

Plotting the Dystopianism in Munis Arazaz' *Confessions of Silencer*

Ahmad Mohd Alkouri* 

Department of English Language, Faculty of Art, Jerash University, Jerash, Jordan

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* Corresponding author:
amdkouri@hotmail.com

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Abstract

Objectives: This paper conveys a critical analysis of Munis Arazaz' *Confessions of Silencer* raising significant questions on the nature of dystopia in the Arab World during the 1980s. The novel designates the upsurge of authoritarianism and how people are manipulated.

Methods: The study employed the inductive and deductive methods, as well as the analytical approach, regarding the literary function of dystopia. It explored how dystopia was employed as a literary tool in the novel *Confessions of Silencer*, and why it became a significant structural component in it. This study provides an adequate interpretation of the concept of dystopia by gathering data and evidence from articles and books, and subsequently analyzing and applying them to the selected novel.

Results: The analysis elucidated the writer's use of techniques such as narrative suspense to respond to instances of violence in this era. It also explored techniques in which Munis Arazaz' *Confessions of Silencer* can help in recognizing dystopia in the Arab regime. It specifically emphasised the reactions to dystopia and considered the status of literature as an approach to create awareness about the violence of Arab regimes.

Conclusions: The conclusion maps how Arazaz employed dystopia in his *Confessions of Silencer* and used his literary historical imagination to deliver a comprehensible narrative. It pointed to the Arab Regimes' exploitation and authoritarianism.

Keywords: Dystopia, Jordanian literature, authoritarianism, Munis Arazaz.

تحبيك الديستوبيا في رواية اعترافات كاتم الصوت لمؤنس الرزاز

أحمد محمد الكوري*

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة جرش، جرش، الأردن

ملخص

الأهداف: تتناول هذه الدراسة تحليلًا نقديًا لرواية مؤنس الرزاز "اعترافات كاتم صوت" والذي يثير أسئلة جوهرية حول حكم الديستوبيا في العالم العربي في عقد الثمانينيات. إذ يهدف التحليل إلى تحديد تصاعد الشمولية والاستبداد وكيفية تطويع الأشخاص.

المنهجية: استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الاستقرائي والاستنباطي، والمنهج التحليلي، فيما يتعلق بالوظيفة الأدبية للديستوبيا؛ أي كيف تم توظيف الديستوبيا كأداة أدبية في رواية "اعترافات كاتم صوت" ولماذا تصبح مكونًا هيكليًا رئيسيًا فيها. وتقدم هذه الدراسة تفسيرًا كافيًا لمفهوم الديستوبيا من خلال جمع البيانات والأدلة من المقالات والكتب، ثم تحليلها وتطبيقها على الرواية المختارة.

النتائج: وضح التحليل استخدام الكاتب لتقنيات من مثل التشويق السرد للرد على حالات العنف في هذا العصر. وعلاوة على ذلك، كشفت الورقة التقنيات التي مكنت الرواية من التعرف على الواقع المرير في النظام العربي الشمولي. وأكدت على وجه التحديد ردود الفعل على الواقع المأساوي حيث كشفت الرواية ردات الفعل نحو الشمولية، وأكدت على مكانة الأدب كمنهج للكشف عن القمع في ظل الأنظمة العربية الاستبدادية.

الخلاصة: كشفت الدراسة عن أسباب توظيف الرزاز للديستوبيا في روايته واستخدام تصورات التاريخ الأدبية لتقديم سرد واضح. كما وأشارت إلى استغلال الأنظمة العربية واستبدادها. الكلمات الدالة: ديستوبيا، الأدب الأردني، السلطوية، مؤنس الرزاز.



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Introduction

Throughout history, dystopia as a new literary genre has threatened humanity. It has been described, extracted into words and scrutinised by authors and critics. There is much to learn from the scrutiny of dystopia in literature itself. Literature is known as actual impressionism, that carries a lot of signification, grounded on the certainty of practices and the reflection of social phenomena rather than documents. Consequently, it could be a sufficient source to discover inspirations, ethics, and communicative tactics as well as social and political impacts of dystopia than a mere pontification of historians, politicians and media.

Literature, then, investigates the basic grounds of dystopia to get rid of this devil of horror, and these perceptions will be illustrated upon in order to enhance our understanding of the literary function of dystopia. At this interval, it is valuable to observe that authors who put pen to paper about dystopia have become target to much criticism. Critics normally enquire about the inspirations that provoke a distinctive author such as Arazaz to portray dystopianism and what type of violent and destructive desires lead him to present this voice in his writings. This is the typical approach to works that contain dystopia, and especially to Arazaz' works that had never been studied using dystopia as a main approach. Besides, surveying the literature on Jordanian novels, the researcher claims that this dystopia has not yet been dealt with. Therefore, these observations call the researcher to undertake a study to examine and describe the uses and functions of dystopia in this novel. The focus of the present paper will be on the dystopia that the researcher assumes it would be a new field of criticism in different contexts such as authoritarianism, dystopianism, and autocracy. The paper significantly reproduces a hidden real dystopian era of Arab life via a critical reading of *Confessions of Silencer*.

The following offers some studies which contain contributions to the writer's work. Several studies concern the Arabic language and linguistic contexts such as the study of Masadeh (2000) entitled "Albena Alfani Fe Rewayat Arazaz" (*The Art Structure in Munis Arrazaz's Novels*). She explains the architectural structure and types of language metaphors in Arazaz's novels. Abdullah Redwan (2002) writes "Ase'lat Areyayah Alordoneyah: Derasah Fe Adab Munis Arrazaz Alrewa'ei," (*Questions On Jordanian Novels: A Study On the Literature of Munis Arrazaz*). He focuses on Arazaz as a writer and novelist. He looks at the literary side and the words Arazaz used as expressions in Arabic language. The most relevant study is conducted by Qutaibah Alhabashneh (2008) entitled "Alghaeb Almahki: Derasah Fe Adab Munis Arrazaz," (*Reveal The Hidden: A Study On Munis Arrazaz Literature*). His study is mainly concerned with political issues and undemocratic Arab authorities. However, this paper reveals the oppressions of the Arab authorities as main contention of asserting the dystopian views.

Confession of Silencer is a novel published in 1986, by Munis Arazaz. Dr Murad, the protagonist of the novel is an ideologist and political thinker. As a leader of a political party, he and his companions tried to take over the country's leadership. Suddenly, without any ostensible reasons, he found himself under house arrest and under the orders of the General. The family contacts their son Ahmad who stays overseas. Yousef is the silencer in the novel, an assassinate killer who kills Ahmad to defeat his father, Dr. Murad. His confessions to Silvia reveals the political agendas towards their nation. It is a story of betrayal in the quest to achieve unity and *democracy for the Arab nation*- the protagonist ends up falling due to the corrupted Arab political leadership.

Born in 1951, Munis Arazaz is a well-known Jordanian and postcolonial writer. He is the son of a Secretary General of the *Ba'th* Party leadership in Syria. His father's political involvement allows Arazaz to produce a prolific bulk of literature that brings reality of Arab life. Al-Habashneh studies the association between politics and literature in Arazaz' life. He correspondingly asserts that "the creativity of Arazaz' literary production is due to the political atmosphere that Arazaz has been living in before" (Alhabashneh, 2008. p 7). He witnessed all sorts of political complexities. Fahd Salameh (2001, pp. 90-91) comments that Arazaz's lifespan as the son of a "well known leader in the Arab world" equipped him with a profound vision of the *Arab nation* more than his own nationality as a Jordanian. Salameh (2001, p. 97) adds that Arazaz was born to a family that is "both educated and politically motivated" which also played a role in polishing his nationalistic personality and sentiments. Arazaz is a well-known Jordanian novelist who has a sense of "belonging" and has a "responsibility" toward his entire Arab nation. His literature always "touches the pain of the Arab nation" (Salameh, 2001,

p. 90). In addition, Al-Abbadi (2006) marks that Arazaz criticizes the politics of country and the national challenges to leaders. Arazaz's writing typically includes the national struggle and the nationalist aims in achieving nationalism for the Arab nation. Finally, Abu Nidal (2001) states that the suffering that has been "portrayed is to uncover the truth of the Arab nation hopes to its unity and get the strength back." He adds that "his depiction uncovers the Arab nation struggling to achieve its power and unity" (p. 8).

Furthermore, many critics have showed the political side in Arazaz' writing. Redwan's *Ase'lah fee Arrewayah Al-Urduniyyah* (2002) explores the political perspective in Arazaz's novels. He uncovers the demonstrations of the radical oppression, and the nationalist struggle for Arab freedom. In the same way, Al-Habashneh's *Derasah fee Adab Arazaz* (2008) proposes how Munis Arazaz's novels critically tackle the politics in the Arab world.

Generally, the Arabic novels involve the political form and theme during the 1980s due to the depressing political atmosphere: "The situation in the 1980s took a form in which was more open on the theory of politics and culture as well as on the theories of literature, like novel" (Al-Abbadi, 2006, p. 219). Arab writers have written different forms of novels tackling the issue of political and cultural conditions during that period. However, there are no dystopian studies specifically on Jordanian literature and on Arazaz' writings.

Theory of Dystopianism

During the last century, the theory of dystopia becomes popular and many novelists have used dystopia as a main theme in their novels. It has a way to spread education on social life and reform. Writers in dystopia brings the reality of people's life into their literature. Erika Gottlieb (2001) describes "the Western model of dystopia" more promptly, asserting that "The writer offers militant criticism of specific aberrations in our own, present social-political system by pointing out their potentially monstrous consequences in the future" (2001, p. 13). Putting this into practise, the predicted future portrayed by those writers, such as Huxley and Orwell, becomes reality in the present life as this paper will demonstrate this assumption.

Gregory Claeys is a prominent scholar who wrote on dystopia. He uniquely draws on the connection between theory and reality. He composes crucial foundational books, mainly in the account of radicalism and utopianism. He focuses on the arenas of political and social reform movements from the 1790s to the 20th century, with a distinctive emphasis upon early socialism and utopianism. Therefore, Gregory Claeys (2013) tried to classify the literary dystopia, in his article, "News from somewhere: Enhanced Sociability and the Composite Definition of Utopia and Dystopia" and later expanded in his volume "Dystopia: A Natural History" (2017). As a Western theoretician studying the connection of dystopia with fiction, he is inspired by two motives, "namely by the fact that dystopian fiction was in fact born as a genre in the Western literary tradition and by the lack of extensive research and consequently of an equivalent categorization in the field of literary criticism." Similarly, Tom Moylan (2000) suitably argues that dystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century. A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination.

Therefore, dystopia represents the imperfection of the world where everything goes dreadfully wrong. Furthermore, dystopianism uncovers the terrifying image that exposes the future of the world. Typically, the foremost dystopian works are oppression, rebellion, wars, revolutions, disasters, and overpopulation. In addition, Mohr (2005, p. 27) states that, "dystopia is a modern literary phenomenon of the twentieth century where dystopia reverses, mistrusts, and parodies the ideal of a perfectly regulated utopian state, often unintentionally inclined towards totalitarianism." Dystopia holds up a hellish reflection to the reader and positions the nastiest of all probable present and future. Besides, dystopia presumes and flourishes on the association and correspondence of the current communal order and the upcoming consequence. Gelhaus (1998) states that in order to have a utopian and stable society two things must be achieved. The primary one focuses on the loss of individuality, while the second focuses on the loss of mothers' nature. Therefore, according to Gelhaus (1998), dystopian fiction can be bounded by the followings:

- It must be only and exclusively a work of fantasy in the time when it is created – a narrative that focuses only on criticizing the reality falls under the category of social criticism or satire.
- It has to expose a description of a single society or larger where can depict anxiety of individual characters, and their sorrow must be the result of the contrary nature of the surroundings.
- It must refer to a system from a social point of view, in which the writer lives, and this is well thought-out of unpleasant and detrimental.

Individual Crisis: Dystopia and Homelessness

As the main criteria of dystopia tackle society as an entity unless the individual represents society, the individual here is the protagonist of the novel Dr. Murad. He is a representative of his nation especially his role as a nationalist holds strong the community future where his repeated statement is “the nation one day will know the truth and will wake up to rebel against these oppressive regimes.” Therefore, he becomes the target of the authoritarian regime to be under house arrest. The narration starts with the individual crisis to expose the representation of Dr. Murad. Arazaz exhibits the individual's sense of belonging to his community. The protagonist's sense of enthusiasm being a member of the nation and striving for his people's freedoms and rights indicates a struggle with the authority. Arazaz tries to show that people's rights and freedoms are not permitted. On the other hand, the feeling of oppression and frustration when all the dreams of freedom are demolished by the Arab authorities is another indication to the frustration where the dystopia can be the right term for further description. Therefore, the Arab individual's suffering and dilemma are portrayed by the protagonists and other characters under the umbrella of dystopia.

This novel also records several scenes of Dr. Murad's destruction and tragic end after long attempts to gain some freedom. The narration illuminates the political oppression against Dr. Murad in order to prevent him from accomplishing his dream of being human being in the Arab land. This type of oppression on nationalists can be categorized under dystopian fiction.

Generally, intellectuals have various foresights and wisdoms, and they apply their forward-looking visions and intellects for the determination of developing and awakening the community. They create ideologies based on issues they could find in their communities. In the novel, the words ‘revolution’ and ‘rebel’ against the Arab authorities repeatedly occur. As an intellectual and ideologist, Dr Murad keeps writing his book about the ideals of the Arab community despite being under intense oppression and depression. “The strangeness is he still keeps writing though he knows very well that the authority is going to cease all his papers” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 35). Arazaz shows insistence and assurance of Dr. Murad's role as an intellect to oppose the authoritarians and lead his community to freedom. Since Dr. Murad is a leading figure in Baath Party, he dreams to take over the existing authority by establishing a revolution and to lead the country to freedom. On the other side, in the eyes of the authority, he is a dangerous thinker that could pose a serious threat to their position of power. With this realization, the authority begins a series of personal attacks to destroy him. In this point, the authority applies one of the variations of dystopia. It considers Dr. Murad as enemy, and immediately starts to take actions against him, where Claeys (2013) claims that dystopia is a world in which everything is imperfect and everything goes terribly wrong.

Dystopian action can be seen clearly in the first attack on Dr. Murad's personality and life is when he is restricted from human life and kept under house arrest. He becomes a criminal being watched all the 24 hours a day. This sudden downfall ruins his social status and affects his personality deeply. The main goal of the political strategy on Dr. Murad is to ensure his permanent silence. As a result of this practice, Dr. Murad's mental status becomes questionable. His wife describes him at home as:

He puts his hands in his pockets and walks around in the house rooms... he looked at me and said: there are new members joined the leading authority. He took his hand out of his pocket and wiped his sweat and says: he does not know half of the faces he watched on the TV yesterday. He wonders where have the senior members have gone?... maybe the General has put them under house arrest?" (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 33).

This describes the pressure and strain of Dr. Murad's mental status. He goes around from room to room and sweats

thinking of the changes happening to the Arab authorities. John Stuart Mill (1988), in his speech, condemned the policies of government saying that “What they [the government] appear to favor is too bad to be practicable” (1988, p. 248). Then Dr. Murad becomes a victim albeit his demands of freedom questioning what happens to the principles and dreams the whole members fought for? Why this house arrest? What happens to many of the senior members who disappear like him? Therefore, Dr. Murad conforms the autocratic leadership of Arabs, its practices and oppression towards the nation.

In fact, the major characteristic feature of the dystopia of Arab authority is classified in the use of force for domination. In fact, the Arab regimes are known by suppressing their people. Dystopia takes diverse measures stretching from the need to control individuals, time, place, life, death and even things or belongings. The following episodes explain in detail these features of dystopia within and outside the political members.

State domination and power can be traced out when the previous Arab authority imprisoned Dr. Murad for his ideas and thoughts. The authorities always take a negative action by throwing intellectuals in prison. Therefore, the mental and physical oppression of political members is also a method of hindering the intellectual and political development of the country. This can be considered as unspeakable dystopian practices by the Arab authorities. In fact, throwing Dr. Murad in jail is considered as a crisis to the State as he offers better ideas for a better future. This type of treatment of the intellectuals indicates an obvious dystopia in the State. Susser (1995) indicates the importance of having a State that supports the nation for future development: “Each nation requires a sovereign State to be healthy and complete. The nation-State is therefore the natural form of political organization and the most basic objective of modern national communities” (1995, p. 220). However, the Arab political practices towards the nation and particularly the intellectuals are completely against those who offer their efforts to that development. This indicates the implementations of dystopianism among the Arab authorities.

Narratively, literary dystopia has been professed in diverse means during the 20th Century. Arazaz’ narration exposes that a political authority targets no more than oppression and destruction of individuals. The shifting in political condition in the entire world has motivated prominent authors in different periods such as Huxley, Orwell, London and others to formulate several inclusive fictional works of dystopia. Moylan (2000) aptly summarizes the backdrop against which these classics were written: Dystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century. A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination. All these events caused these narrative outputs in the worldwide. These narratives enlarge the opportunity of complexity in which dystopia can be perceived.

An episode of dystopia is represented in the tough domination of individuals. This can be manifested in the idea of surveillance. The authority watches and observes everything inside the house of Dr. Murad. (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 10).

The eyes of the guards from over the wall gaze at us penetrate these glassy walls [...] permitting glassy house, awaiting the veil of darkness to cover us as robe or clock in the night. I feel naked. My thoughts even seem to be seen and revealed. We all wait for the darkness and the growth of the bougainvillea.

Surveillance facilitates the authorities’ attempts to ensure domination over Dr. Murad. Every word spoken inside the house is heard and all the movements and actions are watched by the guards who are accordingly ordered to take action. The authority never leaves a chance for an individual to freely practice or even live. This strict observation day and night is to guarantee the authority’s domination over the territory. These authorities’ actions are portrayed in Arazaz’ narration to signpost the dystopian implications. Equally, Gottlieb (2001) comments on dystopian narratives as “The writer offers militant criticism of specific aberrations in our own, present social-political system by pointing out their potentially monstrous consequences in the future” (2001, p. 8). In this junction, Arazaz tries to uncover the Arab political practices towards their nation. He signals a clear dystopia conquering the future of the Arab nation.

Accordingly, Arazaz reveals the totalitarian authority’s practices of power and domination on all the State’s sectors and institutions. It can be obviously realized in splitting up the security services into many sectors. Each sector in government observes the other to ensure the authoritarians’ powerful control and domination. Therefore, the constant observation of individuals is basically set to restrict the nation’s freedom. The Lieutenant, a government servant, frankly reveals to his wife

that “these CCTV are installed in all houses of companions and authoritarians. They might have installed in our house too” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 39). At this point, even the authority’s servants such as the Lieutenant fall into a suspicious life full of fear. Because of the orders to mount surveillance equipment in Dr. Murad’s house, he starts to think that other security agencies may have set up similar equipment in his car or flat. This indicates to the dominant power of State over its nation and its own authority members. His fear of this type of security system and governmental observation situates him to a fearful life. Samuel (1991) notes that; the Middle Eastern countries remain the world of authoritarian throttlehold. The observation reaches to the highest extent that control and dominate the individuals.

A second manifestation on the feature of domination is the attempt to control one’s memory in order to perpetuate the present autocracy. The only remaining day in Dr. Murad’s calendar is the first of April. Signifying the obliteration of any other memories, apart from the General’s birthday and the anniversary of the revolution day which brought him to power. Dr Murad remembers his birthday as a symbol of memory loss due to his oppression. However, metaphorically, it is the April Fool’s day. Dr. Murad looks at his calendar and ponders about his past: “was my whole life a comic lie” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 39). This figurative language used is to present the terrible situation that an individual can reach to. He realizes his hopeless existence as a human or member in the Arab State. This reflects the negligence of individuals’ rights under the Arab authorities’ practices. On the other hand, the General’s birthday and the revolution day, as reference to the General’s achievement in the State, are important memories. Metaphorically, individuals in the Arab world have no value as opposed to the authoritarians.

Another episode of dystopia shows the deep domination on individuals through the confiscation of their personal memories. The General orders to confiscate their albums. The lieutenant obeys the General’s orders and asks, “The album, please” after confiscating the books and writings of Dr. Murad (*Confessions*, 1986, pp. 77-78). The authority tries to wipe out their memory by removing the whole past and its remembrance. Deleting an individual’s past is removing the past from his memory. It is a clear signal on new structure of nation-State identity since the domination of the authority needs to format the individual’s memory and past in order to create its own ideology and assert its civic identity.

In addition, the authority’s attitude of dystopia appears in dominating the individual is proceeding to the simple actions by the Lieutenant who is part of the General authority and power. Dr. Murad says to the Lieutenant: “you enjoy controlling everything” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 39) which refers to the absence of communication. It depicts the deadly life of individuals that are being controlled by such oppressive regimes. Dr. Murad’s family is indeed isolated and has no chance to communicate with the outside world. The authority does not allow them even to have any form of communication. It indicates the usual practice of Arab authorities to individuals. As an ex-authoritarian, Dr. Murad is well aware of the authority’s traditions and attitudes of controlling others. Rauch and Kostyshak’s study of the Arab world’s democracy comparatively states that “The Arab reputation for lack of democracy is well-founded” (2009, p. 184). The statement is reflected in the above scene of Dr. Murad’s straightforward phrase towards the authority as being oppressive and controlling with the power to ensure full domination and non-existent communication. Claeys said that, “the desire to create a much improved society in which human behavior was dramatically superior to the norm implies an intrinsic drift towards punitive methods of controlling behavior which inexorably results in some form of police state”.

Political Dystopia

Genocide is one of the dystopian political strategies deployed by the Arab authorities. The following element indicates the Arab intra-politics through murdering intellectuals or ideologists whose ideas are considered as danger to the authoritarians’ longevity. The integration between authorities and individuals does not fit to one another. An assassinator is employed to accomplish the authoritarian mission of dominating the State and eliminating the people who caused them threatened with regards to their positions in the State. Yusuf, who is addressed in the novel as a silencer, has confessed that the authority had ordered him to kill many people, and one of them is Ahmad, Dr. Murad’s son. “The orders received are clear...assassinate Ahmad” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 131). The order to the assassinator indicates the authority’s abuse of the power and self-centeredness. Yusuf is the authorities’ assassinator who serves the State or the authority’s self-interests.

Therefore, the authority is dealing with the nation and individuals inhumanly being cruel and brutal to serve their mission to rule the State. Gellner (1983, p. 1) in *Nation And Nationalism* states: "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent." The congruence in the case of the Arab politics is not only missing but manipulated.

On the other hand, it is significant to mention the authority's strategy in using Yusuf, a former nationalist, to become an obedient assassinator. Changing Yusuf from a nationalist who is against the government and an ex-member in the political party, to an assassinator serving the authorities indicates a sense of indoctrination. This type of indoctrination chiefly is a strategy to create a sense of conflict in the individual. Therefore, assigning people in the government indicates a political crisis. Yusuf's confession is: "I want to take revenge on his father...to enjoy his tears" (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 70). The basic instrument for this killing is the political interests to destroy Dr. Murad emotionally and kill his pride silently. It also shows how an individual die before even his actual death takes place, particularly, when the authority uses such shown strategies. Therefore, the Arab suffers compactable domination by the authoritarians. The authority practices autocratic system in its leadership to maintain its domination of the State rather than the nation's favor. Susser (1995, p. 217) states that: "Nationalism fosters the idea of that legitimate government rests on the will of the national public. Hence, it activates the masses." However, in the case of the Arabs, the situation is different. The political strategies indicate supreme conception of power within the authorities themselves. Perhaps the fabrication of the character of the silencer and the position of confession reveal the writer's intention to hide behind the character, Yousef, to emphasize his view of the Arab political world by making the silencer practice a caricatured confession in front of a deaf girl without discovering for a moment that he exposes himself to himself, not to be heard by the girl he hired to achieve the act of confession and purification.

A suspicious atmosphere surrounds the Arab authorities of being loyal to their nation. In fact, their concerns lay on strengthening authoritarianism and domination. The surveillances are being installed in every place by authoritarians to ensure complete power and control over the authoritarians themselves. It indicates no trust and no confidence on those who lead the country. When the police officer asked the detective about the CCTV installed on all authorities' houses, the detective proceeds: "I have installed all the hotels with these secret CCTV by my hands" (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 39). Within this parameter, the State ideology shows a very unconfident situation on what is done. It is an impeccable mark on the authority self-personal interest and not on State or nation development. Therefore, surveillance creates a high level of worry among the State members. The Arab authorities perfectly use this strategy to maintain its power to rule the country as Donno and Russett (2004) would explain that the Arab States conquer these characteristics commonly in the third world as postcolonial countries.

Another dystopian element that the State uses to maintain power over the territory is to seize the ideas and books of intellectuals and nationalists. The commander said after knowing Dr. Murad's attempt to write his own thoughts and ideologies of Arab world unity, "haven't we have taken your last writings, papers and pens" (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 98). It indicates that individuals are not free to write or express their rights or the nation's rights. On human rights, Weiss (2011, p. 1) states that "The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. In contemporary international law, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are protected by a wide range of international instruments." The Arab authority aims to spread its power and domination although the price is the deactivation of the nation's will and power. However, the authority restricts these dreams of nation as the writing of Dr. Murad is confiscated.

Any state or country in this modern world has its own ideology to lead the country and progress the nation. The ideology as a term is difficult to be defined. Susser (1995, p. 10) explains:

Definition of ideologies does not come easily, first of all, because the term ideology often serves as a political insult. In one conventional usage, to be called ideological is to be accused of rigidity, fanaticism, shallowness, and conformity. In other context, it is to be dismissed as empirical and starry eyed. It denotes the cynical manipulation of ideas for the sake of selfish interests.

The Arab political strategies in implementing dystopianism as indicated earlier, confirm the autocracy to assert their power and domination over the nation and the State. These strategies are set to force the political authorities and ensure the individuals loyalty to its elements albeit to the past and roots of Arab collective nationality as one united nation. The following section elaborates the idea of blind loyalty to the State.

Dystopia through Invented-Loyalty

This section will move the lens from the protagonist, Dr. Murad, to the other characters specifically Yusuf and the police officer. The analysis here exposes individuals who obey and serve the authority of the State blindly. In that sense, they are called authoritarians or co-authoritarians.

The first episode begins with Yusuf, who fought for the national freedom with Dr. Murad. Yusuf was moulded by the State authorities to serve them as an assassinator. His character as an assassinator for the authority signifies his loyalty to the State after he recognized the decline of Arab national unity. His confessions to Silvia, the nightclub girl, indicate that he is “a tool of killing, silently does the job” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 124). The episode explains how the State, using dystopian concepts, can create a blind loyalty by changing the people's mind and ideology to end in a new form of identity. The strategy used with Yusuf, as explained in the previous section, indicates an obligatory loyalty formed by the State to its nation. As Judith Shklar declares, “the distinctions between obligation, commitment, loyalty, allegiance, and fidelity” (Shklar, 1993, p. 21). Yusuf finds himself obeying the authorities with full obligation. Therefore, connected to the terms ‘obligation’ and ‘loyalty’ are those of ‘allegiance’ and ‘fidelity.’ Yusuf is mainly used as a tool to work for the authorities and his loyalty is not pure but is created to serve the new identity of authoritative State. Then, it can be called as an enforced loyalty, which plots the dystopianism in Arazaz.

Another example that explains the blind loyalty to the State authority by its supporters can be understood from Yusuf's confession, “I received the order to assassinate Ahmad” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 161). He continued explaining that he was hesitant in killing Ahmad because he is his friend. However, his blind loyalty to the authorities is stronger than his loyalty to the friendship. Therefore, this significantly indicates Yusuf's loyalty to the authority than to human relations or friendships. He ends up “shooting” Ahmad to obey the authorities and nothing more. This episode may lead to a good conclusion that the autocratic, oppressive and ignorant leadership of the Arabs in adopting the western dystopianism has in fact caused a great crisis among the Arab nation. Wan Azhar (2011, p. 2) illustrates the point: “Once ignorance spreads from top to bottom and defines the character of the *Ummah* (nation), the community will have no integrity and strength.” Therefore, the idea of blind loyalty comes to the political leaders by creating new dystopian ideology that is completely inventive to the Arab nation. Yusuf's obedience to the orders is not based on his loyalty but on his forced loyalty by the State. This can indicate clearly the dystopian Arab world.

In order to understand whether Yusuf's blind loyalty is obligatory or not, it is necessary to highlight his confessions to Silvia. He suffers his life working as an assassinator and feels the need to release his oppressed feeling. Therefore, “He confesses in front of Silvia because she belongs to a different world, not his world. She will not bring any danger to his life. She is a foreigner and does not know the people he knows” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 142). In fact, he found in his confessions some relief of the oppressed feeling and pressure of responsibility. This exposes that his blind loyalty to the authoritarians is not based on his willingness. It is a compulsory loyalty imposed by the State and authoritarians to assert their new political dystopian policy.

Another example of loyalty or obligatory is comprehended from the police officer who watches Dr. Murad's house and family. His character is considered as evidence on those who support the authority blindly. His loyalty to the political identity and authority drives him to obey the orders with no questions. Whenever a question is directed to him, his response is simple: “it is the orders from the higher authority, you know” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 45). His usual answer gives him the authority to interfere the family life as it justifies his action toward Dr. Murad. This indicates his loyalty to the authority regardless of choice or obligation. Judith Shklar asserts, it is necessary “to make a clear distinction between obligation, commitment, loyalty, allegiance, and fidelity” (Shklar, 1993, p. 21). The police officer is recorded as loyal to his authority.

However; there is clear evidence on hidden obligation to be loyal. The Arab authorities are well known for their domination and autocracy and the police officer no doubt is under order to obey.

Another evidence on the loyalty to the authority is obviously noticed in the General orders: “confiscates the writings of Dr. Murad” the police officer obeyed and said to Dr. Murad; “have we not seized your writings before, why do you keep writing? The authority will seize your writings and I will take them from you” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 28). The quote explains the absolute obedience of the officer to the authority with no objection. The situation explains the officer’s loyalty is the testimony of the Arab authorities’ control over the nation. As Riser (2013, p. 32) illustrates,

A further difference between obligations and loyalties is that, roughly speaking, disintegration of the former can occur when they are deliberately repudiated, whereas the latter are more likely to deteriorate through aversion or disinterest. This distinction is not meant to be exclusivistic, especially in cases where an obligation is founded upon a loyalty.

The situation explains the obligation of the authority over the nation to be loyal. Then, there will be no chance of any individual to disobey the authority. In short, the loyalty to the authority and political identity is questionable. The characters who represent the loyalty were found obligated to be loyal. It is not a loyalty with love and choice. Yusuf obeys the authority but it is not out of willingness as he confesses his suffer to Silvia. The police officer always indicates the orders he receive from the authority as a ‘higher power’ than him. In other words, they have no choice but to obey.

The dystopia used in the State is obviously a new form to control people, it dismisses any disturbance such as Dr. Murad. In addition, Yusuf is manipulated and forced to become an assassinator to help the dystopian State to accomplish its mission of controlling the nation. In fact, Dr. Murad is neither a terrorist nor crazy power. The novel indicates that the characters merely had hope in the party to restore balance, dignity and Arab unity. Dr. Murad indeed claimed that “The Arabs were united one day, they shared same history and lived together for long years” (*Confessions*, 1982, p. 11). He added “I must live, I must see the twenty first century, it will be the period of freedom to all oppressed nations” (*Confessions*, 1986, p. 23). In this case, Dr. Murad's rage was anti-dystopian conditions, as his vision was to avoid totalitarianism. Consequently, the struggle against Arab’s ruling corrupted class provided *Confession of Silencer’s* protagonist with an escape from the humiliation, oppression and hollowness of life. Arazaz thus neither demonised nor offered an apology for the nationalists. He simply presented them as humans, so we can realize what is the reality of Arab regimes and their dystopian planed-future. Doing so, we conclude that we can neither generalise nor rationalise when we deal with human beings; reality beyond totalitarianism is multilayered and complex. This should not, however, doubt the point that nationalists are made, not born, and then become victims.

Conclusion

To conclude, dystopia embodies multifaceted layers of individuals and expressly autocratic agents and acts of violent domination, oppression and in certain sheer violence, and destruction. Dystopia has created far-reaching questions in literary narrative practice. The selected novel by Arazaz reflects upon political ideologies and restriction of freedom and tells a tale that helps the reader make sense of the world he lives in as well as what will happen in future.

Arazaz’ *Confession Of Silencer* calls us to rethink of the narrative demonstrations of dystopia in Arab world for the period of 1980s. Arazaz’s literary exemplifications of dystopia are substantially more multifarious than what we see in media. *Confession of Silencer* appeals to the representational along with the performative character of autocratic acts. In this effort, Arazaz draws upon current political science, sociology and history. In this transdisciplinary endeavour, the Jordanian author puts on narrative practice together with historical imagination to illuminate the phenomenon of dystopia.

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