

Receiving thematic criticism in contemporary Arab criticism The book "Structural Objectivity - a study in the Poetry of Al-Sayyab -" by Abdul Karim Hassan as a model

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Abstract :

Thematic criticism has suffered a kind of marginalization in terms of study and analysis, as there was little interest in it despite its importance and ability to explore the depths of the literary text of both types - poetic and prose -, so I will try to shed light on this critical practice through the definition of the curriculum and its foundations and premises ... From it, a number of problems can be raised, the most important of which are: What is thematic criticism? How did it reach the Arab monetary arena? Who are its most important Arab pioneers? What are its procedural premises? What was the nature of Arab criticism receiving this approach? What are the most important writings in this field? What are the conditions and principles of critical practice?.... I chose the critic Abdul Karim Hassan to be a model for the Arab reception of the thematic approach as one of the most important Arab critics who laid the first pillars of this curriculum by consolidating its components, principles and procedural premises.... In addition to the fact that the critic Abdul Karim Hassan did not only theorize the method, but also dealt with the thematic approach in theory and application through his book entitled "Structural Objectivity - A Study in the Poetry of Al-Sayyab -", which will be the subject of study and analysis.

KeyWords: Thematic criticism, structuralism, critical practice, poetry, method

ملخص:

لقد عانى النقد الموضوعاتي نوعاً من التهميش من حيث الدراسة والتحليل، حيث كان الاهتمام به ضئيلاً رغم أهميته وقدرته على سبر أغوار النص الأدبي بنوعيه - الشعري والنثري-، لذلك سأحاول تسليط الضوء على هذه الممارسة النقدية من خلال تعريف المنهج وأساسه ومنطلقاته...، ومنه يمكن طرح جملة من الإشكالات أهمها: ما هو النقد الموضوعاتي؟ وكيف وصل إلى الساحة النقدية العربية؟ ومن هم أهم رواده العرب؟ وما هي منطلقاته الإجرائية؟ كيف كانت طبيعة استقبال النقد العربي لهذا المنهج؟ ما هي أهم الكتابات في هذا المجال؟ ما هي شروط ومبادئ الممارسة النقدية؟...، ولقد وقع اختياري على الناقد عبد الكريم حسن لكي يكون نموذجاً للتلقي العربي للمنهج الموضوعاتي باعتباره واحداً من أهم النقاد العرب الذين أرسوا الدعائم الأولى لهذا المنهج؛ وذلك من خلال ترسيخ مقوماته ومبادئه ومنطلقاته الإجرائية...، بالإضافة إلى كون الناقد عبد الكريم حسن لم يكتفي بالتنظير للمنهج فقط بل تناول المنهج الموضوعاتي تنظيراً وتطبيقاً من خلال كتابه المعنون بـ "الموضوعاتية البنوية - دراسة في شعر السياب"، والذي سيكون محل الدراسة والتحليل.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النقد الموضوعاتي، البنوية، الممارسة النقدية، الشعر، المنهج

*المؤلف المرسل

The twentieth century is the century of assumptions and theories general and comprehensive, which tried to find final and appropriate solutions to the most important questions that remained intractable and understandable in various fields, and this revolution is manifested in the literary field through the multiplicity of approaches that the critic relies on in the evaluation of the literary text and analysis, interpretation and study, and it is recognized that this critical revolution did not extend to Arab criticism only with the second half of the For the twentieth century, where many new critical trends appeared throughout it, each of which sought to prove its ability and success in studying and analyzing the literary text, whether poetry or prose, and among the most important of these approaches is the "thematic approach", which is considered the latest critical trends that dominated the Western critical arena by a group of pioneers such as: Gaston Bachelard, Edmund Husserl, George Pooley,...Then moved to the Arab critical arena through translations and scientific missions, and his appearance was clear in Arabic studies in the eighties of the twentieth century thanks to a group of critics who tried to establish the foundations and principles of this approach in the Arab critical arena, led by: Hamid Hamdani, Abdel Fattah Kilito, Abdel Karim Hassan, Abdul Malik Mortad.....،

The thematic approach is one of the most important critical approaches in dealing with the literary text, whether poetry or prose, as this approach appeared in Europe during the sixties of the twentieth century with the new wave of criticism, and appeared in the Arab world a decade later than its European counterpart, with the escalation of substantive criticism, the spread of hermeneutical and ideological readings, and the birth of structural and linguistic descriptive analysis.

Objectivist criticism in the 1950s was considered fully represented by "New Criticism," which sparked intense debate between supporters and enemies of modernity, but this representation is deceptive. Modern criticism arose under the banner of linguistics, structuralism and psychoanalysis, those three currents towards

which thematic criticism has always worked to preserve its independence. Roland Barthes and Jean-Paul Sartre was part of this critical trend, although they did not share his spiritual foundations, and gradually moved away from it(1).[e]

1 -Subject Concept and Themes:

The subject is - in the text - the point at which the intuition crystallizes with existence that transcends the text, and thanks to providing an accurate and useful perception of the concept of "subject" for: Richard says: "The subject in a literary work is one of its semantic units: that is, one of the types of existence known for its distinct effectiveness within it", and the term subject according to this definition refers to everything that constitutes a distinct presumption of significance in the literary work in the writer's world, and Richard also explains this in the introduction to the book "Mallarmé's Fictional World. (2) "

The subject is the principle at which all the concepts that establish the objective approach meet, and perhaps it is increasing to point out that objectivity here is only relative to the subject "Thème", which puts the subject in the first place among the rest of the concepts.

In general, the names of this approach varied, ranging from "thematic", "Taymiyya", "phenomenology", "purpose", "radical", "orbital"... It may be called synonymous with another methodological description, so it is said "structural objectivity", although the "Thématique" thematicism is not exclusive to structuralism, but rather it is an approach without identity or a gelatinous critical field in which various philosophical visions and critical approaches overlap: "phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics,", which combine with each other in order to capture the dominant topics in the texts, in their fusion with the linguistic structure that carries them.

In general, thematic criticism appeared at the beginning of the sixties of the twentieth century, in the midst of the conflict between the two trends of Ansonism and the new criticism witnessed by France, and this criticism arose in the arms of phenomenological philosophy, and fed on the ideas of the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962). Which constitutes the theoretical source of the concept and term of thematic criticism (3). [iii]

His banner was carried by a critical group that called itself the "Geneva School", this school believed that the literary text is an imaginary world independent of lived reality, embodying the consciousness of the text. Then it began to develop little by little until it appeared in its systematic form organized by the outstanding efforts of its most important magnates such as: Jean Paul Weber, Jean Pierre Richard , and Georges Poulet . Jean Rousset, and Jean Starobinski....

The term "thematic" was first coined by the critic John Paul Weber "in a special sense, calling it the urgent and unique image present in the work of a writer(4) "...

For reference, there are some illustrious names that emerged and formed the so-called objective criticism stream that dominated the French critical circles and reached its peak in the sixties of this century, such as: Georges Boulet, Jean Starr and Bensky, Jean Rouse..... 4

٢ -Receiving the Arab critical discourse of the term "thematic:"

This term, like others in its first thresholds, failed to find its key term, and this scheme represents the sharp Arab conflict in translating the term "objectivity" into Arab criticism(٥):

-٣ Arab reception of thematic criticism:

Thematic criticism in the Arab world chose to appear in the arms of the university through university theses, two of which were discussed at the Sorbonne: the first is a state doctorate for the third corps, the second is a state doctorate, which was discussed during two close periods, and the third is at the Faculty of Arts in Ribat.

The first letter was by Kitty Salem - sister of the Syrian novelist George Salem - under the supervision of Jean-Pierre Richard on "The Topics of Anxiety according to K.D. Maupassant" in ١٩٨٢, and the second by Abdel Karim Hassan under the supervision of André Mikael and Grimas, and was entitled "Structural Objectivity in the Poetry of Al-Sayyab" in ١٩٨٣, and the last letter appeared in Arabic while the first in the French original remains unprinted, and the third letter appeared by critic Abdel Fattah Kilito Under the title "The Themes of Destiny in the Novels of François Mauriac .(٦) "

٣-١ -Pioneers of thematic criticism in contemporary Arab criticism:

*Critic Hamid Hamdani:

Hamdani has relied on the foundations laid by the epistemological researcher "johanna natali" in her critical article discusses critical studies that dealt with baudelaire's "cats" with analysis, in an input she called "issues in the curriculum", and in fact she identified some of the initial principles that should be available to every student of critical texts, whatever the literary genre. Johanna natalie believes that it is necessary for any student who deals with critical texts, especially those who analyze creative works, to question three fundamental issues(٧): Objectives, Body, and Critical Practice.

Critic Johanna Natalie refers to the most important stages that the critic goes through in his critical process; in fact, they are techniques: description, organization, interpretation, aesthetic evaluation, and health testing.

*Critic Saeed Alloush:

Critic Said Alloush's definition of thematic criticism stems from the fact that it is in fact based on those foundations and principles set by the school of new criticism, which paid attention to the text itself before paying attention to its author. The critic Said Alloush believes that the thematic method has gained its legitimacy and prestige, and its existence was proven by the distinguished critic Jean-Pierre Richard at a time when structuralism and semiotics became dominant in contemporary critical discourse, and at a time when linguistics became contained in all human knowledge.

Thematic criticism, as adopted by Jean-Pierre Richard in his book "The Imaginary World of Mallarmie" - and supported by the critic Said Alloush - is a criticism that prefers to explore the literary work through the repercussions of

language, which is considered for this criticism the only and real way of expression, as each of Malami's poems turns into a symbol, so the thematic critic works – from here – to write grammatical rules rather than total words; imagination avoids as much as possible from confusing the formal disclosure of the work.(^)

***Abdel Fattah Kilito:**

The critic Abdel Fattah Kilito draws the parameters of thematic analysis in the study of the dominant network of images in the texts read, where Abdel Fattah Kilito defines the literary text as a cultural significance, he keeps it and fears it from loss, for this reason he writes and confines between the two books of a book, but it is not enough to write a word to become a text, and we should not forget that the text is a text according to the point of view of a particular culture; Considering codification as a sufficient criterion as only texts are recorded, and this is what happened in the Arab classical era, but in societies where writing is widespread, codification is not a sufficient standard, and since texts are usually difficult or ambiguous, it is necessary to interpret, analyze and interpret these texts to clarify their dark sides, and interpretation in turn or analysis may become a text that needs a new interpreter (٩)], and this is usually in the field of criticism of criticism.

٣-٢ - critic Abdul Karim Hassan through his book (for the themes of structuralism - a study in the poetry of Al-Sayyab -):

The critic Abdul Karim Hassan is one of the first bright critics who were interested in the thematic approach and the consolidation of its foundations and principles in the Arab critical arena and its application as well, because the interest in this approach came - like the rest of the critical approaches - through the consolidation of its components, principles and ideological premises, sufficiency with the theoretical aspect only, unlike the critic Abdul Karim Hassan, who was interested in theorizing this approach and applying it through a book "Structural objectivity: a study in the poetry of Al-Sayyab."

With the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies of the last century, a set of modern and contemporary critical approaches emerged, such as linguistic structuralism with Hussein Al-Wad, Abdel Salam Al-Masdi, Salah Fadl, Maurice Abu Nader, Kamal Abu Deeb, Said Yaqtin... As a result of a set of subjective and objective arguments such as the phenomenon of acculturation and translation, the formative structuralism that combines understanding and interpretation has also crystallized, to complicate a symmetry between the independent aesthetic structure and the reference structure, as we find in Lucien Goldman, and adopted by: Mohamed Bennis, Mohamed Berrada, Hamid Hamdani, Said Alloush, Driss Belmelih,... In addition to the two approaches: structural-linguistic and structural-formative, we mention the thematic approach or structural objectivity, which studies Arabic literature at the level of themes and topics, but in a modern structural way by many pioneers, led by: Abdul Karim Hassan in his book "Structural Objectivity - A Study in the Poetry of Al-Sayyab", and Ali Shalak in his book "The Qibla in Ancient and Modern Arabic Poetry" (١٠) .[x]

***The concept of thematicity according to Abdul Karim Hassan:**

The Syrian critic Abdul Karim Hassan has received the term theme with multiple names through his works, the most important of which are:

Theme	Thematique	The reference in which the translation came
Subject	Objectivity	Structural objectivity - a study in the poetry of Al-Sayyab-
Subject	Thematic approach	Thematic approach
Thematic	Thematic approach	

But the critic Abdul Karim Hassan focuses on the word "objective", and this is confirmed by the critic Youssef and Ghalisi in his book "Methods of Literary Criticism", where he says: "Abdul Karim Hassan is unique in being careful to attribute to the singular 'objective' and avoid the ratio to the plural 'thematic, and thematic', but the most rigid linguistic academies have become permissible to go out to avoid semantic confusion, especially since the 'objective approach' manufactured by Abdul Karim Hassan is often confused with what is not subjective, so we are confused between this curriculum that teaches subjects, and between the duality of 'objectif' and 'subjective subjectif' that often confront us in philosophical and social thought.(١١)".

***A study of the book "Structural objectivity - a study in the poetry of Al-Sayyab - " by Abdul Karim Hassan:**

Critics and scholars have tried to apply the thematic approach directly either to the novel or to poetry; in most non-academic studies that were written in novel criticism, they lacked a clear methodological vision, because they choose the simplest critical means, which are RESUME and ESCPLICATION, and an example of this applies to the study presented by Youssef Al-Sharouni. In his study of the novel "We do not plant thorns" by Youssef Sibai (١٢). [xii]

In the field of poetry criticism, we can only talk here about the mighty and great work presented by the Syrian critic Abdul Karim Hassan, which is considered a qualitative leap in the field of poetry criticism in the Arab critical arena, this exceptional work entitled "Structural objectivity - a study in the poetry of Al-Sayyab -", this huge book in terms of its size - which exceeds ٤٥٠ pages - where it was characterized by accuracy, which is in fact a university thesis discussed in ١٩٨٣ at the University of Sorbonne, a doctoral thesis by critic Abdelkarim Hassan and under the supervision of Professor André Miquel.

Critic Abdul Karim Hassan began his book by mentioning the interventions made by his supervising professor André Miquel, and the interventions made by the discussion committee consisting of Professor Undrier Grimas A.J. GREMAS and Professor David Cohen ..

This critical work has been divided into an introduction to ten chapters and a conclusion, where the book came with this magnitude because the critic, instead of choosing one divan or one poem from the works of Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab, chose the complete poems in order to focus on all the topics and problems posed by these works.

The first chapter focused on answering the question "What do we mean by the term structural thematry?" The critic acknowledges that pursuing this type of hybrid approach is a kind of risk-taking and critical adventure.

Critic Abdul Karim Hassan defines his goal in this critical work by saying: "We set the goal of our study when we set our sights on discovering the objective structure of Al-Sayyab's poetry at each stage... Our objective structural study because it was not a study of selected or scattered topics linked by an artificial network of relations, and this study did not come structurally spontaneously, but we wanted it from the beginning when we set its goal by discovering the network of objective relations that are organized within it and these topics are detailed. (١٣) "

Critic Abdel Karim Hassan believes that this approach responds to the structural characteristics of "Claude Lévi-Strauss", where he admits that he neglected all external circumstances – neglecting everything that is outside the text – psychological, social and economic.... He also focused on the text in the sense of focusing on the text itself in isolation from any external influences – that is, the fact of the author's death called for by structuralism – where it is not seen – the text – as a result or reflection of external factors, but as an absolute being of independence .(١٤)

The most important term that the critic Abdul Karim Hassan came up with in this critical work is the term linguistic family, where the linguistic family is based on three basic principles: derivation, synonymy, and moral kinship. The linguistic family gathers within it vocabulary with a single linguistic root, synonyms and vocabulary that are linked to each other by a weaker moral connection than the synonym, "The linguistic family, whose number of elements varies from stage to stage, is the indicative face of the subject as we have defined it, and the elements of the linguistic family are those 'multiple curtains' that Jean-Pierre Richard talked about, under which hides that hidden congruence, which is the subject. (١٥) "

For example, in the second chapter of this study – a chapter in which the Diwan of Early Studies – the main subject is forced to study a secondary topic is "rejection", although this word is completely absent in it, but the critic focused on other vocabulary such as: "Distance, nuclei, distance, alienation, ...", they express rejection in substance rather than form.

It is known that the poet Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab is considered one of the pioneers of the romantic school that adopted drowning in sadness, sorrow and loss, and this is confirmed by the critic in his analysis of some of the passages contained in the poem "Marha Ghilan": "... The grave turns into the house of Al-Sayyab, and the house of Al-Sayyab into a grave, as he is a prisoner of his grave.... Thus, death achieves victory over Al-Sayyab and the society of Al-Sayyab, and the victory is sweeping to the extent that death began with him to shout the name of Christ, where Al-Sayyab says:

A malicious without a nerve like a dead skeleton like an ice sacrifice
The light and the darkness in it are two mazes without borders
Ashtar in it without hubby
And death runs through its streets and shouts: O sleepers

Rise up, darkness has been born

And I am Christ, I am peace

The conflict here is between life and death, a conflict that takes place in the same context and in his society.(١٦)

Through this, the presence of romanticism in Al-Sayyab's poetry is evident, and this presence is what confirms that "objectivity is not a cancellation or reduction of the specificity of poetry or poet, but rather a highlight of the bright and dark aspects of it".(١٧)

The presence of death and annihilation has overshadowed most of the work of Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab, and examples of her presence are also what was mentioned during his study of the Diwan "The Drowned Temple" in the sixth chapter, where the critic says: "Surrender to death is the last stage reached by Al-Sayyab, Al-Sayyab has lost his ability to face life in all its personal, political and social colors, and death has become the only solution that brings the poet out of the reality of hardship and torment.

Despair has reached a stage where he does not ask for anything for himself, and does not care about everything that revolves around him, whether the years accept life or accept death, whether the years scattered ears and graves, he seeks death personal comfort from the trouble of pain:

To scatter the graves and the ears of the teeth

I want to live in peace

Like a candle melting in the dark(١٨)".

The critic has tried from the second chapter until the eighth chapter to apply structural objectivity in his own style and in his own way, by focusing on those ideas from which the critic Jean-Pierre Richard started as one of the pioneers of thematic criticism in the Western critical arena, but he returned in the ninth chapter to give a general summary of what he reached in the previous chapters, while the tenth and last chapter served as an introductory page for the poet Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab.

***Some critical opinions directed at the critic Abdul Karim Hassan:**

There have been many critical opinions directed at this work presented by critic Abdel Karim Hassan. The critic Hamid Hamdani, for example, acknowledges that the critical work presented by Abdul Karim Hassan has no connection with research in the curricula, but is only an analytical study of the poetic works of Al-Sayyab, "There is therefore turmoil in Abdul Karim Hassan in the matter of determining the subject of the study and choosing the methodological vision.

In addition to Hamid Hamdani, we find another critic, the critic Youssef Ghulisi, and among the most important criticisms made by the critic of Abdul Karim Hassan's book are those mentioned in his book "Methods of Literary Criticism", the most important of which are:

"the three principles mentioned by the critic Abdul karim Hassan, which limit the "linguistic family", absent a fourth strong principle that should be absent, which is the principle of conscience, especially since Abdul karim Hassan's approach in applying this concept relies on statistics absolutely, and the critic excluded consciences from his inventory process; in his discussion of this work, because

conscience may often have a major role in highlighting the relations of the "word/subject", citing the famous poem "liberty" by P.Eluard, on the grounds that its main and obvious theme is freedom, but the word "freedom" occurs only once, and at the end of the poem.

Critic Youssef Oglisi considers that the concept of "tree" adopted by critic Abdel Karim Hassan is just an artificiality, in order to embody the network of objective relations; this embodiment that deludes the reader that it is a personal innovation by the critic, and this is a misconception because such a term is almost widespread in Western linguistic studies, along with other terms: such as the concept of the graphic tree, the tree chart, ..." (١٩). [xix]

There have been many criticisms of the work presented by the critic Abdul Karim Hassan, and these opinions varied between criticisms of the theoretical side of the approach followed and criticism and the face of the applied side, the reader of this work notes a kind of contradiction experienced by the critic and the best example of this is what was stated in his definition of the concept of the subject where, he says: "Our determination of the subject depends on its linguistic base in the literary work that we study. (٢٠)"...

He then contradicted himself by acknowledging that the principle he would adopt in this work is text-based: "Our analysis is textual and has nothing to do with the language of the dictionary" (٢١), and this is not surprising, because the critic has returned after a long time to contradict himself again through those opinions that he included in his book "The Objective Method - Theory and Practice -", this The views that came against his basic principles adopted in his analysis of the complete works of the poet Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab, and the most important thing that revolted against him is the real value of the concept of the "linguistic family" within creative works, where he says: "... The objective critic can break into the creative universe from any window, no matter how narrow, and it is the absence of the concept of the dominant linguistic family that gives the critic this freedom, and I do not see this freedom as a positive advantage, but I see in it a kind of loss of controls, a kind of lawlessness that Richard calls magic at a time when I personally believe that such magic has lost its favor in the age of linguistics (٢٢).

Despite all the criticisms directed at the book "Structural Objectivity - A Study in the Poetry of Al-Sayyab -" by the critic Abdul Karim Hassan, it remains a pioneering work through its size and the great effort made by the critic, considering that this book appeared in the eighties of the last century, this period in which the Arab monetary arena was suffering from poverty towards this type of curricula that were considered new to criticism, so his work takes a leading position in Arab universities along with The works of critic Abdel Fattah Klito through his book "The Subjectivity of Destiny in the Novels of François Mauriac", and the critic Kitty Salem through her work "The Objectivity of Anxiety in the Stories of K.D. Maupassant."

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