

The poetics of fear at the novels of Osama Al Muslim

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Abstract

This paper explores the poetics of fear in Osama Al Muslim's novels as a thematic of power dimension that configures experiences and actions. Through his novels, Al Muslim represented a complicated interrelation between identity and fear and often used fear to explore social and psychological aspects. The paper discusses how Al Muslim interrelates fear with cultural, political, and existential questions in developing a narration that blurs the line separating personal and collective anxieties. This paper is intended to reveal, through the analysis of his major novels, the mechanisms of how fear acts as an emotional reaction and a literary device in enriching the development of narrative structures and character arcs. The paper further explores aesthetic techniques adopted by Al Muslim, including imagery, symbolism, and tempo, in developing feelings of fear in the novels. This study ultimately demonstrates how the poetics of fear in Al Muslim's works offers deep insight into the human condition and reflects upon broader issues of society.

Keywords: The poetics , fear , novels , Osama Al Muslim

Introduction

This is the poetics of fear-a powerful and wide theme in literature, especially within modern Arab novels. Mostly, authors would engrave in such a complicated psychological and social topography of fear. Osama Al Muslim would present fear, in his works, as something more than just an emotional condition, but it's some deep force acting in driving the plot and construction of character to explore themes. The characterization of fear in Al Muslim runs very deep in human psychology and probes its effects on the individual, as well as on society and politics. His novels reflect an understanding of fear as an image of personal and collective anxiety and provide a distinct perspective for examining the human condition.

In the works of Al Muslim, fear is often a tool of psychological manipulation, a reflection of societal instability, or an answer to existential crises. To depict the nature of fear, Al Muslim usually resorts to direct and indirect presentations, creating complex stories where fear plays an ambiguous role both as a destroyer and a motivator for resistance, survival, or even transformation. His writing thus invites readers to engage with fear in multifaceted ways: as something which ties

them to their surroundings and societies, yet also as something that a person has to cross in order for him or her to transcend some personal and social limitations.

In essence, this study will explore how Osama Al Muslim employs fear in the novels to construct a unique poetics that would appeal to the modern reader. From the pacing of suspense to the use of symbolism and imagery, Al Muslim's innovative narrative techniques serve only to heighten tension within his stories and push fear to the forefront of the narrative experience. This is a poetics of fear that can be viewed both as part of the socioeconomic realities of the Arab world and as something more universal: an existential dread, a search by man for meaning in an uncertain world.

Moreover, this introduction opens up further possibilities for exploring how Al Muslim crafts his characters' emotional journeys through fear. He uses fear not as an aesthetic but as a kind of social commentary in order to see how fear as a sense of being shapes identity, forms relations, and defines moral and existential choices of his protagonists. This research hopes to contribute to an understanding of the broader implications of fear in contemporary literature through an engagement with its use by Al Muslim and how it serves as a window to the complexities of human experience and cultural identity.

In the chapters ahead, several central novels by Osama Al Muslim are analyzed in some detail, bringing together literary and psychological frameworks to help reveal how the construction and deconstruction of fear occur throughout the work. Aims of this study include, first, focusing on the style of Al Muslim through the poetic of fear to contribute to this understanding, as well as broader understanding of what fear does and does not achieve within contemporary Arab literature.

The poetics of fear in novels are the ways in which authors use different forms, techniques, and elements of the novelistic discourse for the expression of fear, dread, and unease in the reader. Fear is among the most intensive and overwhelming emotions; thus, its function in literature ranges from making a story deeper thematically to affecting the psychological development of the characters. In the framework of studying the poetics of fear in novels, several aspects can be pointed out:

1. Atmosphere and Setting:

Atmosphere or setting is one of the most important elements with regard to provoking fear. There are quite a few settings that might depict how tension and anticipation are taken to a greater level; to name a few, dark and deserted areas, abandoned houses, and tiny places. The description should make a person feel claustrophobic, victimized, and alienated. The known master who has used bleak settings is none other than Edgar Allan Poe.

- Example: In "The Fall of the House of Usher," Poe uses descriptions of a decaying mansion, oppressive weather, and eerie silence all as precursors to impending doom and horror.

2. Psychological Fear:

Fear in novels is often more internal than external. The fears depicted could be heightened by psychological portrayals of characters' mental states, anxieties, and inner conflicts. Writers might concentrate their attention on the mental decline of a character or on the terror of the unknown, fears of one's own imagination, and terrors originating in the self. Psychological horror involves terrors emanating from identity, memory, or sanity.

- Example: In "The Shining" by Stephen King, the fear isn't only rooted in the haunted hotel but also in the breakdown of the main character's mental stability and the terrifying thoughts and impulses he experiences.

3. Suspense and Foreshadowing:

Another convention of poetics of fear involves the technique of creating suspense through the use of pacing and foreshadowing. In some cases, this means subtle hints that threaten the characters, while in other instances, the author may slowly mete out pieces of information to readers. All that builds tension and uncertainty thus, fear thanks to such delay.

- Example: The gradual unravelling of strange events and uneasy happenings in Shirley Jackson's "The Haunting of Hill House" culminates into building up the kinaesthetic aspect of fear before the true nature of the house is revealed.

4. The Uncanny:

The uncanny refers to the familiar that is strange, weird, and disturbing; mostly taking the main context in horror novels. Objects, figures, or experiences that might be out of place create unease. It dissolves any threshold separating the known from the unknown, making one feel like things are just not right.

- Example: The monster in Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" is a human/non-human figure, which inspires terror through its strangeness and its challenge to human identity.

5. The Supernatural:

Most novels have used supernatural elements to heighten the fear of ghosts, monsters, or otherworldly entities. Often, such elements are symbolic of deeper fears related to death, the unknown, or moral corruption. The supernatural forces may represent existential anxiety or a disruption in the natural order, creating a sense of vulnerability and existential dread.

- Example: Count Dracula in "Dracula" by Bram Stoker is a manifestation of both supernatural power and fear of the unknown, with his unearthly abilities and malevolent influence over others.

6. Character Responses to Fear:

How characters react to fear also contributes to the poetics of fear. Fear can reveal much about a character's psychology and motivations. Some characters may fight against fear, while others succumb to it, demonstrating varying levels of strength or fragility. Fear can drive characters to make irrational decisions, leading to tragic consequences or personal revelations.

- Example: In William Golding's "Lord of the Flies", the universal fear of the unknown that led them all into savagery was concentrated in an imaginary beast that turned them into chaos and violence.

7. Language and Imagery:

The poetics of fear are the languages used in the novel, full of vivid imagery, metaphors, and symbolism. Such descriptive language may cause visceral reactions—a racing heart or a chill down the spine—and is used to heighten the emotional impact of the story. Dark, grotesque, or ominous imagery often suggests feelings of horror or dread.

Example: A blend of cosmic horror with grotesque descriptions in H.P. Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu" develops an existential kind of fear wherein the characters are consumed by the insignificance of humanity within the vast universe.

8. Moral and Existential Fear:

Beyond the supernatural or physical, many novels look into existential or moral fear. These are those fears that have to do with the meaning of life, the outcomes of human actions, or the darkness within human nature. These novels might raise deep, profound questions about existence, identity,

or morality in a way that makes the reader afraid not only of external threats but also of internal, philosophical ones.

- Example: In the novel "1984" by George Orwell, besides fear concerning the totalitarian state, it deals with losing one's liberty, distorting the truth, and erasing identity as well.

The poetics of fear in novels is variegated and multi-layered because such approaches allow writers to explore some of the deepest anxieties and vulnerabilities that human experiences can provide. Atmosphere, psychological depth, suspense, and the supernatural-these are all ways in which an author can instill fear that is both emotionally and intellectually resonant with readers. From external threats to internal turmoil, the poetics of fear remains among the strongest methods literature has of exploring the darker sides of the human psyche.

Poetics of fear in Osama Al-Muslim's novels signify the very emotion used as a literary device for the psychological, social, and existential journeys his works have taken. Indeed, Osama Al-Muslim is one such contemporary Arabic writer who more often than not interlaces fear with deep commentaries on the human condition, societal issues, and political realities in peculiar narrative structures challenging for the characters and readers.

Main Elements of Poetics of Fear in the Novel Works of Osama Al-Muslim

1. Psychological Fear:

Al-Muslim often delves into the internal fears of his characters and shows how insecure, anxious, or paranoid they feel due to turbulent or oppressive societies. Many times, these characters face certain fears that are just not only in the environment outside, such as war or violence, but rather deep inside their souls. Such features engrave their identities and bring their choices of existence to a crisis. By the same token, Al-Muslim investigates in them the fragility of the human psyche.

2. Fear of the Other:

One of the overwhelming trends in his works is deep-rooted dread of the "Other"the dreaded regime, the alien culture, and even societal norms ostracizing some members. This then reflects itself in xenophobia, social alienation, suspicion against all those perceived as different. Al-Muslim draws this out in comment on anything but social division, and reaches to implications related to prejudice as well.

3. Fear and Power Dynamics:

The poetics of fear in Al-Muslim's novels often relates to the relations of power. In most cases, characters are in states of fear as a controlling factor in authoritarian states where fear has been institutionalized into dominance. It is either the fear of punishment, police surveillance, or even the mechanism of social exclusion that controls and commands the movements of individuals and societies. In this prism, Al-Muslim criticizes those societal structures which generate fear and sustain oppression.

4. Fear of the Unknown and the Absurd:

Most of Al-Muslim's works are characterized by the absurd, where the characters are thrown into situations beyond their understanding or control. This leads to the fear of the unknown-of events that seem to happen without reason or logic. The existential fear here is mostly accompanied by a search for meaning in either an indifferent or chaotic world. Al-Muslim portrays this fear as an invitation for one to question the meaning of life and existence.

5. Metaphysical and Existential Fear:
Al-Muslim often deals with metaphysical themes of life and death, using fear as a magnifying glass to perceive the existential questions that beset humanity. Besides, the fear of death, the meaninglessness of life, or the fear of a higher power are preoccupations shared by his characters. This element of fear goes beyond the physical into the philosophical and spiritual. Fear as a narrative tool

In Al-Muslim's novels, fear is not only a theme but also a major narrative device. It dictates the plot, the development of the characters, and the tone of the entire story. Fear is portrayed in multifaceted ways, from subtle psychological unease to overwhelming, life-altering terror. Through the prism of fear, Al-Muslim is able to engage with broader themes of social justice, identity, and the impact of historical events on personal lives.

Style and Technique

Al-Muslim employs a number of literary techniques in order to instill fear:

Suspense and Tension: He creates suspense through slow reveals of information, which develops a sense of imminent danger. The emotional stakes become so high in these stories.

- Symbolism and Imagery: Dark, ominous imagery—of landscapes, events, and even character behaviors—symbolizes fear. These symbols are often rooted in cultural and political contexts, which makes them strike a chord deep within the reader.

Unreliable narrators: Most of his characters are unreliable; this adds to an element of uncertainty and fear. Readers are left pondering upon what is real and what is imagination, adding to the overall effect of dread.

Fragmented narratives: Sometimes, the structure of his novels reflects the disjointed experience of fear. This non-linear storytelling is reflective of the disorientation caused by fear, putting the reader into a continuous unease.

The poetics of Osama Al-Muslim's novels is complicatedly interwoven in the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of fear.

His works beckon the reader to confront uncomfortable truths about the world and themselves, offering a poignant critique of the ways fear shapes individual lives and societal structures. In Al-Muslim's novels, fear is not an emotional response but a lens through which to examine broader existential and political issues, making his work a powerful reflection on the human experience in the face of uncertainty and oppression.

Conclusion

The poetics of fear in Osama Al-Muslim's novels is a deep medium that reaches the human condition in its most complex states, especially when turmoil, be it societal, psychological, or political, is concerned. Fear, in Al-Muslim's hands, is never used simply to evoke feelings but is a lens through which he interrogates the realities of living in a fractured world. Fear is not an external threat only, but it is a pervasive force percolating deep into the psyche and, therefore, influencing one's behavior and shaping identity. In his works, fear is multi-dimensional: personal, collective, existential, and social.

Al-Muslim's characters are often caught in their fears, which emanate either from the oppressive systems, existential crises, or fears of the unknown. These are fears that serve to advance the plot through tension, character development, and the exploration of the darkest recesses of the human soul. By making fear both the thematic and structural backbone of his stories, Al-Muslim provides a means whereby readers can invest in the emotional struggles of his characters but also wider social and political concerns that feed into such fears. Thematic concerns related to fear in Al-Muslim's novels are rendered most apt in a world where, more often than not, fears have been used as instruments of social control, means of enforcing power structures, and ways of manipulating collective consciousness.

His portrayal of fear both in respect of the authoritarian regime and of social fragmentation thus serves as a critical lens through which to perceive the psychological consequences such conditions have on an individual. A life lived in fear of surveillance, punishment, or societal alienation permeates the lives of his characters and reflects the oppressive realities that many face in contemporary politically unstable environments. However, Al-Muslim does not employ fear solely as a narrative device confined to its social and political dimensions.

Fear also takes him into the spheres of existential and metaphysical considerations, questions about the nature of life, death, and afterlife. This lends a philosophical layer to the poetics of fear in his novels, where the characters' internal struggles are reflected by larger, more universal concerns: the fear of the unknown, the question of existence, and the inescapable confrontation with death create a strong emotional resonance that allows readers to reflect on their own fears and the nature of the human experience. It is in this respect that suspense, fragmented narratives, and unreliable perspectives mark Al-Muslim's style and further heighten the effect of fear.

By doing so, he disorients the reader with his literary techniques, which reflect the psychological turmoil of his characters and raise a compelling sense of unease. Such techniques hardly allow the thematic weight of fear to be relegated to the background but make it an integral part of the unfolding story. This means that the reader is constantly pressed to negotiate the maze of perception, reality, and imagination—a maze through which fear might instill disorientation in the mind. Finally, Osama Al-Muslim's exploration of fear in his novels is not merely for narrative tension.

Fear is a core, many-faceted force driving the emotional, psychological, and social dimensions of his stories. This gives Al-Muslim the ability to comment on an individual's search for meaning amidst a chaotic world, the forces of power and authority in an oppressive manner, and the existential questions haunting every human being. Through his poetics of fear, Al-Muslim creates a multi-layered web of stories with which readers easily relate, confronting them head-on with disturbing realities about the nature of fear itself and how widespread the influence is within our lives.

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