

***Scheherazade's Heroines Die in the End! Why?  
Is That a Deliberate Ideology or an Insinuated Dialectic?***

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**Abstract**

Parts of the literary text have received the attention of literary criticism since its earliest stages. The beginnings and ends of the literary texts may have found greater interest in the varying nature of those texts. Recent narrative studies are concerned with the starting and ending locations, as they represent the frontier between the text factor of imagination and reality/the reference on the one hand and the capabilities of creativity/author and the recipient/reader on the other. Besides, the beginning and the end of the text constitute only strategic locations where the meaning is centered and where the expected effect starts and ends. It is noticeable, however, that the attention paid to the beginnings was more favorable than that paid to the ends. The ends of Nawālal-Sa'dāwī's novels have a clear indication that centers around the idea of the death of heroines, including a specific attitude that motivates the reader towards change, in which the act is accompanied by sound, as opposed to the death of the heroines at the ends of the novels. They also contain the writer's clear attitude toward her heroes and constitute a means of going out of the state of helplessness and defeat through death. Such ends are considered inevitable closed ones and allow no other alternative ends.

**Keywords:** Literary representations, end, conclusion, lexical indication, interior, the women's unique role.

**Introduction**

The characters are the clearest forms of literary representations. The shape of our fictional narrative confirms our perception of existence and the shape things inevitably look like, but what does the narrative structure of the literary text reveal about the perception of what women's lives look like? What is the element that represents their lives and is considered the thematic plot of the females' fate?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>What does the woman want? Freud asked this exciting question: What does a woman want? He put it to a number of prestigious psychologists, as well as psychoanalysts, and they did not hesitate to provide the answer that supports the old idea that says: Women's demands and needs are determined by their sexual and reproductive characteristics. Some male researchers felt they never had to hide the fact that they knew women - functionally - in their relation to society's needs. Psychoanalytic Joseph Traynold, for example, says: "Women are educators and caregivers." Anatomy tells us that "when a woman's life grows unworried about her biological functions and without

Russian formalists considered the ends of texts to be among the criteria for literary typology. Eichenbaum says that the ends of short stories tend to be decisive and unexpected, unlike the novel, whose end is often quiet. In general, modern narrative texts are arguably more inclined toward uniqueness and difference, and therefore their ends are more problematic than the old texts<sup>2</sup>.

Parts of the literary text have received the attention of criticism since its early stages, and perhaps the beginnings and ends of the literary texts have found the greatest interest, given the different nature of those texts and their written aims. Aristotle, noting the importance of that, said that a well-built plot should not start or end randomly.<sup>3</sup>. Recent narrative studies are concerned with the location of both the beginning and the end, as they represent the frontiers between the world of text/imagination and reality/reference on the one hand and the possibilities of creativity/author and receipt/reader on the other, besides to the fact that the beginning or end of the text are only strategic barriers, where the meaning is

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sabotaging her femininity, and then when she enters the realm of femininity with a sense of heterosexuality, then we will reach the good life of a world where we are safe to live."Of course, none of these is far removed from the ideas expressed by Rousseau about women, but the modern pattern of this style of thinking is found in Ericson. Erickson tried to revive Freud's negative notion that the evolution of female personality is derived largely from the young girl's sense of envy toward the penis.

Erickson instead tried to argue that evolution is completed by having an "inner place" that has tremendous power: the uterus. So a woman's ability to carry and feed a child is not merely an aspect of her nature as all her identity and her life revolve around that particular "inner peace" and her desire to fill it out.

So Erickson claims to know women for what they are and what they look like naturally. However, the reasoning employs in this subject is neither more conclusive nor convincing than Rousseau's. His demonstration that women are fundamentally aware of their "internal place" is a result of experiences when boys and girls at an early age were asked to install scenes from a number of given toys. Erickson also argues that it is the biological necessity of human life that makes raising a child the "unique function of a woman ."Therefore, it is biology that explains many of the differences that we notice in a young girl, not only reacting to things with much more tenderness than a child but she has also learned to be easily satisfied within a limited circle of activities, showing less resistance and impulse than the kind that later leads boys and men to deviate. See Oaken, Muller Susan (2002). *al-Nisā' fi al-Fikr al-Siyasi al-Ġarbi*. Tr.by Imam Abd al-Fattah Imam. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Cairo: al-Majlis al-A'la li al-Thaqafa, p.266-268.

<sup>2</sup>al-Qaḍi, Moḥammad et al (2010). *Mu'jam al-Sarḍiyat*. 1<sup>st</sup>. ed. Tunis: Dar Moḥammad 'Ali, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup>Aristotles (1999). *Poetics*. Cairo: Hala li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', p, 128.

concentrated and where the expected impact begins and takes place. It is noticeable, however, that the attention paid to the beginnings was more advantageous than the ends, as Philip Hammon asserts.<sup>5</sup>

### Definition of "End"

The lexical indication of the end is linked to the goal, where the thing ends, which is the end. We say: It reached its end; something has reached its end; and 'the thing ended,' and 'it ended,' and 'it reached its end.'<sup>6</sup>

As it is used by researchers, the term "end" overlaps with the "conclusion" due to the different nature and aims of the texts and the differing views of critics between the two terms. The term "conclusion" refers in the dictionary of literary terms "to the last part of a text, which is often long, in which the purposes of the text, the results of the research, or the latest developments of the events are briefly mentioned if the text is narrative."<sup>7</sup>

However, the narrative dictionary indicates that the end follows previous events, is not followed by other events, and indicates a state of relative stability.<sup>8</sup> By comparing the contexts in which these two words appear, it is noted that the 'conclusion' is more linked to the author's own practice, namely, the writing process. The 'end,' however, is linked to the fate of the events, which relates to the relay of the narrative and the space of interpretation, but nevertheless, the separation between them remains difficult in the uses of contemporary Arab criticism, although most narrative studies tend to use the term 'end.'

### The Features of Good Narrative Endings

When talking about the features of good narrative endings, we realize that:

1. They should be satisfactory by being able to answer the questions on which the novel was based
2. They should be appropriate to the nature of the topic on which the novel was based.
3. They should be surprising, by containing something that the reader didn't notice.

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<sup>4</sup>Kilitto, 'Abd al-Fattah (2001). *al-Maqamat: al-Sard wa al-Ansaq al-Thaqafiya*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Translated by 'Abd al-Kabir al-Sharqawi. Dar Topqal, p.196.

<sup>5</sup>Lehmedani, Hamid (2002). " 'Atabat al-Naṣṣ al-Adabi. Baḥṡ Naṣari. *Majallat 'Alamat*. Vol. 12, Issue 46, p. 29.

<sup>6</sup>Ibn Manzūr, Moḥammad bin Makram (2000). *Lisān al-'Arab*. 1<sup>st</sup>. ed., Vol. 15, p. 8. Dar Ṣader. Entry: (ن . ي . ه . ن).

<sup>7</sup>Wehbi, Majdi and al-Muhandes, Kamel (1984). *Mu'jam al-Muṣṡalaḥat al-'Arabiya fi al-Luḡa wa al-Adab*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup>Prince, Gerald (2003). *Qamus al-Sardiyat/ A Dictionary of Narratology*. Translated by al-Sayyed Imam. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Cairo: Meret li al-Nashr, p.58.

4. They should be both logical and convincing and proportionate to what the novel previously presented.<sup>9</sup>

On the whole, two main types of endings in the novel can be distinguished. There are *closed endings*, where the events are complete, and the fate of the characters is clear, in which all questions are answered, and this type is closer to the reader's satisfaction.

The second type is *open endings* that remain open to several possibilities, and in which the suspense of the reader is strengthened to be involved in the conception of the end and determination of its features and possibilities.<sup>10</sup>

### Types of the Novel Ends

There are six types of novel ends:

1. **The end of the summary**, in which the hero solves the problem definitively and accurately, is the kind that prevails in traditional novels.
2. **The intellectual end** is unrestricted by a specific end and in which the reader participates in drawing an appropriate end.
3. **The end of sensing** sends some future glimpses that keep the reader eager to know what will result from the post-knot solution.
4. **The end of the sudden landing**, which adds accidents or emotional effects after the solution has been realized, although the novel could have been finished before that development, improves it.
5. **The end of the analysis** uses a word, a saying, an idea, or other means of analysis. It is usually a part of the information used in the novel's plot and influenced it.
6. **The reversed end** represents the complete opposite of the beginning, in the sense that the novel begins with a state and ends with its opposite.<sup>11</sup>

### The Study

- **The Goals of the Study**

The study seeks to achieve the following goals:

1. To extrapolate narrative endings into the study novels here in order to learn about the constructive specificity of al-Sa'dāwī's novelistic texts under the necessity of awareness of the function of literature that is based on the theory of reflection.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Racol, F.A. (2001). "Kayfa Tatajannab Id'āf Nihayat al-Qiṣṣa" in, Ma'ālem al-Qaṣṣ. Translated by: Ma'ni al-Jahni. 1<sup>st</sup>. ed. al-Riyad: al-Nadi al-Adabi, 185-186.

<sup>10</sup>Zaytūni, Latif (2002). *Mu'jam Muṣṭalaḥat Naqd al-Riwaya*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan, p. 86.

<sup>11</sup>Racol, F. A. (2001), p. 186-192.

<sup>12</sup>In his interpretation of the *theory of reflection in literature*, Shukri al-Maḍī says that it is one of the theories in modern criticism, and it is directly related to the theses of the Marxist approach, and its

2. To identify the indications of the sections of the endings in al-Sa‘dāwī’s novels and their relationship to the holistic indications of the novels.
3. To conduct a comparison between the ends of the novels of the study here.

### **Employment of Character of the Heroine in Novels of the Study**

The study of the character depends on the follow-up of all the features, actions, statements, and relationships that are attributed to it, but the character can also be clear through what is attributed to other characters by identifying the facets of the similarity and differences between the characters.<sup>13</sup>When two characters are presented in the same circumstances, the similarity or contrast between their behavior confirms the distinctive features of both or one of them. The existence of a character that is similar to the other highlights their common features, but the difference between them confirms the distinction between the two, but not every line of separation between the two characters is considered to be a factor in the construction and highlighting of their features, but the distinct difference within a specific and clear field as in contrast between two contradictory qualities such as stinginess versus generosity, or good heart versus evil. When two contradictory characters are opposite in traits, each one not only reveals its distinctive characteristics but also reveals the characteristics of the parallel character to it.

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name shows that it views literature as reflecting the issues in the society it speaks about. It makes literature a mirror of reality and society, and the theory of reflection adopts the Marxist material thought that maintains that literature is a reflection of social reality. But this reflection is neither mechanical nor parallel nor simple, but a complex process as literary works that represent reality may be compliant with and conciliatory with this reality or can be an overriding vision that seeks to change and destroy societal relations in order to build a better society. The theory of reflection views literature as a social activity, which is a human experience, and the aim of literature -in this theory- is to share with the author this experience that he presents in his literary work in a way that affects the recipient and his feelings in order to contribute to changing its social reality for the better.

Ziad Şaleḥ says that one of the most famous adopters of Marx's vision of 'reflection' is György Lukács, who has delved into many Marxist terms and concepts such as superstructures, and infrastructure. Besides, he talked about "comprehensive unity," which means that literature does not reflect the initial impressions of sense and does not merely portray the manifestations of reality but depicts its depth and relationships that demonstrate its comprehensive unity. See, for example, al-Madi, and Shukri (2005). *Fi Nazariyat al-Adab/On the theory of literature*. 1st ed., Beirut: al-Mu‘asasa al-‘Arabiya li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, p. 73, 77; Şaleḥ, Ziad (2016). *Afaq al-Nazariya al-Adabiya: Min al-Muḥaka ila al-Tafkikiya/ The Prospects of Literary Theory/From Imitation to Deconstruction*. 1st. ed. Tunisia: Dar al-Tanwir li al-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, p. 65, 67.

<sup>13</sup>Qassouma, al-Şadiq (2000). *Tara’iq Taḥlil al-Qiṣṣa*. Tunisia: Dar al-Janub li al-Nashr, p. 105.

The wicked character highlights the goodness of the heart of his opponent, and the fat highlights the thin who stands by him.<sup>14</sup>

In al-Sa'dāwī's novels, the story flows from both imagination and reality, weaving a world that is founded on reflection, criticism, and review, capturing rich details by suggestions and symbols in order to confront the disappointment and individual and collective falls that women have known.

al-Sa'dāwī employs the personality of the woman to arouse the reader's conscience to be a witness to an unequal conflict between a powerful and unjust authority represented in the man's authority and patriarchal society and the oppressed violated woman who is deprived of her will and dignity. By that, Nawālal-Sa'dāwī aims to expose and reveal the oppressive society with its masculine authority and, thus, provoke women's injustice and oppression of the woman for years. This oppression and this injustice against her create abnormal, broken, and psychologically and physically destroyed female personalities, transforming the woman into an alienated person within her society who lives outside of time and history.

One pattern that insists on emerging is that suffering and death are the inevitable destiny of Arab feminist female protagonists, especially those who commit sexual abuses. This pattern assumes that women are pure (that is, God and nature have judged them to be pure). Hence, any misconduct becomes a violation of the deepest depths of their feminized Self. Hence the duality of bad values, where men are disadvantaged by nature, so they must be forgiven, while women who "fall" destroy themselves. Even when these female characters are introduced with sympathy as victims of a feelless social world, once they lose their innocence, their path inevitably shifts towards death. This is Fardous's story in *Imra'ah 'Inda Nuqṭat al-Ṣifr/Woman at Point Zero*. Every turn or hinge point in the plot is built in such a way that influences the reader and makes him feel the inevitability of her end. Fardous is introduced as a woman who suffers from a harsh life with a husband many years older than her. He is sixty years old and she has not completed the 19 yet. Fardous entered the institution of marriage as a result of an arranged marriage by her uncle and his wife. Sheikh Maḥmūd is a physically repellent husband to her, with an impairment on his face, who beats her and curses her, and therefore, she flees from his home to meet her inevitable fate with Bayumi, who started violating her body with his friends. She fled to face her black fate by meeting with Sharifa Salaḥ al-Din, who entered the world of prostitution.

We notice that the movement of the hard plot does not suggest for a while that the heroine may find a way back. Fardous resembles the train under which she throws herself to the end, pushing hard on the path of her tragic feminine destiny and becoming increasingly irrational, self-deceiving, and unhappy, convincing herself that money is power and it is not

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<sup>14</sup>Raymond-Kan'an, Shlomit (1995/2011). Contemporary Poetic Narrative Analysis. Translated by: al-Hassan Aḥmama. al-Dar al-Bayḍā'; Dar al-Thaqafa li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', p.105, 106; See also:

117-114'יוסף, אבן. *הזמנות בסיפורת*. תל-אביב: ספרית פועלים, 1980. עמ

important how you get it, so be it by adultery. That is, too, Anna Karenina's story and Madame Bovary's story. Every turn or detailed point in the plot is built in such a way that affects the reader and makes him feel the inevitability of its end.

Anna Karenina, for example, is presented as a woman who suffers from a trivial life as a result of traditional marriage to a man who is highly traditional and physically repellent to her, and it is natural to think that she clings to an opportunity of happiness with a man with whom she relates emotionally, but the plot, since her "downfall" develops according to a completely different logic. The reader recognizes Anna's betrayal of her husband as totally unnatural and that she is an unbalanced woman, neither mentally nor emotionally. She becomes increasingly irrational, self-deceiving, and unhappy as the narrative events move forward. Here, too, the movement of the cruel plot does not suggest, even for a moment, that the heroine may find a way back, as Anna Karenina, too, like Fardous, resembles the train she eventually throws herself underneath, as she pushes herself hard on the path of her tragic female destiny. The fate of female heroes of literature who exceed the boundary of acceptable sexual conduct acknowledges this.

Narrative plots tell us that men must accept to perform actions in order to become heroes, and thus, they strive to shape conditions according to their opinions. However, the women's heroism is formulated out of their acceptance of their constraints and disappointments stoically.

Pam Morris says: "In literary texts where the main character is a male, the plot is often built as an excavation journey that follows the hero's involvement in the world positively, whether his adventures end in success or failure and death. Conversely, central female personalities are always built in a negative relationship with the events.

Events happen to heroines, "and Clarissa, Richardson's heroine, and Tess, Harry's heroine, and Little Dorrit, Dickens' heroine, realize their places by taking on what happens to them, and not by actually performing the action."<sup>15</sup>

This is what happens with al-Sa'dāwī's heroines. Fardous, the heroine of *Imra'ah 'Inda Nuqtat al-Şifr*; Bint Alla, the heroine of *Şuqūṭ al-Imām/ The Fall of the Imām*, and Janat, the heroine of *Jannāt wa-Iblīs/ Jannāt and the Devil*, and Zena, the heroine of *Zenarealize* their status by enduring what is happening to them, not by actually performing the action.

Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī explains in her introduction to the novel *Imra'ah 'Inda Nuqtat al-Şifr* that she was looking for the character of some of the accused or convicted women in various cases: "I was looking for the characters of some of the women who were accused or sentenced in various cases."<sup>16</sup> So she chose a woman, not a man, to star in her novel because she wanted a "different character."

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<sup>15</sup>Morris, Pam (2002). *al-Adab wa al-Niswiya/Literature and Feminism*. Translated by Siham 'Abd al-Salam. al-Majlis al-Ala li al-Thaqafa, p. 190-191.

<sup>16</sup>al-Sa'dāwī, Nawāl (1979). *Imra'ah 'inda Nuqtat al-Şifr/ Woman at Point Zero*. Beirut: Dar al-Adab, p. 5.

In the opening of her novel *Ṣuqūṭ al-imām*, al-Sa‘dāwī says: "And I tried to write this novel when I was a schoolgirl, but I didn't know how to write it, the idea in my head, the sensations, and characters... but language doesn't help me. And this novel lived with me, haunting me and getting more urgent for me over the last ten years. The eyes of its characters throw me into vigilance, into sleep, and when I travel outside or inside the country. The characters of girls and women were more stable and settled, but the name of Bint Allah/ Daughter of God caused me anxiety for many nights."<sup>17</sup> Its heroine was a woman.

In the introduction of her novel *Jannāt wa-Iblīs*, she talks about a different morning and a different sun and the motion that filled the bodies above the ground... and then, all of a sudden, everything stopped when she entered the gate. Even the birds stopped twittering: "And then everything suddenly stopped when she went through the gate. Even birds stopped twittering. She remained in her place above the wires looking at the new next innate with small eyes. Through the two parts of the door, her slim body rushed with an unfamiliar movement of Eve's daughters - an intruding movement."<sup>18</sup>

And again, we come across a different woman, who, as she appears, life stops life from moving. It is expected that the novel, which seems to be an excavation journey of a young woman in search of life, is transformed into the heroine of the story, which makes her a heroine. In introducing Zena's personal image in *Zeina*, she points out that it does not leave her memory: "Her image does not leave my memory; its features are engraved in my brain cells, inside the bones of the head and the vaults of my unconsciousness,"<sup>19</sup> an influential character that cannot be forgotten so much that it is engraved inside the brain cells.

The hero's character submits to different mechanisms of exaggeration and hyperinflation to gain the reader's support on the emotional level, as it appears as an antithesis of the power that possesses great capabilities. Nawāl al-Sa‘dāwī's novels are characterized by sympathetic insight into the feelings of the heroine/woman and her blatant exposition of the man's selfishness. Perhaps the most important feature of women writers' feelings of the need to prove testimony is the small number of female victims who are mentioned and welcome to speak boldly in women's voices in the areas of politics and male-dominated protest.

The sense of solidarity with other women has led to a great sense among women writers for the need to "prove their testimony" and to use their work intentionally to witness and protest against the oppression and suffering of women. This is how the emotions of Nawāl al-Sa‘dāwī moved with a similar sense of need to testify against certain types of injustice. Thus, she wrote her novel *Imra`ah ‘Inda Nuqṭat al-Ṣifr*, which testifies in narrative form to a prisoner she interviewed in prison. The woman was sentenced to death for the

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<sup>17</sup>al-Sa‘dāwī, Nawāl (1987). *Ṣuqūṭ al-imām/ The Fall of the Imam*. Dar al-Mustaqbal al-‘Arabi, p. 9-10.

<sup>18</sup>al-Sa‘dāwī, Nawāl (1992). *Jannāt wa-Iblīs/ Jannat and the Devil*. Beirut: Dar al-Adab, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup>al-Sa‘dāwī, Nawāl (2009). *Zeina*. Beirut: Dar al-Saqi, p. 7.



murder of a man after she suffered for years as a victim of a political, religious, and social system.

The heroine in all of al-Sa'dāwī's novels seems to us to be a project of a liberated woman, as the text in *Imra'ah 'Inda Nuqtat al-Şifr* indicates. She's not deeply liberated but is not as tame or subordinate as she is to Zeina. She is aware that the mistake lies in the basis of her life, and as she searches for the cause and thinks about liberation, she makes more mistakes as Fardous does in *Imra'ah 'Inda Nuqtat al-Şifr*. Hoping to break free from her husband and the burden of his imprisonment and her waiting for him for thirty years, as she did in *Jannāt wa-Iblīs/ Jannat and the Devil*. She is a rebellious woman who chooses to isolate herself in defense of the accusations of the men of power as she Bint Allah is *Şuqūṭ al-Imām/ The Fall of the Imām*.

The woman in this awareness spins on herself like a cat that spins behind its tail. In this awareness, she becomes subtler in silence, more withdrawn into her own shell and retreating into her subjective world. Her ability to see the other diminishes, and she becomes self-reliant. Thus, she cancels out the other. We see this type of al-Sa'dāwī heroine swing in between two types of awareness. She, the woman, knows that as it appears to us from the text in al-Sa'dāwī's novels, but she doesn't know everything. She knows that the error exists, but she doesn't know that she is formatted to commit that mistake. Thus, she is an imperfect heroine, a heroine with a flaw that she does not know and is not responsible for, which gives her simultaneously her tragic and dynamic condition as a revealing fictional character.

The question that is asked here is: What makes a heroine in a novel like *Imra'ah 'Inda Nuqtat al-Şifr*, *Şuqūṭ al-Imām*, *Jannāt wa-Iblīs*, and *Zeina* fall into a state of complete loss where she doesn't know what she wants and what she does in her life? What makes this huge difference between one heroine and the other? One is a heroine who resists and rebels, and the other is lost and wandering! Is it the writer's tendencies and vision and his intellectual inclination? Or is it the writer's own nature? Or is there another deeper law behind the appearance of a hero or heroine in this way or that in this or that social stage? This loss is dominant in the central characters, the heroines of the Sa'dāwī's novels.

al-Sa'dāwī introduces us to heroines that live with a specific vision and attitude, but they are heroines without heroism. al-Sa'dāwī's heroines are young women in their 20s (Fardous, Zeina, Bint Allah), except Jannat, who is in her 40s. She lived an empty, inert life that she spent in waiting, which consequently led her to emptiness and spiritual death.

al-Sa'dāwī describes women's misery with amazing skill, but the problem is that suffering is not confronted with any desire to resist or respond to it. It is misery from whose thick layers no individual nor collective awareness of what is going on appears. It is a general misery of all women, which involves a seed of meeting and a kind of resistance, but all this is not enough because the heroine is in a state of crisis that cannot continue to resist until the end, which is the same case with Saadawi heroines.

al-Sa'dāwī shows her heroines' crisis in the novels as worried and threatened women. Their fates are hanging by a fine thread. They are lost in an urban virile male society. There are heroines, and every one of them has her dreams and aspirations, her life, her clashes, and her

ideology. They are heroines who try to live with death, but death is the ultimate destiny of each of them. Consequently, although they are presented and described as strong women, their ultimate picture is that they are women who are deprived of will and ability.

A small straw can turn the life of each one upside down and turn it into Nothing, to just a pile of flesh whose nerves are worn and burned. This speech applies to Fardous in *Imra'ah 'inda Nuqtat al-Şifra* and the fate of her lifetime, which was a prison and execution. Jannat in *Jannāt wa Iblīs* and her fate in the hospital for mental illness after she thought that her life was stable with her husband. Bint Allah in *Şuqūṭ al-Imām* was chased by the authority men to her death. Zeina was also shot dead for refusing to comply with the man's authority and his wishes. Bodour, too, was also eaten by the flames of remorse after marrying Zakaria al-Khartiti after having abandoned her newly-born daughter. We monitor the narrative trajectory of Fardous in *Imra'ah 'inda Nuqtat al-Şifr* through the functions/nucleus in the words of Roland Barthes.<sup>20</sup>, which we summarize in the following words: her growth in her father's house, that cold house; moving to the city with her uncle after her father's death, then going to school to take get a high school certificate and marrying Sheikh Maḥmūd in a very traditional way; difficult, cruel, and short life with the husband; escape from the conjugal house to the street to stay in the clutches of Bayoumi and his friends; fleeing from Bayomi's house to the street again, to fall into the hands of Sharifa Salah, who became her first teacher in the world of prostitution; escape from prostitution and returning to an honest life after Diya the journalist lit up her life again with his famous sentence that shook her being: "You are disrespectful!"<sup>21</sup> Then, we see her working at the company, meeting Ibrahim, and falling in love with him; Ibrahim betrays her by his engagement to the daughter of the company's chairman, returning to prostitution through its widest doors. The last stop was the murder of Marzouq, the pimp, and finally, her death sentence.

We monitor Jannat's narrative trajectory in *Jannāt wa Iblīs*, which we summarize in the following: Growing up in Grandpa and Grandma's house. Traditionally marrying a young man in the military, Zakaria. Living with my husband Zakaria's monotonous life for thirty years, characterized only by waiting, discovering treason, and entering a mental hospital.

Bodour's narrative trajectory within the novel *Zeina*, which overlaps the narrative trajectory of the narrative of *Zeina*, is summarized in the following: Bodour, a university student who meets Nassim and enters into a sexual relationship with him; pregnancy occurs, but she gets rid of it in order to preserve the family's honor. Then she marries Zakaria al-Khartiti, and the marriage is done in a traditional way. Life with Zakaria al-Khartiti was strained and broken.

<sup>20</sup>Barthes, Roland (1992). *al-Taḥlil al-Bunyawī li al-Sard*". *Tara'iq Taḥlil al-Sard al-Adabi*. Tr. by Ḥassan Bahrawi, Bashir al-Qamri and 'Abd al-Ḥamid 'Aqqar. al-Ribat: Manshurat Ittihad Kuttāb al-Maghreb, p. 88.

<sup>21</sup>al-Sa'dāwī, Nawāl (1979). *Imra'ah 'inda Nuqtat al-Şifr*, p. 79.

Zeina's character is also on the level of a hero and at the center of the narrative. Therefore, we can observe her narrative path within the narrative and summarize it in the following: Zeina is lying on the street after Bodour decides to abandon them. Dada Enat finds her. The next step is her learning at school, and there, Nanny Mariam discovers her musical talents and her playing the piano. Then she grows up on the streets with the street boys, and her musical talent grows up with her becoming the owner of a band composed of her friends, The Street Boys.

Ahmad al-Damhiri, cousin of her mother, Bodour. He is crazy about her and tries to get close to her, but she refuses, so he decides to kill her and issues an order to his group, as he is the prince of the group, to kill her. She is killed on the stage while she is singing, and people are clapping.

The study novels begin here, from the present moment, to dive with the reader into chapters and details of the life experience of al-Sa'dāwī's heroines (Fardous, Bint Allah, Jannat, Zeina) and to represent the narrator and narrate simultaneously. For example, in *Imra'ah 'Inda Nuqṭat al-Ṣifr* and *Ṣuqūṭ al-Imām*, the speech came in the language of the first-person singular speaker. To represent something that is spoken of in *Jannāt wa Iblīs* and *Zeina*, the used narration is in the third person singular.

In both cases, Nawālal-Sa'dāwī has made the central personality/woman a pivotal heroine around whom she weaves, and overlapping uneven relationships are woven between her and the rest of the characters of the novel, in which the textual composition is based on scenes where the present and past overlap and intersect. The scenes appear in a parallel way that is established on irony, which deepens the sense of disappointment of the woman/heroine and strengthens the perception of the enormity and fall of the dream in front of the paradox of the deteriorating reality, which the novel tries to capture all of its private and public parts, such as poverty and ignorance, and the dominance of the traditional mentality and exploitation of the woman by her husband.

### **The Inevitable Heroine's Death at the Ends of al-Sa'dāwī's Novels**

It is noticed that 'death' is the heroines' end in all of al-Sa'dāwī's novels. For example, in *Imra'ah 'inda Nuqṭat al-Ṣifr* Fardous is sent to prison at the end of the events to await execution after being charged with the murder of pimp Marzouq, who broke into her life and shared her home and money: "... I no longer own my home, where I paid my race and effort."<sup>22</sup> Marzouq entered her life forcibly and began to make a compelling journey with her of a new kind, justifying that by arguing that the woman cannot protect herself by herself, and therefore, a man must protect her even if she is a prostitute. "There is no woman above the ground who can protect herself... If I don't threaten you, another man will threaten you, as there are many pimps..."<sup>23</sup>

With these words, the pimp summarizes the masculine viewpoint about the world of women. Fardous refuses to seek a pardon from the President of the Republic to reduce the

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

sentence from death to a life sentence. She insists on hatred of men: "..., But they judge me by death because they're afraid of my life. And they know that if I live, I will kill them. My life means their death, and my death means their lives. They want to live. Life for them means more crimes and more spoils."<sup>24</sup>

Ultimately, the heroine transcends the fear of dying, as well as the love of life, and thus, she triumphs over them and the life: "I triumphed over life and death because I did not want to live. I am no longer afraid of death. I don't want anything. I don't hope for anything. And I'm not afraid of anything. I have my freedom. Fardous has come to reject life and death, and her desires have reached zero point. She no longer desires anything but killing or harming men: "Nothing enslaves us in life except our wishes, hopes, and fears."<sup>25</sup>

Fardous is not afraid of death, and it fills her with vanity because it probably brings her back to the womb of the greater mother, where the conqueror's relationship with the oppressed is negated: "This journey to a place that all people above the Earth ignore, including kings, princes, and rulers, fills me with vanity. I was looking for something to fill me with vanity. Something that makes me lift my head over the heads of people, particularly kings, princes, and rulers."<sup>26</sup>

Death gives Fardous the opportunity to see herself in a higher position than men, especially the rulers. This, in my view, stems from the overwhelming reaction stemming from frustration and even lesbian tendencies. Life here does not matter as much as the love of revenge and the desire to quench her grudge so much that her sadistic and masochistic tendencies blend here with the effect of social oppression. Therefore, it is no wonder that Fardous takes the newspaper and spits on the image of any man she sees.

This intense aggression prompts her to crave death with some sort of masochistic reaction that fills her with vanity. The problem for Fardous, in our opinion, is confined to men, as they are the reason for her misery and loss of freedom. She rebels against them and hates them, and in the words of Tarabishi, she doesn't realize that she hates herself and castrates her femininity in the center. To cancel the other means to cancel the Self and ruin life itself.<sup>27</sup>

After killing Marzouq, the pimp, Fardous goes out with a lifted head to the street to summarize her life with a short sentence: "I am not a prostitute, but my father, uncle, and husband trained me from the beginning to be a prostitute."<sup>28</sup> She then acknowledges the murder and puts responsibility for the existence of crimes in this world on masculinity: "... Did you kill anyone? I said: Yes... You're a criminal, the daughter of a criminal. My mother wasn't a criminal. No woman can be a criminal; criminality needs masculinity."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 111–112.

<sup>27</sup> Tarabishi, George (1995). 'Untha Did al-'Unutha: Dirasa fi Adab Nawāl al-Sa'dawi 'ala Dou' al-Tahlil al-Nafsi. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah li al-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, p, 58-60.

<sup>28</sup> al-Sa'dawī, Nawāl (1979). *Imra'ah 'inda Nuqtat al-Şifr*, p. 110.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 109–110.

Fardous would rather die by her crime than by their crime. It is true that her end is tragic, but she sees that she has ultimately triumphed over life, over death, and over fear, and thus, she has become free: "I triumphed over life and over death because I no longer wanted life, and I am no longer afraid of death. I don't want anything, I don't hope for anything, and I'm not afraid of anything. I have my freedom."<sup>30</sup>

The woman receives her inevitable fate of death in the novel *Imra'ah 'Inda Nuqtat al-Sifr* because she is a woman who stands against the male stream and against the values of the manly society and against the entire masculinity. She stood against the leader, Marzouq, the pimp who represents the negative masculinity that denies the woman to be human, especially if she is a prostitute: "How can you be among the high class, Fardous? The woman by herself cannot be. How can she be if she is a woman and a prostitute? Don't you see that this is impossible?"<sup>31</sup>

Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī chooses death to be an inevitable fate for the woman but draws it as a strong death. Therefore, she makes Fardous feel flagrant, powerful, and triumphant over everything. Triumphant over life and death and fear. She dies a strong woman, not afraid, having freed her from her wishes and hopes, and thus, she made her overcome everything.

In the novel *Šuqūṭ al-Imām*, the woman receives the inevitable fate of death because she refuses to walk along with the male stream but stands against it and against masculinity completely.

Bint Allah tries with all her effort to escape from their grip, but she does not succeed. She dies at the end of the narrative after an exhausting pursuit by the Imam's security personnel. Here too, al-Sa'dāwī chooses a tragic ending for the woman, but she draws a strong woman when she dies. She makes her fight until the last moments of her life: "She doesn't care about the stab coming from the front or the back. She dances and doesn't care about death."<sup>32</sup> Bint Allah says: "If my body dies, my heart will not die, and the last thing that dies in me is my mind. It lives on the least. And everything dies in me before my mind. Nobody of you has got my mind.

Nobody, and no matter how far you get from my body, my mind remains far-fetched."<sup>33</sup>

In *Jannāt wa Iblīs*, at the end of the narrative events, Janat is brought to trial before a judge who gathers in his image and appearance all the men I have known. There is no difference between one man and another for Janat: "... From the first row, she saw him come out. I knew him right away... He embodied her dead grandfather's body, and Zakaria's arched nose... and the turban of Sheikh Basyoni."<sup>34</sup>

We read: "... He's behind the rack wearing her dead grandfather's robe and her father's red fez (tarbush). His head is as large as that of the manager. He has Sheikh Basyuni's stick in

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 111

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>32</sup>al-Sa'dāwī, Nawāl (1987). *Šuqūṭ al-Imām*, p.156.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p.158.

<sup>34</sup>al-Sa'dāwī, Nawāl (1992). *Jannāt wal Iblīs*, p.150.

hand, writhing in the air like a snake."<sup>35</sup>Jannat dies "lying inside a box of wood called a coffin. They carry it over their necks. She's dressed in a wedding costume. Her eyes are open upward. Her lips are open with a smile."<sup>36</sup>

She dies strong and rebellious until the last moment during her trial: "I'm Jannat, I'm a rose. Rarely does a rose sprout in the desert. O you who fights history and turns the lamps off, whomever you are when you talk vaguely. I'm not a point in your book or two. I'm not a deleted name or a letter of feminine gender. I'm not afraid. I don't hide my face, and I don't shy away from my body, you who fights the mind and knowledge. I'm a jewel, and the jewel rarely emerges from the Earth."<sup>37</sup>

We can determine what happened with Jannat in Jannāt wa Iblīs through the conflict between the pre-marriage and post-marriage periods. In the past, her husband was that loving husband, but after marriage, things changed. His absence from the house is long and her waiting for him is longer, and the novel confirms that it lasted for thirty years. Every day, day after day, year after year, thirty years standing at night waiting for him, hour after hour, but he doesn't return.<sup>38</sup>

In the course of time, Jannat's waiting turns into a terrible boycott and rupture in their relationship, a split between two times: the time of innocence and happiness that Jannat lived in and the time of the present, the time of disappointment and breakup in which she lived as a result of her husband's negligence and betrayal. Treason/boycott also manifests at the collective level between two stages: the stage of aspiration towards the establishment of a new society in which the woman achieves her dignity, and the stage of disappointment, where that who was relied upon to bring about change is transformed into a person who denies her ambition, by his tendency to pursue his individual wishes and whims, and by that the value of betrayal is transformed into the center of convergence in which the structure of dream and disappointment intersects into a common equation between the destiny of society as a group and the individual as an individual, who unite in the same narrative path.

In the novel *Zeina*, Zena, the heroine, faces her inevitable fate of death, after refusing to bow to the requests of her mother's cousin, Aḥmed al-Damhiri, who decides to kill her. Zeina dies by shooting for rejecting the masculinity that is represented by Ahmad al-Damhiri: "Because she knows this kind of man.

She pays the price and loses her life: "Over the stage, she was standing under the lights before the bullets went off... The sound of applause overwhelms the sound of bullets... She wore her white cotton gown, red blood-colored threads crawling from her chest under the ribs... blood was bleeding from her chest as she stood playing and singing."<sup>39</sup> Zena grew up

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 142–143.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 153–154.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>39</sup>al-Sa‘dāwī, Nawāl (2009). *Zeina*. Beirut: Dar al-Saqi, p. 227.

on the street and was trained to resist and was a privileged, rebellious human being living in total freedom.

Based on the foregoing, the theme of "treason" /a man's betrayal of a woman/does not appear in the study novels here as a form of expression of women's sorrow only. In addition to that, we find an indication that deviates from its social and moral level in order to take other indications suggesting a symbolic betrayal between two crucial periods in the woman's life: the pre-marriage period, where hopes, ambitions and a beautiful dream with a man, and the post-marriage period where the rise in the dual relationship between the man and the woman, whom the men exploit, to impose his masculinity and manliness at the expense of the woman. The bitterness of the woman's disappointment grows deeper as the dual relationship between the man and woman after their marriage becomes cold, and then she is betrayed. Therefore, the betrayal and the form in which it was practiced against the heroine reflect the bitterness of disappointment and violence of reality.

To sum up, we say that the woman faces her inevitable fate of death at the end of the novel, and her end is tragic because she is a woman who stands against male currents, against the values of manly society, and against masculinity in its entirety.

### **Summary**

The end is a piece of writing at the end of a literary work. It is usually used to put an end to the literary work, which is presented from an in-story perspective, so it is obvious that the end section should be located in the last part of the novel text and that the end of that section should be the last word of the text. According to the principles of narrativity, the point of departure at which the end section will start will be determined on the basis of the transformations of the narrative itself.

One of the patterns that insist on emerging is that suffering and death are the inevitable destiny of the heroines of the Arab novel, specifically those who commit sexual abuse. This pattern assumes that women are pure (that is, God and nature have judged them that way). So, any misconduct becomes a violation of the deepest depths of their "feminized" Self. Hence, the duplication of bad values in Arab society. The man is loose by nature, and therefore, he must be forgiven, while the woman who "falls" destroys herself and pay a heavy price.

Nawālal- Sa'dāwī's heroines are women who stood against male trends and against the values of the urban patriarchal manly society against an absent father, a clergyman denied femininity, a grandfather seeking to impose his alopecia, and a traitor husband.

Al- Sa'dāwī chooses tragic death as an inevitable final destiny for the woman in her novels, but she makes it a powerful death that is triumphant over life and death because death gives the heroines the opportunity to elevation through which the woman achieves her freedom and Self, and thus, she frees the woman from masculinity and its burdens.

Here, I would like to ask: Does Nawalal- Sa'dāwī choose death and complicated life for her heroines in order to provoke the reader? Or does she condemn and accuse society of pure masculinity and that it is this masculinity and virility that drives women to fall, and

consequently, they meet their inevitable death? These are questions that will inevitably lead me to conduct new research!

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