The narrative structure in Ibrahim Nasrallah's novel the second war of the dog. An analytical study

(ID) Moustafa Mohamed Abouelnour[1*], (ID) Ali Kamel Ali Alsharef[2], (ID) Mohammed Ahmed Abou Adel[3], (ID) Mohammad Issa Alhourani[4]

[1] University of Khorfakkan, College of Arts, Science and Information Technology, Department of Arabic, Sharjah, UAE; Moustafa.abdelmawla@ukf.ac.ae (M.M.A.).
[2] College of Arts, University of Alqasimia, Sharjah, UAE; aalsharef@alqasimia.ac.ae (A.K.A.A.).
[3] Arabic Language Department, Al Wasl University, Dubai, United Arab States; mohamad.abouadel@alwasl.ac.ae (M.A.A.A.).
[4] Al Ain University, Abu Dhabi, UAE; mohammad.alhourani@aau.ac.ae (M.I.A.).

Abstract: This research explores the narrative structure in the novel *The Second War of the Dog (2016)* by Palestinian writer Ibrahim Nasrallah from a postmodern perspective. The study aims to analyze various narrative elements in the novel, such as time, setting, characters, and plot, and to examine how the author employs postmodern techniques to construct his fictional world. Additionally, the research seeks to uncover the intellectual and aesthetic meanings embedded in this narrative structure and its connection to contemporary cultural and social contexts. The significance of the novel lies in its portrayal of societal transformations and realities through a fantastical and satirical lens, exposing the flaws and distortions in society. The novel is set in a dystopian, corrupt city symbolized by the main character, Rashid, who oscillates between two opposing realms: the world of good and the world of evil. The study employs a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing literary criticism tools and postmodern theories to analyze the novel's text.

Keywords: Fragmentation, Magic realism, Narrative structure, Postmodernism, Satire.

1. Literature Review

Ibrahim Nasrallah's novel *The Second War of the Dog* is a significant work in contemporary Arabic literature, representing a model of the postmodern Arabic novel. This novel is marked by a complex and intertwined narrative structure that reflects the transformations within Arab and global realities amid rapid technological and social changes. This research aims to shed light on the distinctive narrative features of the novel and how the author employs postmodern techniques to build his fictional world. Additionally, it seeks to explore the relationship between the narrative structure and the intellectual and social themes presented within the novel. The importance of this study lies in its provision of an in-depth critical reading of one of the major works in contemporary Arabic literature, contributing to an understanding of the shifts in the Arabic novel within the postmodern context. The research opens new avenues for the study of contemporary Arabic novels from a modern critical perspective. The analysis will follow a scientific methodology, drawing on previous critical studies and postmodern literary theories, and will be divided into sections addressing various aspects of the narrative structure, with a focus on the postmodern techniques employed.

Among previous studies on *The Second War of the Dog* is Masad's (2021) study, which provides a critical reading of the novel through the philosophy of the mirror, based on the dialectic of the original and the copy. The novel highlight's themes of the original and similar replicas within a dark dystopian world, where scientific advancement leads only to increased primitiveness and inhumanity. In this setting, the self is lost in the other, and humanity loses its emotions, in a narrative where reality intertwines with unreality, and fantasy with science fiction. Characters appear as mere reflections of the original form, as in a mirror that reflects the original image, but with multiple mirrors reflecting

endlessly. This creates a world bound to eternal recurrence, where mistakes repeat as people fail to learn from the past. The novel is an explicit call for humanity to pause, reflect, and confront itself to avoid inevitable destruction.

Hussein's (2019) study explores the psychological ailments of humanity in the novel's fantastic world, connecting the depicted psychological disorders to Freudian theories that serve as a reference in psychology. Chaos is a central element in the narrative, warning of an impending apocalypse fueled by human greed and moral decay. The study examines disaster profiteers and war opportunists, illustrating the transformation of individuals from idealists into self-serving, opportunistic figures, as represented by the character Rashid, who serves as a focal point in the narrative. This study, based on the psychological approach, interprets the psychological afflictions that make individuals vulnerable to war. It briefly addresses the fantastical nature of the novel and distinguishes between the wondrous and the magical. It also analyzes the protagonist's character and his shift from a disciplined idealist to an opportunist exploiting societal changes for dominance and revenge. Additionally, the study critiques capitalism, portraying it as a force that reduces humans to amoral machines focused solely on profit.

Another study by Miqdadi (2021) uses the novel as an analytical model, applying both descriptive and analytical approaches. Nasrallah uses dystopia to depict an imaginary future society characterized by chaos, exploitation, opportunism, and war, leading to material and spiritual devastation in people's lives. This destruction in the dystopian world is attributed to the loss of values and principles, replaced by Machiavellianism, as people pursue extreme wealth, prioritizing materialism over moral and humanitarian values.

The latest study on *The Second War of the Dog*, by Sadat and Zahra (2021), examines the manifestations of identity in the magical realism of the novel, focusing on how fantasy is employed within the magical realism genre. It depicts the future of humanity amid a growing desire for simulation and the creation of replicas—a phenomenon that erases individual identities. The novel serves as a warning about this borrowed concept, which, if it continues to infiltrate real aspects of human life, could ignite new types of conflicts and impose destructive violence on societies. The study also examines the atmosphere of magical realism in the novel's portrayal of individual identity, utilizing a descriptive-analytical approach to explore the crisis of individual belonging as people shift from purely personal behavior to a destructive humanitarian catastrophe.

2. Key Terms of the Study

Narrative Structure: Narrative structure is a central concept in modern narrative studies, referring to how story elements are organized and arranged to create a coherent meaning. This concept has been examined by scholars like Tzvetan Todorov (1990), Gérard Genette (1997), Roland Barthes (1993), Yumna Al Eid (1990), and Abd al-Rahim al-Kurdi (2005). According to David Herman (2021), narrative structure represents "the organizational framework that connects events, characters, and spatio-temporal elements in the narrative text, thereby shaping the reading experience." Peter Hühn and others (2022) emphasize that narrative structure "goes beyond mere sequencing of events to include complex relationships among various narrative levels, such as narrative voice, perspective, and narrative time." Mona Lisa Abdul Karim (2020) notes that contemporary Arabic literature has seen significant transformations in narrative structure, becoming "more complex and experimental, reflecting social and cultural changes in the Arab world." In a similar context, Mohamed Bouazza (2023) views narrative structure as "a convergence point between form and content in the literary text, reflecting the author's worldview and stance."

Recent studies in digital narratology have expanded the concept of narrative structure. According to Marie-Laure Ryan (2019), "narrative structures in digital media are characterized by interactivity and branching, giving the reader a more active role in shaping the narrative path." This expansion of the concept reflects contemporary technological and cultural developments and their impact on narrative forms and structures.

3. Modernism and Postmodernism

The term "postmodernism" is often described as ambiguous, elusive, and flexible, with its features not yet fully established. As Mohammed Sabila (2007) described, it is "a slippery term, coated in soap, misleading in its meaning." Similarly, Abdel Wahab El-Messiri saw postmodernism as "the era of post-metaphysics, post-interpretation, and post-transcendence. In reality, postmodernism might signify the end— the end of history, humanity, causality, imitation, metaphysics, and interpretation. In this sense, postmodernism implies hostility towards modernism, signaling its failure, end, and bankruptcy" (El-Messiri, 2003).

However, critics like Alain Touraine, in his book *Critique of Modernity* (1992), argue that the ambiguity of postmodernism should not be a cause for doubt or concern. He states that "the proliferation of definitions and the ambiguity of most analyses are not sufficient reasons to dismiss the concept of postmodernism. Movements that history has deemed significant, from Romanticism to Structuralism, have not been clearly and rigidly defined" (Touraine, 1979). This does not prevent us from engaging with postmodernism as an intellectual force that has asserted itself across various fields of knowledge.

The term "pre-modern" (Pre-Modern) refers to the period preceding modernity and often encompasses those "who oppose cultural modernity, claiming reason as the foundation. They cautiously observe its fragmentation into science, ethics, and art, as well as the triumph of rational knowledge of the world. This group advocates for a return to pre-modernity, as represented by Leo Strauss's philosophy" (Jedidi, 2008).

On the other hand, **modernity** refers to changes across all aspects of life—political, economic, social, and more—which likely emerged at the beginning of the European Renaissance. "Contrasting with tradition, modernity entails factors of rupture, transformation, and change within society. It is an intellectual model that arose and matured in the West right after the Renaissance, founded on the concept of reason, which organizes all human activities in society, whether in science, technology, or social, political, economic, and administrative structures" (Al-Khattabi, 2009). Generally, the main features of modernity include a focus on "self-awareness, aesthetics, and reflection, rejecting traditional narrative structures in favor of synchronicity and synthesis to explore paradox, ambiguity, indeterminacy, and open-ended reality. It also rejects the notion of the integrated personality, emphasizing the fragmented self-devoid of humanistic qualities" (Al-Khalil, 2014). Terry Eagleton differentiates between **modernity** and **modernization**, noting that "postmodernism generally refers to a type of contemporary culture, while postmodernity refers to a specific historical period" (Eagleton, 1996).

The postmodern era is viewed as the period from approximately 1970 to 1990, encompassing the theories, movements, and schools of philosophy, thought, literature, criticism, and art that emerged after structuralism, semiotics, and linguistics" (Hamdaoui, 2011).

Opinions have varied regarding the relationship between postmodernism and modernism—whether it marks a break from it or complements its shortcomings.

The first group believes that postmodernism does not represent a complete break from modernism. Rather, it is viewed as a second or later phase of modernism. As Jürgen Habermas put it, postmodernism is an "unfinished project" (Brooker, 1995) because it "expanded and solidified modernism's achievements, broadened the concept of reason to include the irrational, and extended the scope of human capabilities to encompass imagination, illusion, belief, and myth. This is precisely what triumphant modernism, with its strict rationalism, had previously dismissed, as Descartes famously described imagination as 'the mad tenant'" (Sabila, 2007).

On the other hand, the second group argues that postmodernism has transcended modernism, establishing a complete break from it. "Modernism heralded reason, but this modernist rationality was unable to provide the cohesion that religion once did. Thus, modernism attacked religion, replacing it with reason and modern science" (Abu al-Nur, 2012). According to Lemert, postmodern thinkers can be categorized into three groups (Hossam al-Din, 2015):

1. Radicals: Figures like Lyotard, Baudrillard, and Ihab Hassan, who see modernism as something belonging to the past, arguing that contemporary cultural conditions cannot accommodate its concepts.

2. Strategists: Thinkers like Michel Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze, who base their analyses on language or discourse and reject any formulation of a universal essence, totality, or universal values.

3. Late Modernists: Such as Habermas and Jameson, who adopt a critical stance toward grand universal systems but do not reject modernism's concepts entirely.

- Traditional and Modern Novels: The traditional novel dominated the literary scene for a long time, playing a significant role in literary development, particularly in the early stages of the novel's emergence. As Shukri Al-Madhi puts it, it effectively contributed to "softening the language and establishing a base of readers" (Al-Madhi, 2008). Its key characteristics can be summarized as follows: it appears as a "means to convey ideas, morals, and lessons, rather than a fully integrated experience; ideas are easily extracted, often being ready-made or nearly so, inserted into the novel's form. There is a greater focus on events than on the depth and features of characters. The traditional novel is a product of a conventional view of art, humanity, and the world" (Al-Madhi, 2008).

In contrast, the modern novel is considered one of the achievements of the modern era, aiming to "build bridges between art and life, enriching both in the process. It strives to find a place for idealistic beliefs amid the challenges humanity faces and to uphold ideals within the mutual connection between art and life, preventing modernity from fragmenting and dispersing our worlds" (Matz, 2016).

The influence of postmodern philosophy has become clear in literary criticism as a whole and in contemporary Arab creative works, especially in poetry and the novel. This has led to an unusual phenomenon in the history of the humanities: instead of creativity guiding criticism, criticism now often dictates creativity. This imbalance reflects "the flourishing of contemporary critical discourse and the decline and dissolution of distinctive literary creativity, blurring the lines that preserve the genres and forms of literature" (Bouchair, 2010).

4. Discussion

Ibrahim Nasrallah, in his novel *The Second War of the Dog* (2016), explores a strange world devoid of values and principles, a dystopian realm marked by corruption and dark visions. This world is embodied in the main character, Rashid, who shifts from an opposition figure to a corrupt extremist. The novel follows Rashid, who is arrested and tortured, yet remains unshaken and unbroken. Upon gaining his freedom, he decides to engage in a cunning war, beginning with his marriage to the sister of the officer (Salam). Rashid then exploits his intelligence to create projects that end human lives without the need for treatment—callously and without remorse.

As the volcano of corruption erupts, everyone begins to see replicas of themselves, making it impossible for individuals to recognize themselves or their loved ones. Everyone looks the same; the virtuous and the vile, the clean and the unclean are indistinguishable, and the stench of corruption permeates everyone. Eventually, the *Second War of the Dog*—a war of identicals—breaks out following the end of the *First War of the Dog*, which was a war of differences. The streets become a battleground of destruction; nothing remains the same. Even state security is unable to resolve the crisis or arrest the criminal due to the identical appearances of everyone involved. Ultimately, rights are lost amidst chaos and disorder.

This novel is part of Ibrahim Nasrallah's "Balconies" project, which parallels his "Palestinian Comedy" series and examines the contemporary Arab situation. However, *The Second War of the Dog* is a novel that contemplates the future. These are the main events in the novel, occurring within an imagined reality. As for the features and manifestations of postmodernism in this novel, they are reflected in the following aspects:

4.1. Blending Reality and Illusion

Among the key tenets of postmodernism is what is known as nihilistic philosophy, which "is based on the absence of meaning and the subversion of reason, logic, order, and harmony. In other words, postmodern philosophies do not offer practical, realistic, and pragmatic alternatives; rather, they are absurd philosophies that propagate despair, complaint, and chaos within society" (Hamdaoui, 2011). Through the technique of blending reality and illusion, the absence of meaning arises from the multiple interpretations of the creative text. "The attempt to combine the familiar and the unfamiliar, or the real and the unreal, and to rely on hesitation or the principle of probability in accepting events, all of this tends to provoke the recipient and disrupt the stability of their natural assumptions, prompting them to read the text repeatedly. With each new reading, perspectives and interpretations may vary, thereby enhancing the relationship between the recipient and the text, which gains greater opportunities for continuity by being viewed as an open text that accommodates more than one reading" (Ali, 2004). In the novel *The Second War of the Dog*, such blending of fantastical elements in both form and content is abundant, whether at the level of characters or events, approaching the realms of postmodern fiction.

The plot of the novel appears realistic, beginning with Rashid's perspective as he watches a film taken by one of his close associates. Nasrallah surprises us with the first bizarre event when Rashid finds himself lying on the ground, questioning in a state of extreme despair, "How did the shell come out of the film and blow up the apartment?! He had to remain in this state for a long time before he remembered that he didn't own a television that advanced, and he only regained his consciousness during the first session of torture" (Nasrallah, 2016).

This fantastical event casts a shadow over the recipient, inviting them to engage with the author in a complex mental process that goes beyond mere suspense and attention to follow the narrative to its conclusion. Rather, it serves as a revelation of the unspoken, through which Nasrallah seeks to expose the contradictions of life in a society filled with chaos and absurdity. It also suggests that the wonder of the event is not limited to the "shell emerging from the television screen," but also in what suddenly befalls Rashid. In another incident that illustrates the blending of truth and illusion, we see the *First War of the Dog*; set in a distant future after a strange event where a "dog" is sold for a price with part paid up front, and the buyer promises to pay the rest later but fails to keep their promise and seeks to evade the remaining payment. This leads the seller to unleash their wrath on the buyer, resulting in a cycle of killings between the two parties that constitutes the *First War of the Dog* (Nasrallah, 2016). This is a reflection of the Dahis War, which lasted over forty years over a she-camel, illustrating the state of today's societies, where people kill each other for trivial reasons. Rashid remarks, "But what's puzzling about our lives today is that we've reached a stage where we see and know the absurd, without knowing the reason. Isn't that right, Salam?" (Nasrallah, 2016).

If Nasrallah aims to focus on important issues within a society suffering from crises of chaos, loss, and destruction as narrated in the novel, then why rely on the fantastical dimension through a hyper-realistic language? The novel *The Second War of the Dog* adopts the principle of metaphorical mental vision as a semantic reference; it stores reality and reproduces it but within the logic of narrative treatment that shapes the world as it is lived, or how it will be, as a projection or future prediction. This is a quality that some writers aspire to achieve, but I do not believe that a seasoned writer like Ibrahim Nasrallah would fall into this creative trap from both narrative and intellectual perspectives; he is keen on embodying pain, anxiety, and civilizational reference within a highly skillful synchronous structure (Abu Shahab, 2017).

4.2. Irony and Satirical Simulation

Irony represents another dimension of forms of rejection, using sharp criticism as a mask to reveal the unspoken issues within society. This expression—referring to the unspoken—has become prevalent in discussions about the marginalization of the underprivileged in contemporary studies. It signifies "the avoidance of specific fields of knowledge due to religious and sectarian fanaticism, political taboos and coercions, ethnic tensions, or class arrogance... etc." (Ismail, 2006). On the other hand, irony carries literary connotations that distinguish it from its abstract linguistic meaning, according to (Oxford, 1978):

- A metaphor that gives a meaning contrary to the phrase used.
- Praise that resembles blame.
- A paradox in the course of events that ends in an unexpected result.
- The context includes both apparent and hidden meanings.
- Feigning ignorance in dialogues to triumph over the interlocutor.

As for paradox, we can discuss two types: verbal irony and situational irony. "Verbal irony necessarily involves the presence of an ironist, a person who creates the irony, or someone who consciously and intentionally employs a technique. In contrast, situational irony, which arises from a specific situation, does not necessarily require the presence of a person creating the irony; rather, it is merely a state, circumstance, or outcome of events that contribute to it, and is perceived and felt as a result of the irony. In both types, there exists a form of confrontation or juxtaposition where one thing is placed alongside another conflicting element" (Najah, 2009).

Through the novel *The Second War of the Dog*, Nasrallah presents a series of paradoxes and irony as forms of postmodern narrative. This does not necessarily imply the absence of irony and paradox in traditional novels; rather, what is striking is the extensive use of these devices by contemporary writers in new literature.

The title of the novel, *The Second War of the Dog*, embodies both irony and satire. It suggests a host of negative connotations that express a psychological state overwhelmed by the pain of a reality plagued by widespread corruption. The irony lies in the term "war" and what it invokes in the collective memory regarding its connotations, particularly the destruction and devastation that war leaves behind. What war does one desire?

Nasrallah begins his discussion of war with a statement from Rashid: "Every war starts with a shot, regardless of the size of the shot... sometimes it can start with a stray bullet" (Nasrallah, 2016). The irony here is clear; the audience understands the connotation of war, which ultimately leads to devastation and destruction. This is emphasized by Rashid when he states, "But wars are wars in the end, and they leave nothing but destruction and death, unless we exclude the war between the Netherlands and the Scilly Isles, located 40 kilometers off the southwestern coast of the United Kingdom, which lasted 325 years (1651-1986) and ended with the signing of a peace treaty. That was the longest war in history, but ironically, it left no casualties at all, and that's why we look at it today as a joke" (Nasrallah, 2016).

Thus, from the title and Rashid's comments about war and its miseries at the beginning of the novel, one might assume he is addressing a significant war that has shaken the conscience of humanity, causing terrible devastation that has left him with memories of destruction, fear, and loss. However, as the reader continues through the novel, they find themselves facing a different kind of war, one that is more deeply felt, characterized by a savage inclination—a materialistic tendency that is far removed from moral and humanitarian values. He observes, "I noticed two days ago that people no longer fight and argue to injure each other, but to kill. To kill definitively? Definitively, as if they have agreed on a rule that says: from the place of quarrel to the grave! Without passing through the hospital? Without passing through the hospital. Are they trying to save on medical expenses? I don't think that's the case; they've decided to rid themselves of those who are like them forever, after having previously rid themselves of those who are different from them in the past" (Nasrallah, 2016). The wars of the past were waged over differences, while this war seeks to eliminate those who are similar to them. This reflects our current reality: in many of our Arab streets, people die due to disputes and struggles for survival.

The aspect of irony in the title becomes evident through the metaphorical meaning of "the dog." If the initial question—what war does he want?—reveals that it speaks of a lost homeland or a painful reality in an irony where the apparent meaning does not convey the deeper implication, then another question should be raised: What does man truly want?

This irony carries bitterness filled with rage and tension, projected onto humanity, which is unaware of what it really desires. It is expressed through derogatory and repulsive images, particularly that of the "dog," which has become a mask for the savage human who brutally harms those around him

without mercy. For instance, "Rashid kicked the dog to push it away from the only bed in the cell; the dog bared its teeth and took two steps toward him. Rashid backed against the opposite wall and sat on the ground, without taking his eyes off the dog" (Nasrallah, 2016). Finally, the remaining aspect of the title, the term "second," implies a previous number and another to follow, suggesting the continuity of wars that seem never-ending.

Irony also manifests in Rashid's projects presented to the hospital director, dubbed "Hope Prisoners' Projects," referring to patients whose recovery is not expected. Once they reach the hospital, they typically pass away, as their admission is driven solely by financial motives. It resembles the old slave trade bridges; however, Rashid appeared ascetic while offering his best ideas to others, whether in terms of profit or in some other humanitarian realm... "If we left these patients in their countries, they would die due to inadequate treatment" (Nasrallah, 2016).

5. Fragmentation of Events and Time

One of the most prominent artistic functions based on the fragmentation of narrative structure in the novel is to break the norm and transcend traditional storytelling. This compels the audience to participate in reconstructing the events of the narrative and expanding their horizons in interpretation. This is a characteristic of postmodern writers who do not trust in "the completeness and perfection associated with traditional stories, preferring to engage with other methods of structural narration, representing one of the alternatives in the multiple endings that resist finality by providing various possible outcomes for a plot" (Lewis, 2011).

In the novel *The Second Dog War*, the events are based on the fragmentation of the narrative, even though they superficially appear organized according to the titles of short chapters, such as: "War Introductions," "About the Joke and the Tragedy," "The Secret Journey," "The Nobel Prize for Literature," "The Season of Chaos," "The First Sparks of War," "The Perfect Crime," and "The Third Dog War." However, Nasrallah presents in each chapter an event that diverges from the previous one, eliminating discussions of the past according to the events of the narrative. Nevertheless, the development of events illustrates that history repeats itself every time. Furthermore, he does not disclose all the events of the novel, making the task of organizing them extremely difficult. The reader needs to focus intensely to understand the reasons behind these events and interpret them, in addition to the absence of many character names that contributed to the fragmentation of the story.

The events of the novel are formed through continuous cuts in its structure, which in turn supports the disintegration of its events. The reader is unaware of the spatial settings; the place of the "fortress" is unknown, and there is no specification for the locations of the "house" and "hospital," which negates any spatial or event-based connection due to its artificial composition. The exit of the shell from the screen, rain falling in the size of balls, and merging the seasons into a single chapter all exemplify postmodern narrative style. The novel transcends an approach to the Arab situation to reflect on the conditions of humanity everywhere, in a time when humans can no longer distinguish between the perpetrator and the victim.

The fragmentation of events in the modern novel aligns with the fragmentation of time; it does not rely on a logical chronological sequence (chronology) as in traditional novels that document and arrange events according to their temporal sequence. In this contrasting framework, the awareness and perception of the audience in receiving the narrative experience are tested. "At the heart of the moment of complete reception, where the audience's spirit is supposed to be the focus of the universe, various lines of light and its different paths converge to form a reflected, multi-dimensional image of the work of art in the audience's mind. At this very point, the perceiving consciousness meets the perceived world and the audience's perceptions of themselves and others" (Farouk, 1997). Thus, the chronological sequence is no longer significant in narrative construction; it has become tied to the dynamism of events and the audience's interaction with them. In "The Second Dog War," Ibrahim Nasrallah presents narrative time apart from monotony and sequence as a form of postmodern narrative approaches, characterized by two dimensions: projection and fragmentation.

The projected time refers to that time "which presents the end of events that will be mentioned later" (Mustafa, 2011). In the early parts of the novel, while narrating Rashid's attempt to search for his

first life partner (the officer's sister) after his release from prison, he races against time to reveal that he has become the director of "Al-Amn" Hospital and has fallen in love with the secretary, while the reader is still unaware of what happened to him after his release from prison. He states: "Mr. Rashid, Director of Al-Amn Hospital, which is a large and successful hospital in the best neighborhoods of the capital, became embroiled in a crazy love affair with his secretary from the very first day he was appointed as the director. His extensive experience in five hospitals and his long work in a job he created himself: the Guardian of Hope Prisoners; all these experiences qualified him to occupy the director's position in the famous hospital" (Nasrallah, 2016).

This temporal leap illustrates the projection of time towards the upcoming moment, stimulating the reader's mind from the very beginning to recognize the importance of these two events: the administrative position and the love for the secretary, and their impact on delineating the intertwined events of the narrative. This justification becomes apparent from Rashid's own words when he says: "I think we jumped too much into the future, discussing the secretary before talking about the wife, and that can only be forgiven by the strength of the story and its impact on the events of this novel... Let's go back" (Nasrallah, 2016).

In contrast to temporal projection, the fragmentation of time in the novel is evident. It is a time that does not proceed according to a clear sequential line; the novel portrays a future world in a fantastical form that has not yet arrived and revisits the past through narrow temporal windows to warn against the unknown future, considering the past as a reflection of the present and future simultaneously. This fragmentation stems from the undefined geographical spaces and the fragmented identities of the disturbed characters, who violate the sanctity of nature, to the extent that their contagion has spread to animals. As noted in a report from a group of scientists who almost unanimously agreed that "many animals and insects have started to imitate humans and their customs and morals in one form or another, and if this is indeed confirmed, we will face a new phenomenon, which is the abandonment of nature of its innocence and order" (Nasrallah, 2016). Thus, time has become linked to the movement of disordered events, resulting in a fragmented temporal structure devoid of hierarchy and sequence.

6. Conclusion and Results

The novel "The Second Dog War" belongs to the realms of new narrative, a postmodern novel in which the critic and novelist Ibrahim Nasrallah addresses a socio-political issue with philosophical and imaginative dimensions, transcending traditional narrative techniques to modern narrative techniques that have brought about a comprehensive change in the structure of the novel in several ways. These include breaking away from the conventional in structural narration, employing the third-person narrative, and the absence of a defined time frame to expand the implications of events on the past, present, and future. Nasrallah also relied on the omission of many character names, aside from the main characters, which significantly contributed to the fragmentation of events, marking it as a distinctive feature of modern narrative that does not depend on a direct style but rather on ambiguity and vagueness in order to engage the audience in reshaping events as an integral part of the narrative work.

In this text, Nasrallah partially steps away from history to engage in a new ahistorical imagination, which serves as a proactive history that sketches itself on the horizon with an unavoidable certainty, reclaiming a present we have not yet lived but is undoubtedly forthcoming, with its noise, blood, and displacement. It also raises significant existential issues in an Arab society that has closed itself off from all doors of life and modernity and is beginning to slip towards total collapse—a society that dies daily relentlessly, losing its vital parts in a nearly fatalistic tragic state that is unavoidable. It reproduces the deadly media of its backwardness.

Finally, regarding whether "The Second Dog War" can be considered a new line in Ibrahim Nasrallah's novelistic writings or a form of the new novel, Nasrallah responded: "I do not know if this experience marks the beginning of a new line, but as a human being, to the extent that the image of the future terrifies me, if humanity continues to do what it is doing today, then as a writer, I have tested my imagination more than in any previous novel. I had to present dark imaginative atmospheres in which the characters move in the future, and I had to invent or greatly develop many of the scientific

inventions that currently exist. This is, in fact, the enjoyable aspect for me in the novel; it is part of the imaginative play, after which I can say that I felt my imagination had become broader" (Zidan, 2016).

Copyright:

References

[1]   Abu Al-Nour, H. (2012). Jürgen Habermas: Ethics and communication. Al-Tanweer Publishing.
[2]   Abu Shehab, R. (2017). [Title not provided in original]. Retrieved February 11, 2017.
[3]   Al-Eid, Y. (1990). Narrative techniques in the novel in light of the structural approach. Dar Al-Farabi.
[4]   Al-Khatabi, E. (2009). Questions of modernity and its stakes in society, politics and education (1st ed.). Arab Science Publishers.
[5]   Al-Khalil, S. (2014). Guide to cultural studies and cultural criticism terminology: Documentary illumination of common cultural concepts. Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya.
[6]   Al-Kurdi, A. (2005). The narrative structure of the short story (3rd ed.). Maktabat Al-Adab.
[7]   Al-Madhi, S. (2008). Patterns of the new Arabic novel. Alam Al-Maarifa, 355, 9.
[8]   Al-Masiri, A., & Al-Turiki, F. (2003). Modernity and postmodernity. Dar Al-Fikr.
[9]   Al-Mousawi, M. (2020). Transformations of narrative structure in contemporary Arabic novels. Fusoul Journal, 105.
[10]   Atiyah, M. (2011). Postmodernism in the new Arabic novel (1st ed.). Al-Warraq Publishing.
[11]   Bart, R. (1993). Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives (M. Ayashi, Trans.). Cultural Development Center.
[12]   Brooker, P. (1995). Modernity and postmodernity (A. Alloub, Trans.; 1st ed.). Cultural Complex Publications.
[13]   Bousha يِ, R. (2010). Questioning the novelistic text in contemporary Gulf Arab narratives (1st ed.). Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage.
[14]   Bouazza, M. (2023). Aesthetics of narrative structure in modern Arabic literature. Dar Kunooz Al-Maarifa.
[15]   Eagleton, T. (1996). The illusions of postmodernism (M. Salam, Trans.). Academy of Arts.
[16]   Farouk, A. (1997). Aesthetics of fragmentation. Sharqiyat Publishing House.
[17]   Genette, G. (1997). Narrative discourse: An essay in method (M. Mu'tasim et al., Trans.). Supreme Council of Culture.
[18]   Hamdawi, J. (2011). Literary criticism theories in the postmodern era. Aluka Network.
[19]   Herman, D. (2021). Narrative theory: Core concepts and critical debates. Ohio State University Press.
[20]   Hussein, I. (2019). Narrative of chaos and human complex in the fantastic novel: Ibrahim Nasrallah's The Second War of the Dog. Al-Baath University Journal for Humanities, 41(103).
[21]   Hosseini Shokouh, S., & Mahmoudi Abadi, Z. (2021). The Second War of the Dog: Identity manifestations in magical realism. Journal of Studies in Arabic Narratology, 2(1).
[22]   Hühn, P., et al. (2022). Handbook of narratology (3rd ed.). De Gruyter.
[23]   Ismail, M. (2006). Public mentalities between the unspoken and the unthought. *Literature and Criticism Journal*, 246, 15.
[24]   Jadidi, M. (2008). Modernity and postmodernity in Richard Rorty's philosophy (1st ed.). Arab Science Publishers.
[25]   Lewis, B. (2011). Guide to postmodernity (W. S. Abdul-Masih, Trans.; Vol. 1, 1st ed.). National Center for Translation.
[26]   Matz, J. (2016). The development of the modern novel (L. Al-Dulaimi, Trans.; 1st ed.). Mada for Media, Culture and Arts.
[27]   Miqdadi, M. R. N. (2021). Aspects of dystopia in Ibrahim Nasrallah's novel: The Second War of the Dog. *Hussein Bin Talal University Research Journal*, 7.
[28]   Masad, A., & Akkawi, A. (2021). Mirrors of "The Second War of the Dog" by Ibrahim Nasrallah: An analytical approach. Sharjah Journal of Arts and Humanities, 18(2).
[29]   Nasrallah, I. (2016). The Second War of the Dog (1st ed.). Arab Scientific Publishers.
[30]   Ryan, M. L. (2019). Narrative in digital media. In Narrative theory: A contemporary overview. Cambridge University Press.
[31]   Sabila, M. (2007). Modernity and postmodernity (2nd ed.). Toubkal Publishing House.
[32]   The new Oxford illustrated dictionary. (1978). Bay Books and Oxford University Press.
[33]   Todorov, T. (1990). Poetics (S. Al-Mabkhout & R. Ben Salama, Trans.). Toubkal Publishing House.
[34]   Touraine, A. (1979). Critique of modernity (A. Mughith, Trans.). Supreme Council of Culture.
[35]   Ali, L. K. (2014). The fantastic and Arab narrative: Theory between reception and text (1st ed.). Arab Science Publishers.
[36]   Ali, N. (2009). The concept of paradox in Western criticism. *Nizwa Journal*, 53, 98.
[37]   Hassan, M. (2015). Media and postmodernity. Supreme Council of Culture.
[38]   Zeidan, B. (2016). Retrieved November 29, 2016.
[39]   (n.d.). Sahafi.jo. Retrieved from http://www.sahafi.jo/files/art.php?id=e2a33512c5527e50a1d9df3fc6506206e379f2dd
[40]   (n.d.). Al-Ayyam. Retrieved from https://www.al-ayyam.ps/ar/Article/311843/%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-