018)

English sources

Articles

- Campbell, Ian. 2017. "False Gods and Libertarians: Artificial Intelligence and Community in Ahmad 'Abd al-Salām al-Baqqāli's 'The Blue Flood' and Heilein's 'The Moon is a Harsh Mistress'." *Science Fiction Studies* 131: 43-64
- Gilmore, Christine. 2015. "A Minor Literature in a Major Voice: Narrating Nubian Identity in Contemporary Egypt." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 35: 52-74
- Khayrutdinov, Dinar Rafisovich. 2014. "Ahmed Khaled Tawfik's Novel 'Utopia' as an Important Example of the New Wave of Science-fiction in Arabic Literature." *World Applied Sciences Journal* 31(2): 190-192
- Rani, Bhargav. 2015. "Science Fiction in the Arab World: Tawfiq al-Hakim's Voyage to Tomorrow." *Arab Stages* 1(2)
- Snir, Reuven. 2000. "The Emergence of Science-fiction in Arab Literature." *Der Islam* 77(2): 263- 285

Books and Book chapters

- Allen, Roger. 1992. "The Mature Arabic Novel Outside Egypt." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 193-223
- Almohanna, Mohammad. 2016. "Greek Drama in the Arab World." *A Handbook to the Reception of Greek Drama*, eds. Betine van Zyl Smit. John Wiley & Sons: Chichester
- Arendt, Hannah. 1998. *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago
- Azouqa, Aida O. 2011. "Gamāl al-Ghīṭānī's 'Pyramid Texts' and the Fiction of Jorge Luis Borges: A Comparative Study." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 42: 1-28
- Badawi, Muhammad Mustafa. 1987. *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge
- Campbell, Ian. 2018. *Arabic Science Fiction*. Palgrave MacMillan: London
- Cuddon, J.A. and Habib, M.A.R. 2013. *The Penguin Dictionary Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 5th edition, Penguin: London
- Foucault, Michel. 1978. *History of Sexuality*. trans. Robert Hurley. Random House: New York

- Foucault, Michel. 2003. "Lecture 11, 17 March 1976", in *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France* ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana. Picador Press: New York, 239-264
- Hafez, Sabry. 1992. "The modern Arabic short story." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 270- 329
- Kilpatrick, Hilary. 1992. "The Egyptian novel from *Zaynab* to 1980." In *Modern Arabic Literature*. eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Badawī. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 223-270
- Meisam, Julie Scott and Starkey, Paul, ed. 2010. *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*. Routledge: Oxon
- Moosa, Matti. 1997. *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*. 2nd ed. A Three Continents Book: London
- Mūsawi, Jāsīm Muḥsin. 2003. *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence*. Brill: Leiden
- Rieder, John. 2008. *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction*. Wesleyan University Press: Middletown
- Roberts, Adam. 2006. *The History of Science-fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire
- Suvin, Drako. 1979. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. Kent State University Press: Kent
- van Leeuwen, Richard. 1995. "Love and the Mechanisms of Power: Kamāl 'Abd al-Jawwād and Sa'īd al-Jahaynī" in *Love and Sexuality in Modern Arabic Literature*, eds. Roger Allen, Hilary Kilpatrick, and Ed de Moor. Saqi Books: London, 91-106
- van Leeuwen, Richard. 2009. "The Narrative of the Ship: al- Mu'aqqit, Maḥfūz and Jabrā." In *Intertextuality in Modern Arabic Literature since 1967*, ed. Willy-Luc Dehevels, Barbara Michalak-Pikulska, and Paul Starkey, 13-32. Durham University Press: Durham

Online sources

- Ahmad, Muhammad Aurangzeb. 2017. "Sci-Fi and Speculative Fiction in the Muslim Tradition." *The Wire*. 28 June 2017 (<https://thewire.in/culture/sci-fi-speculative-fiction-muslim-tradition>)
- Ahmad, Muhammad Aurangzeb. 2017. "Sci-Fi and Speculative Fiction in the Muslim Tradition." *The Wire*. 28 June 2017 (<https://thewire.in/culture/sci-fi-speculative-fiction-muslim-tradition>)

- Anders, Charlie Jane. 2012. "The Philosophical Roots of Science Fiction." *Gizmodo*, 8 August 2012 (<https://io9.gizmodo.com/5932802/the-philosophical-roots-of-science-fiction>, last accessed 23 March, 2019)
- Andoni, Lamis. 2015. "The Arab World is at war with itself." *Al- Jazeera*, 16 November 2015 (<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/11/arab-world-war-151125115525462.html>)
- Morayef, Soraya. 2014. "Arab Science Fiction: Thriving Yet Underappreciated." *al-Fanar*, 1 December 2014. (<https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2014/12/arab-science-fiction-thriving-yet-underappreciated/>)
- Shabi, Rachel. 2014. "Battling perceptions: Minorities in the Arab world." *Al- Jazeera*, 10 April 2014. (<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/04/battling-perceptions-minorities--20144965348535478.html>, last accessed 27 May, 2019)