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The Poetics of Dialogue in the Novels of Ismail Yabrir

(The Madman's Testament, The Angels of Lafrane, and Cold as a Female)

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Abstract
The poetics of dialogue in the novel are reinforced through the displacement of the word from its communicative dimension to its artistic and aesthetic dimension, whereby dialogic structure is transformed into a space of polyphony and into a means of revealing psychological and social tensions and conflicts. This is clearly evident in the novels of Ismail Yabrir, who moves beyond the employment of dialogue as an ordinary linguistic exchange to activate it as a tool for constructing conflict and propelling the course of narration. Monologic discourse simulates the language of madness and memory; it confesses and reveals the fragility and alienation of the self through the simulation of the discourse of wounded emotion and tense affective consciousness. Body language accompanies the utterance and intensifies its emotional force, while silence leaves a semantic gap that implicates the reader in the production of meaning. Moreover, the speech scene endows the novelistic moment with an intensified dramatic quality. Thus, the poetics of dialogue in Yabrir's work are founded on the interaction of the inner voice with gesture and silence, whereby novelistic discourse is transformed into a structure that reflects the individual's struggle with the self and with society and grants the text psychological and aesthetic density.
Keywords : poetics, dialogue, novels, Ismail Yabrir.

Introduction:

Dialogue in novelistic discourse is a space in which voices intersect and through which the dynamics of meaning are manifested. Dialogue is not merely a verbal exchange; rather, it is a semantic structure that contributes to the construction of characters, the development of events, and the revelation of the intellectual and aesthetic visions of the text. It thus transcends its communicative function to assume a poetic, linguistic, and psychological function in which language intertwines with the characters' mental states and the structure of the fictional world through the monologic word, body language, silence, and the speech scene. How, then, do these elements function in the novels of Ismail Yabrir (*The Madman's*

Testament, The Angels of Lafrane, and *Cold as a Female*) to become aesthetic resources that construct the poetics of dialogue, enrich the text, and deepen its significance?

The Concept of Dialogue

Linguistically, in *Lisan al-Arab,* it is stated that "I spoke to him, but he gave me no response: "hiwaran, hiwaran, muhawaratan, huwayran, and muhwaratan, with the ha vocalised with dammah on the pattern of mashurah, meaning an answer; and ahara alayhi jawabahu: he returned his answer to him … al-muhawarah means mutual response, and al-tahawur means reciprocal exchange" (Ibn Manzur, p. 1043). Thus, dialogue in language conveys the meaning of return and reciprocal response in speech; it is the exchange of speech between interlocutors; that is, each party says something, and the other responds.

Terminology: Dialogue is "a presentation (dramatic in character) involving two or more characters. In 'dialogue', the characters' utterances are presented in the manner in which they are supposed to be spoken, and these utterances may be accompanied by the narrator's words" (Prince, 2003, p. 45).

Dialogue, then, is a form of dramatic presentation in the narrative text, on the basis of the exchange of utterances between two or more characters, whereby the characters' speech is presented in the form in which it is assumed to be spoken within the narrative context, thus ensuring its particularity and revealing its psychological and social dimensions. In the "process of dialogue, the issue of consciousness in the character emerges, and the language of the speakers in dialogue expresses their different levels of consciousness" (al-Ibrahim, 2011, p. 171). These utterances may also be accompanied by interventions on the part of the narrator, whether in the form of commentary, description, or direction.

Dialogue is also "the exchange of speech between two or more people, and it is a mode of communication in which individuals alternate in sending and receiving; dialogue is connected with the closest features of life, namely, continuity in establishing communication" (al-Ibrahim, 2011, p. 171).

For Abd al-Malik Murtad, it is "the intermediary language situated between soliloquy and narrative language. Dialogue takes place between one character and another or between characters and other characters within the novelistic work … distinguished novelistic dialogue should be concise and condensed so that the novel does not become a play, and so that neither the narrator nor the narration is lost through these dialoguing characters at the expense of analysis and at the expense of the beauty of language and verbal play" (Murtad, 1998, p. 116).

Murtad thus regarded dialogue as a form of novelistic language occupying an intermediate position between soliloquy the character's speech to himself or herself and narrative the speech of the narrator who recounts events. It is the speech that takes place between characters within the novel. It occurs when characters exchange speech, through which we come to know their ideas and feelings, and dialogue derives its quality from being employed carefully and without prolixity.

Among the patterns of dialogue are external dialogue (*dialogue*), internal dialogue (*monologue*), and silence.

1.Monologue: It is "a long discourse produced by a single character and not addressed to the other characters. If the monologue is unspoken, that is, if it consists of the character's verbal thoughts, then it constitutes an interior monologue; if it is spoken, it is considered an external monologue or soliloquy" (Prince, 2003, p. 115).

Thus, the monologue is divided into an internal monologue and an external one, and it is regarded as one of the most prominent expressive techniques employed by Ismail Yabrir in his novels, where it appears as a linguistic and stylistic structure that contributes to the construction of meaning and to the intensification of the poetic and aesthetic dimension of his novels.

As previously noted, the monologue in *The Madman's Testament* constitutes a discursive structure that shapes the manner in which the story is constructed. This novel in particular is almost entirely based on a single narrator speaking from within, a narrator who simulates the discourse of madness between delirium and confession. In it, the monologue appears as the voice of troubled consciousness, for we are confronted with a character who does not narrate a clearly defined story; rather, his thoughts slip and unfold in the form of fragmented stories expressing what is taking place within the character's mind. If we follow the character of the madman as the bearer of this voice, we find that he represents both types of monologue, internal and external, as it is "a mode of narration adopted by fictional writings to reveal what occurs within the souls of their characters beyond the logic of sequence, making use of association and soliloquy" (Allouch, 1985, p. 206). In addition to association and soliloquy, it also makes use of repetition, delirium, and sudden transitions between ideas. Ismail also employed monologues to simulate, at the linguistic level, the speech of the madman, and this is manifested through the following:

1.1. **Sentence fragments:** These are incomplete sentences, whether in structure or meaning, such as his saying: "In the end, I was unable to protect anyone, not even ..." (Yabrir, 2013, p. 28).

"I ... was the saddest of them all" (Yabrir, 2013, p. 60).

"I could have ... no, not with Fatima" (Yabrir, 2013, p. 66).

"I tried ... but I did not succeed" (Yabrir, 2013, p. 79).

1.2. **Rhetorical questions not followed by an answer:** All of them are of this kind, whether existential or ironic, as the novel contains no fewer than eighty unanswered questions.

1.3. **Random transitions between topics:** For example, he speaks about the barbershop, then the sacrificial ram of Eid, then his school days, then the English league, then his hair, then Bayt al-Lak al-Hazin, and then Haj Bourguiba.

1.4. **The repeated vocative "Idris... Idris":** This is repeated seven times as an inevitable recurrence interwoven with the narration, indicating an attempt to restore Idris to consciousness.

Thus, *The Madman's Testament* made the monologue a linguistic instrument that transformed the discourse of madness into a narrative structure through which its stories were conveyed and deconstructed.

If the monologue in *The Madman's Testament* simulates the discourse of madness, then in *The Angels of Lafrane,* it simulates the discourse of confession and memory. It thus appears less delirious, yet it reveals the fragility of consciousness and the interpenetration of memory and reality.

Yamonda does not speak in order to describe the present; rather, she speaks in order to retrieve places such as Laghouat, where "she remembered 'Rahbat al-Zaytun', and 'Jnan al-Baylik', the warm garden ... Ayn Madi ... Zuqaq al-Hujjaj ... Kordane" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, pp. 51–52). Places also remind her of faces, such as Lafrane Wing, which reminded her of Lafrane, and the Djurdjura Hotel, which reminded her of Mr A. They reminded her of Zaynab before the escape and of her question, "which of the two existences am I?" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 60). Is she now Zaynab or Yamonda? She also recalled many events interwoven with what was happening to her at that moment, such as the incident of her mother's death, the harsh treatment of her stepmother, her mistakes with al-Arabi, her engagement, and her escape.

The monologue in the three novels is predominantly marked by an existential and contemplative outlook, one of its most significant manifestations being scattered questions, among them the questions posed by Yamonda when Najat was late in opening the door: "She wondered what Najat was doing now. Perhaps she was watching one of the American films? Or perhaps she was asking forgiveness for her? Or perhaps her husband was asleep and she was now trying to wake him so that he might throw her out?" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane,* 2010, p. 10).

Najat activated free association when "she imagined more than one scenario for her entering upon Abd al-Baqi: she became angry with him and asked for a divorce while he begged her to forgive him and bought her an expensive gift; and because that scene did not please her very much, she resorted to another scene, in which she asked his pardon and he embraced her, 'The house is yours, madam', and to an even more extreme scene in which he threw her out of the house" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 47). These are events that Najat does not actually experience; rather, she imagines them and expresses them under the impulse of emotion and possibility.

The monologue in *The Angels of Lafrane* is a narrative mechanism that transforms memory and free association into a means of constructing the story, as the narrative is formed through the movement of consciousness and reflection rather than through the succession of events.

The monologue appears once again in *Cold as a Female,* although in a manner different from that found in the previous two novels, as it operates through broken feelings and emotionally troubled and tense consciousness. One thus finds oneself before a monologue besieged by emotional disappointments, far removed from mental disturbance and the retrieval of memory. It expresses the voice of emotional pain embodied by the character of Idris, who lives in a state of emotional coldness in which even tears have dried up, narrating an inner wound experienced

by the great majority of society during the Black Decade, when his emotional disappointment came upon losing the girl he had loved during his school days. He says, “Rose is no longer mine? She got into the car of al-Hashimi, my cousin’s son, betrayal! This was the third wall to collapse, but this time it was collapsing within me, and despite its deafening crash, life goes on” (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 30). This passage works through a poetic intensification of the inner voice, for it begins with a question that is not genuine but rather a rhetorical question that reveals a moment of breaking. The interrogative then becomes an instrument of inner explosion, which grants dialogue its poetic dimension so that emotional sensibility and inner pain become the material of narration. Language is thus transformed into an affective space that precedes the story and governs it, as represented by the dense and shocking declarative sentence, “She got into the car of al-Hashimi, my cousin’s son.” It is a declarative sentence, yet it carries a high emotional charge, especially as the betrayer is a relative. The cry of pain is then embodied in a single word, “betrayal!”, as a final judgement upon the scene. This results in an inner collapse that creates a paradox between the crash of that collapse and its effect upon the self, on the one hand, and the continuation of life, on the other, thereby generating poetic tension and revealing the absurdity of individual suffering before the persistence of life.

He then suffers another disappointment when he finds the girl he loved in his youth with her fiancé and says, “I burn from my head to the soles of my feet while she loves another. Why, then, did you make me?” (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 70). Burning suggests that pain exceeds its psychological dimension to become a comprehensive bodily sensation, indicating the extension and spread of pain throughout the entire body. In contrast to his burning, she loves someone else; here, the paradox is generated. The passage concludes with an existential question in protest against the girl’s coldness, she had made him a living being, as he said: “How you used to fill the dead land with life” “Why, then, did you make me?” It is thus a declaration of the collapse of purpose, and the monologue is transformed from the expression of jealousy into an existential cry that calls into question the value of his existence.

3. Body Language:

Body language is among the most prominent expressive components of the narrative structure of the modern novel. In addition to spoken language, it reveals the depths of characters, enriches dialogue, and deepens its psychological dimension.

2.1. Definition of Body Language: It is “the signs indicating specific meanings by means of a part of the body” (Daoud, 2007, p. 7).

Body language is thus represented in a set of nonverbal signs indicating specific meanings, such as hand movements, facial expressions, eye gaze, tone of voice, and bodily postures, issued by a part of the body. It is used to express psychological states, feelings, emotions, and various communicative situations, and it contributes to the conveyance of significance and the direction of meaning.

Thus, “the human being uses the organs of his body indeed, his whole body in communication with others; he speaks with his body just as he speaks with his tongue, and his movements and

gestures carry intelligible meanings exactly like the words of language" (Daoud, 2007, p. 7). It therefore complements spoken language or replaces it.

2.2. The Rhetoric of Silence in the Dialogic System: Silence is among the most prominent and eloquent forms of body language. Linguistically, silence derives from "samata yasmutu samtan wa sumtan wa sumutan wa sumatan, and asmata: prolonged silence ... al-sumtah: that by which a child is silenced, such as dates or some delicacy ... and it is said: ma dhuqtu sumatan, that is, I have tasted nothing. In addition, it is said: lam yusmit-hu dhalika, that is, it did not suffice him ... and he possesses neither silent nor speaking property; the silent means gold and silver, and the speaking means living creatures, camels ... Abu Malik said: al-simat means purpose, and I am on simat hajatī, that is, on the verge of fulfilling it ... al-musmat: that which has no hollow inside ... a musmat lock: closed or obscure ... a musmat garment: one of a single colour ..." (Ibn Manzur, p. 2494).

Thus, the root samt has several meanings, including silence, dates or something eaten to quieten a child, gold and silver, and purpose. The fundamental meaning is deliberate silence and refraining from speech. It is a voluntary act indicating abstention from utterance and may serve various purposes, such as reflection, disturbed consciousness, grief, or contemplation.

Silence holds great status, and its presence has been regarded as more eloquent among the Arabs, both in the past and in the present, as indicated by the Prophet's saying, peace and blessings be upon him: "Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent" (*Sahih al-Bukhari*). There are many other hadiths that call for choosing silence when it is preferable. Thus, preference, benefit, and goodness are the conditions for it, whereas in other situations, it has been considered blameworthy, such as remaining silent in the face of truth, according to the well-known saying "He who is silent about the truth is a mute devil."

Imam Ali, may God be pleased with him, said, "Through abundant silence, awe is attained" (al-Zamakhshari, p. 136).

Similarly, the proverb states that if speech is silver, then silence is golden.

In novelistic discourse, silence is not merely the absence or muteness; rather, it is a semantic element that contributes to the production of meaning and the construction of discourse. In the novel, silence shifts toward signifying the psychological states of characters, revealing inner tension and psychological conflict that spoken language is unable to disclose and thus takes the form of implicit discourse. It becomes a meaningful sign within dialogue because it interrupts the sequence of speech, leaving a semantic gap and emptiness that prompt the reader to reflect and interpret. Silence is thereby transformed from mere muteness into a stylistic technique and a verbal phenomenon in the novel that contributes to the creation of the story and the construction of meaning, delineates the psychological and existential dimensions of characters, and increases the significance and poetics of dialogue.

Among the most prominent manifestations of silence, which constitutes a marked linguistic sign in *The Madman's Testament*, is Idris's failure to respond after the repeated calls, "Idris ... Idris ...", which begin on page 24 and recur throughout Idris's stories and varied confessions, far removed from his reality at the moment of being called. He hears this call but does not answer

the caller. He says, "This name was not unfamiliar to me; it took me a second or two to recognise it again after wondering. It was my name, which had clung to me since I became conscious and had not changed except during my last journey, when I met a taxi driver bearing the same name" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 25). Silence here thus has a psychological significance, indicating withdrawal, psychological closure, or separation from reality, and Idris's immersion in his inner world in an existential isolation that allows him to pass on his fragmented thoughts, which accords with the character of the madman.

He also says, "My name was echoing in the outside world, while I was dragging my steps toward the Street of Fear, our street. I arrived, and perhaps I did not arrive; I was, and perhaps I was not. The street was black and terrifying and then quickly gray and white. Now, deep within myself, I do not know whether I am truly hearing or whether the name belongs to another Idris. A voice, which I assume to be that of a doctor, says, 'I do not respond,' and I reply to him, but the distance between us is neither real nor imagined" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 102).

Fear is manifested as the dominant feeling governing Idris, who imagines that he has killed his friend al-Saadi. Here, fear is not a passing sensation but a symbolic space signifying existential anxiety and inner crisis. The gradation of colours reflects the transformation of his psychological state from terror and fear, surrounded by blackness, to anxiety and perplexity, and then to emptiness and the search for a way out of the crisis. This portrays the confusion and disturbance of Idris's consciousness, as he has become unable to distinguish between what he actually hears and what he imagines, thereby reflecting a state of existential alienation in which he has lost all his sense of boundaries and identity.

This silence in dialogue is not encountered only by Idris's doctor; rather, it is also encountered by the youths of the quarter, Shaykh al-Mahi, and al-Taqiya. He says: "I left everyone and placed myself in another station. I left to them the titles, the names, the bodies, the illusions, the desires, the shadows, and the graves, misery and joy alike. For this reason, no call is of any use with me" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 104).

This technique is also employed in *The Angels of Lafrane* through Yamonda's repeated calls to Abbas, which are met with silence. This points to two significations: first, the absence of the one being called, Abbas; and second, Yamonda's longing and tension, as she repeats Abbas's name four times without any answer: "Ya Abbas, ya Labbas" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 149).

Silence also has the significance of weakness, illness, and incapacity in Yamonda, and among the indications of this are the following:

- Najat's words: "Why did you not ask me for water, Yamou, you ..." (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 20)
- Yamonda's words: "And what about you, how were you able to ..." (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 30)

In addition to silence in response to being called, we also find, as a linguistic sign of silence, the suspension points (..., ..), which are repeated in the body of the novel no fewer than 75 times. They are used to interrupt syntactic sequence and structural flow, thereby creating a semantic gap that prompts the reader to fill in the blanks.

This is also a distinctive sign in his other novels, where it occurs 59 times in *The Angels of Lafrane* and 146 times in *Cold as a Female*. These three dots indicate the character's silence resulting from hesitation, sorrow, and intense fear, as in Idris's reply to the masked men who stormed Yahya's house: "I am ... my uncle Yahya, and I stay there during the holidays ... we come to the lake" (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 38).

Likewise, Abu al-Hasan replies to Officer Abd al-Rahman when the latter asks him to shave his beard and refrain from entering the world of politics: "I shall do it ... you ... y..." (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 24).

This sign also indicates suggestion rather than explicit statement, because of the ugliness of the act and the attempt to conceal it, as when Idris says: "I wish to protect you, and you drive me to ..." (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 107), that is, to protect you from disgrace, and yet you drive me to expose you.

And: "Engaged to whom, when I ..." (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 108), that is, to whom are you engaged when I was on the verge of being the father of your child.

This large number of signs of silence and ellipsis thus expresses a tense psychological state or powerful feelings that Idris is unable to articulate in words, as he says, "I belong to Yahya, who was killed because he was silent" (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 125). The verb "belong" refers to biological affiliation, but if we connect it to the description "silent", the reference becomes spiritual and ethical, since Yahya lost his life because he remained silent, while Idris lost his beloved and his uncle because he remained silent in the face of truth.

Yahya in *Cold as a Female* is perhaps the character who embodies silence in all its dimensions. He is the image of the mute man, whose silence did not prevent him from living like any speaking man, yet silence ultimately led to his death. Idris makes him a symbol of wisdom, calmness, and generosity. This name and the crime associated with it evoke the life of the Prophet Yahya, peace be upon him, as a symbol of purity, innocence, and a silent confrontation with corruption, whose killing was associated with an ethical stance rejecting moral deviation, in contrast to the killing of Uncle Yahya, who was wrongfully accused of a moral offence with which he had no connection.

Silence also signifies communicative failure, as it creates a gap between the taxi driver, who speaks about the security situation during the Black Decade, and Idris, who meets him with silence, saying, "I did not utter a single word" (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 13).

Silence is also accompanied by meaningful linguistic correlates such as the looks of the eyes, the movements of the body, and its changes, all of which constitute manifestations of body language.

3. The Language of the Eye: Among the greatest blessings enjoyed by the human being is the eye. It is regarded as the most eloquent of the body's organs in expression, the truest in indication, and the most precise in disclosing what stirs within us, for it speaks the truth when the tongue is unable to express it. It reflects what passes through the mind and constitutes an essential means of knowing and recognising things, as it contributes to conveying their images to the mind and clearly delineating their features. It is "the human being's window onto existence, the primary means of perception, and the greatest, widest in scope, and most sensitive of these means" (Daoud, 2007, p. 39).

It is thus the primary means of communication through which meanings are indicated, and it is particularly important because both of its sides are directly connected to the human being. This sign is produced by the human being through one of the organs of the body and received by another organ, just as is the case with linguistic sound. Perhaps it is this connection and parallelism between it and sound that has granted it the right to be associated with language, given the expressive, communicative, and signifying capacities it possesses (Dia Ghani Lafta & Ali Mohsen Badi, 2009, p. 20).

The eye is an instrument of psychological expression, as it reflects the inner states of characters: **Fear, doubt, and tension** are reflected in the following statement: "His eyes were drowning before his body" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 21). Here, the eye is regarded as the center of emotion and the focal point of feeling, suggesting the inwards breaking of Idris's grandfather, his surrender to drowning, and his intense fear, which is read in the eye.

Idris says of Fatima: "I saw in her eyes will and determination, and I also saw bewilderment and fear" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 57). He thus relies on the eye as a nonverbal expressive medium; he does not base his perception on Fatima's speech but rather on the features of her gaze. In this way, body language is manifested in the eye as a semantic carrier that reveals the inner psychological state, through which emotion is read and feelings are interpreted from the silent gesture, and in contradictory bodily expression at the inner level, for he sees will and determination as the language of a steady and focused gaze, while he sees bewilderment and fear as the language of a hesitant, wandering, and anxious gaze.

The adolescent Idris says of a female classmate, before realising that she belonged to someone else: "At midday, Warda comes out, casts me a suspicious glance, and proceeds towards the empty street" (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 30). The bodily act "casts me a glance" carries the significance of a swift sideways look that conveys suspicion and places a distance between her and Idris, a meaning reinforced by the adjective "suspicious".

Brokenness and reproach are reflected in the following statement: "All the food for the mourners was prepared by Fatima in Haj Bourguiba's house. My mother said that day, 'How fortunate is the one who locked his house upon Fatima', and she cast me a glance whose harsh messages knew no bounds" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 60). Here, we return to the verb "cast me a glance", and to the significance,

it has a brief, concentrated look that here conveys rebuke, reproach, blame, and disdain. The gaze is thus transformed into a complete discourse without words, as it takes the place of reproachful and admonitory sentences. The narrator here is the principal speaking character, and he is the one who reads and interprets the gaze on the basis of the inner brokenness he is experiencing.

Love and admiration, as opposed to coldness and harshness, appear in the following statement: "Al-Saadi could have gone blind before the girls' looks throughout the years, and his heart could have turned to stone before their tears" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 63). The passage distributes significance between two elements: the eye as an instrument of perception and the heart as the center of feeling. Blindness here is not literal; rather, it signifies refusal to respond and deliberate disregard of temptation, indeed a symbolic suspension of the faculty of sight. The looks here represent an emotional call indicating love and admiration, which are transformed into the most powerful form of body language expressing them, namely, tears, which convey the pain of coldness and rejection. A poetic paradox is thus generated between the tenderness of tears and the movement of the female body in love and pain, on the one hand, and the hardness of the heart and the rigidity of the male body, on the other hand.

Tears intervene as the most powerful manifestation of the language of the eye, as an emotional mirror, in a silent dialogue between Yamonda and her grandmother: "She lifted her fist from the door and found it opening. The grandmother, in her white garment, was an angel. A burning tear gathered in Yamonda's eye, and in the eyes of the old Zaynab, there was expansive joy" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 55). The burning tear suggests accumulated pain and repressed longing, while it is matched by the grandmother's joy, which appears in her eyes. This encounter, which is based on two parallel clauses, thus creates a structural parallelism that produces a semantic rhythm founded on contrast:

Yamonda's eye	**Grandmother Zaynab's eye**
A burning tear	Expansive joy
Pain, sorrow, fear	Longing, the joy of reunion, hope for repentance

Contempt, abandonment, and the exclusion of the other are expressed in Idris's words: "I said to al-Saadi: Do you remember the day you burned Fatima? However, he frowned and shot me a look that cast me out of their world" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 121).

"He frowned" is a sign of anger, irritation, and silent rejection of the subject at hand, while "shot me a look" is characterised by a sharp gaze charged with contempt, hostility, condemnation, and exclusion. The look is thus transformed into an act of expulsion and an instrument of marginalisation.

The look of tension and exclusion is also clearly apparent in Idris's statement: "I do not know whether we had actually spoken, or whether the purpose of the dialogue was those suspicious

and uneasy looks exchanged by both of us" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 124).

As the saying goes, out of sight, out of mind, and this is what Idris's meeting with the brother of the girl he wished to propose to come to: "We parted in tension. He did not look at my face as he left. He said to me, I do not agree, and if you want her family's refusal, send your family" (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 89).

The avoidance of eye contact here signifies unspoken refusal, embarrassment, and haughtiness; he announces the rupture before stating it explicitly.

"Who is this Salim? What does he mean in comparison with what lies between us? Why do you want to kill the beautiful things we created together? It was as although her looks were snatching the words from her lips, trembling with anger, as although her lips had become aware of their disappointment with me. I read in her eyes, 'There is nothing beautiful between us.' I do not know whether the rest came from the dictation of her eyes or from the movement of her lips" (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 109).

Here, one perceives a vivid and precise poetic image in which the gaze is transformed from an instrument of sight into an active force that snatches speech from her lips, declaring emotional coldness and the erasure of the other so that disappointment appears as a visual reading.

The eyes also acquire a language of their own that reveals people's resentment toward Yamonda and her actions, which they considered the cause of the earthquake, for "most of them could not conceal what was going on inside them; their eyes exposed them" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 78).

Thus, the eye performs a communicative function when speech is incapable of expression, and the gaze is transformed into a silent discourse carrying profound significance. The eye in turn becomes a sign bearing multiple symbols, such as the look of brokenness and inner defeat; the look that signals resistance, rejection, and abandonment; another that indicates distraction; and the look of passion and love, fear, and tension. In this way, the eye creates the poetics of dialogue and grants the text a suggestive dimension that allows the reader to interpret meaning.

2.4. The Language of the Face: The face is "the human being' mirror, identity, and title; hence, in Arabic it serves as a metonym for the self, as well as for intention and purpose. It is the sensitive indicator upon which human emotions and feelings are imprinted; for this reason, it has been used to express an abundance of sensations and emotions, and the word 'face' and its derivatives have constituted the key to many affective expressions" (Daoud, 2007, p. 33).

The face is thus the largest part of the body that reflects the truth of the human being, and for this reason, it is the mirror of identity and the title of the self. It is therefore used in Arabic to signify the self, as in "the face of God" and "a new face" (Daoud, 2007, p. 33), and it is also used to express intention and purpose, as in "the aspect of the matter", "the aspect of speech", and "he turned his face away from..." (Daoud, 2007, p. 33). The face is distinguished by its great sensitivity, as human emotions and feelings clearly appear upon it, such as joy, manifested in the smile, or sorrow, manifested in pallor and brokenness, which appear in altered features. Because of this capacity, the face has become an important means of expressing various human

emotions and feelings beyond spoken language, and it constitutes a truthful instrument that reveals what a person feels inwardly.

The language of the face is one form of body language in novelistic discourse. It operates alongside spoken language and performs both a communicative and an aesthetic function at the same time. It is highly important in the novels under study because it is an expressive means that reveals the psychological, emotional, and social dimensions of the characters and contributes to the construction of the semantic structure of the novelistic text.

"We grew up, and the hatred of the chikh of the kuttab towards us grew with us, yet at a certain moment he feared al-Saadi's violence. Years later, he came to exchange greetings with him, while he frowned whenever he saw me, and I had no need to lessen my sins, so I returned to him the same frown. Perhaps he recited the Qur'an whenever he saw my face, pale in its features... My features and my dry inhalation had this time become wet" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 31).

This passage uses the face and its features as an instrument of confrontation to express the psychological conflict within the character of the madman and the external conflict produced by the tension in his relationship with the kuttab shaykh, who resorts to reciting the Qur'an to restrain the language of Idris's face. The frown thus dispenses with dialogue and condenses a history of repressed tension, while the description of the face as pale and dry points to its being affected by emotional coldness, inner crisis, and painful memory.

Idris says, "I wanted to raise my head so that he might see my face and have mercy on me; I had barely done so when he slapped me" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 73), thereby expressing the poetics of dialogue that relies on the language of the face, for the raising of the head and the slap constitute a visible and condensed moment of conflict between the desire for mercy and the authority of imposed force. The body narrates what speech fails to say and heightens the psychological tension.

Idris restrains his tongue and leaves his face the freedom to speak, saying, "For I need my face with its cracks, its bends, and its valleys; I need it in its truth. It is enough that I present it, lying and lying about, to others. All attempts to bring a mirror failed; for this reason, I was relieved of my face. I hardly know what it looks like, and if I am unable to obtain messages from my face, then my steps will be uncalculated and I shall fail" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 89).

His face is therefore not merely a set of features but also a psychological map of his person. The cracks reflect wounds, and the bends reflect the complexities of feeling. His need for this face signifies a search for true identity amid bewilderment in a false world. The face also appears as a moral and psychological instrument because reading a person's expressions leads him or her to observe himself or herself and adjust his or her conduct, while the absence of these bodily signs from sight renders error possible.

The seer interprets the language of Idris's face, saying, "You wanted the mirror to disappear so that you would not see your face and suffer a shock. You wished to be in a place beyond the reach of your own eye so that you might forget that you had a face. You wished that people

would look into your interior and not at your face, forever startled and taut like a question mark. However, you yourself did not succeed in that either; not once were you able to erase the failure of your features" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 107).

Idris's face had long been his eternal affliction, and here, it is not merely a means of expression but a mirror of the inner self and of psychological conflict. The word "startled" indicates anxiety and fear, whereas the question mark signifies perplexity and questioning of identity.

In another passage, "He asked her how she had brought down the building. She laughed before saying that he had heard one of the neighbours speaking about her deeds that had brought destruction, and that was what made her face turn black" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 78). The language of the face thus moves in two directions: laughter as a veil concealing truth and emotion and blackness as an intensified bodily response reflecting anger, shock, shame, and a sense of guilt.

Body language is also manifested through the lowering of the head, which signifies humiliation, shame, and brokenness, reflecting the psychological state of Yamonda's father, who "she bade farewell from afar as he made his way across the street towards the tailor's shop in the town centre, with head bowed" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 134).

2.5. The Language of Bodily Bearing and Movement: By "bodily bearing" is meant "the state in which the body appears in the perceptible or the intelligible, that is, as conceived in the mind, such as the posture of lowering the wing in the Qur'anic verse, 'and lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy' (al-Isra, 24), which signifies submission and good conduct. Bodily bearing includes the various postures assumed by the human body in states of stillness, such as standing and sitting, and in states of movement, such as walking and running" (Ouldennebia, 2021, p. 470).

It thus appears that bodily bearing is not merely an outwards form but a semantic discourse accompanying speech. It is manifested in the total form assumed by the body in a particular communicative moment, and the recipient perceives its message through the posture of the body, whether standing, bent, or extended; through the direction of the body; through the contrast between bodily stillness and agitation; or through features and movement.

His statement, "Umar al-Najjar, who was beside us, although he was the one who gave him the name, was the most fortunate in receiving the Sad King's smile. I often witnessed intimate conversation between them and secret smiles from the king that softened his sternness and slightly relaxed the lines of misery on his face. My uncle al-Malik used to sit proudly, spread upon the earth, and his stature was so tall that his passing by the windows was a source of annoyance to many. We used to say to al-Saadi: your father overlooks Dzayer" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 48), is a passage that speaks al-Saadi's father and the reason for naming him the Sad king. Through it, the narrator conveys the language of bodily bearing and posture derived from the Sad king's exaggerated height, while his manner of sitting represents a spatial sign, as although he were a watchtower, as suggested by the expression "your father overlooks Dzayer". Thus, despite his sitting upon

the ground, which signifies simplicity, poverty, and lowliness of place, he remains proud, possessed self-regard, and imbued with a sense of mastery.

Walking, the eyes, and movement become a language, indeed an identity card, an imprint that determines identity, for "men used to recognise women in their jilbabs, their wraps, and their veils; they preserved the distinction between this woman and that through walking, through the eyes, or through movements" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 54). Similarly, concealed bodily bearing does not efface individuality because identity is not erased by clothing but rather emerges through minute details, height, posture, movement, and manner of walking.

Idris says, "I burst out running from the house. I thought that I would stop running as soon as I was outside the house, but I failed. I postponed stopping until I reached Wadi Mallah or the Jewish cemetery. I did not. I thought that I would stop in the middle of the town to drink a glass of water, but the running carried me on to the outskirts of the town. The running had turned into a jog, then into a quick walk, before I came to a complete stop, but my hands continued to wave as although I were still running. I could no longer walk. I fell to the ground, or I felt that I did" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 111).

Here, the bodily kinetic rhythm, running, jogging, quick walking, and stopping, is transformed into the creation of a dramatic atmosphere that begins with impulsive movement, then fatigue, and finally collapse. Movement is thus translated into psychological emotion. The body collapses, yet the hands continue moving, for the desire to flee remains lodged in Idris's mind, and the commands of his mind continue to surge despite the exhaustion of the body. The fall here carries the significance of inner collapse such that movement becomes a psychological discourse parallel to speech.

Running here is therefore not an ordinary movement but a sign of inner disintegration. The loss of the ability to stop reveals a separation between mental decision and bodily execution, which is at the root of representations of madness. Idris also doubts the occurrence of his fall, although it did in fact happen, and this also reveals the disturbance of perception.

The body may also become a site of trial, and the abdomen is a space of heavy silence intended to speak through a certain movement, for "Najat was content with searching for some movement in her belly that might please Abd al-Baqi, but to no avail" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 20). Instead of expressing Abd al-Baqi's desire for children directly, the narrative borrows the movement of the belly as an inseparable sign of pregnancy and childbirth.

Yamonda's collapse also became a bodily event and a symbolic omen for "Najat wanted to take her to the neighbourhood doctor when she collapsed before the door. You neither enter nor leave; it is a fall that admits of no favourable interpretation" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 21). Her collapse is caused by her weakness and the worsening of her illness, but it also bears a symbolic signification of the intensification of her psychological crisis following the loss of her leg, her radiance, and her shelter.

3. Speech scene: This is regarded as one of the most important narrative techniques upon which the novelist relied in constructing his texts, as it appears as a space in which voices intersect, characters are revealed, and events develop.

3.1. Scene, linguistically: In *Lisan al-Arab*, *al-mashhad* is defined as "a gathering of people. *Al-mashhad* is the place where people are present. The *mashahid* of Mecca are the places in which they gather" (Ibn Manzur, p. 2350).

Thus, the scene in its linguistic sense is the place or state in which presence and witnessing occur, that is, where events take place and where a person is a witness to them. The concept of the scene is therefore associated with seeing, presence, and participation.

3.2. Scene, terminologically: It is one of the principal speeds of narrative, such as ellipsis, pause, stretch, and summary. We are before a scene when discourse time is equivalent to story time (Prince, 2003, p. 173).

It is also "a sequence of shots linked to one another by a common element, namely, setting, development, movement, character, or psychological state" (Swain, 2010, p. 147). If we consider this concept from the perspective of the novel, we may liken the latter to cinematic representation, for the writer does not present the event all at once but rather displays it in successive partial images, such as a character entering a place, then his or her gaze, then movement, then reaction. These small images are called shots, and when they are brought together, they are called scenes.

These shots are connected through a shared element, which may be the setting, that is, the place, such as a scene occurring in a café, where the shots follow one another to describe the tables, the customers, the waiter's movement, and the character's sitting down. Or it may be development, that is, the event, as when a certain situation is presented, such as a quarrel that begins calmly and then escalates. Alternatively, it may be movement, such as the description of a character's transition from one place to another and the actions and changes accompanying that transition. Alternatively, it may be a specific character, with the scene presenting his or her actions and emotions. Alternatively, it may express a psychological state, such as fear, anxiety, or joy, through the description of facial expressions and movements.

"The scene is the mode of presentation to which the novel resorts when it presents characters in a state of direct dialogue. The contrast in speed between the detailed scene and the summarised narrative echoes the contrast in content between the dramatic and the nondramatic scenes. The scene in the novel is reserved for important events, whereas the summary narrates ordinary incidents" (Zitouni, 2002, p. 154).

By scene in the novel is meant the mode through which the narrator presents the event directly, so that the characters appear as though they are moving and speaking, especially in direct dialogue, and the reader feels as though present within it. The scene is slow and detailed because the narrator presents the event in its precise details and conveys the words of dialogue as they are spoken and describes movements and emotions. The scene is therefore generally used in presenting important events that the writer wishes to foreground and emphasise in terms of their psychological and semantic effects. Summary, by contrast, is rapid and concise because the

narrator recounts events without detail; it is therefore used in presenting ordinary or secondary events. From the foregoing, we may conclude that the speech scene is a narrative passage based on the transmission of speech, as it is uttered directly by the characters, whether in dialogue, monologue, or delirious discourse, so that the event appears to take place before the reader at the moment of reading, without the intervention of the narrator. Ismail Yabrir relied on this stylistic mechanism in the construction of his novelistic texts, and among its most prominent manifestations are the following:

1. The Speech Scene That Simulates the Discourse of Madness: This clearly appears in *The Madman's Testament* through a number of scenes, such as the following:

"The fire in the region of the eyes disappeared, and my body rose slightly from the side of the legs. I began to feel my inclination and found no discomfort in it. Around me were all the meanings of absence, and a festival of nothingness embracing me within its expanse ... There is no body here lying beneath my mother's sieve without rhythm. All directions come from all directions so that there is no difference between the right and left or between the upper and lower directions. The truth is that this nonplace in which I now delight is what tempts me to contemplate what has passed of me, so long as nothing is coming here. I contemplate myself outside pity and reproach" (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, pp. 23–24).

This scene is unified by a common element, namely, the psychological state of the madman, who experiences a feeling of emptiness, loss, and separation from place and body, and this is manifested in his words: "I began to feel my inclination and found no discomfort in it" and "Around me were all the meanings of absence".

In this scene, one perceives a gradual development in sensation, beginning with the perception of emptiness, then the feeling of the weight of nonplace, then the sensation of inclination and rising, and finally immersion in nothingness and absence, which allows him or her space to read his or her past so long as he or she remains far from the eyes and mouths of those who judge him or her.

"I return in haste, I jog, I run quickly, and the street stretches as although it were eternity. I run and run and run ... as although I shall never arrive. I sweated, I was afraid, I choked. I wanted to vomit at the end of the street and to sit on the ground and to weep and to scream that I should surrender myself to the police. I killed al-Saadi a month ago and hid the killer with my aunt ..." (Yabrir, *The Madman's Testament: The Book of the Dead Against the Living*, 2013, p. 29).

This is an intense psychological speech scene that reveals the state of inner disturbance experienced by the character of Idris, the madman, through the inner conflict expressed by the words "I was afraid and I choked"; bodily and psychological collapse, "I wanted to vomit", "to weep", "to scream"; and surrender, "that I should surrender myself to the police". These findings indicate the state of psychological pressure produced by pangs of conscience, which has lasted for a month since the imagined crime occurred.

The repetition of the verb "I run" also carries the meaning of flight from a place, or an attempt at psychological escape from a truth or a crime. However, this escape appears eternal because of the extension of the path and the absence of an end, as suggested by his words, "and the street stretches as although it were eternity". Movement in this scene thus appears as a bodily translation of fear and remorse.

Two temporalities also intersect in this scene: the present, which is the time of running, fear, and the desire to scream and weep; and the past, which is the time of al-Saadi's killing and the disappearance of the killer.

It is noticeable in this scene that its short, successive sentences translate the character's tension and anxiety, while repetition expresses terror and confusion.

2. The Speech Scene as a Mechanism for Constructing Coldness Linking Novelistic Discourse to the Title *Cold as a Female*: Among its most prominent forms are dry dialogues, terse responses, and the absence of intimacy in address, such as the dialogue that takes place between Idris, the protagonist of *Cold as a Female*, and the taxi driver:

"Going down to Dzayer?"

"Yes... going down, very much so."

"Get in, brother ..."

"Praise be to God, brother, security has returned."

I did not utter a single word. I hate talking about the country's security situation ... As although the man noticed my silence, he changed the subject.

"Perhaps you are here as a tourist?"

I wanted to shout in the face that, from its very first features, poured itself upon me, 'Drop me' but I withdrew and offered him the appropriate social stupidity instead:

"I sold my car; that is why I was overcome by a feeling of nakedness.

I have not walked since graduating from university ..." (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 13).

This scene reflects an outwards submission that conceals an inner refusal. Here, the poetics of the speech scene are manifested, and dialogue becomes a field of tension and dissonance. The first four utterances are ordinary colloquial expressions, yet behind them lies a troubled security context. Silence then assumes the form of an existential stance on the part of Idris, who refuses to engage in the discourse of fear, as although talk of the security situation were summoning the memories of wounds lived through by the addressee. The driver notices his or her silence and changes the subject to tourism. Emotion reaches its peak but leaves no outwards trace except for silence, thereby creating tension between desire and action that suggests the character's social brokenness.

Similarly, in Idris's dialogue with Abu al-Hasan:

"Do you love this girl?"

The fox asked me with the gentleness of one who knows love; I did not trust him, so I remained silent.

“I am asking you whether you love her, Idris?”
“I seek God’s forgiveness,”
I answered him, fox-like.
“If you want, I shall speak to your father so that we may ask for her hand for you ...” (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 21).
The poetics of this speech scene are manifested through linguistic condensation and the brevity of sentences: a question met with silence, followed by insistence and hesitant denial. In it, Idris employs the fox as a symbol of wisdom, knowledge, and cunning while also embodying the masked inner voice that conceals the truth. Idris’s recourse to seeking forgiveness is a way of avoiding confession and of embodying denial.
This scene is distinguished by a particular poetics arising from the tension between question and denial, from the symbolism of the fox as a voice that knows the truth, and from the silence that reveals what words are unable to say. It is a dialogue that transforms confession into an anxious existential experience.
Coldness is clearly evident in Idris’s dialogues with his beloved in the following:
“You are a cultivated young man, and you seem older than your age.”
“I also seem useless as I go on following ...”
She placed her hand over my mouth, interrupting me, and I kissed it.
“Do not be a general.”
“I do not understand you.”
“The foolish Arab deals with his female as an absolute ruler does, like a general and a barracks: either all submit to his absolute authority, or they revolt against him and bring down the temple” (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, pp. 71–72).
The poetics of dialogue here are manifested through the interweaving of speech and action and through the tension in the relationship between authority and desire and between domination and brokenness. The dialogue here does not convey as much information as the tension between the two characters does. The girl constructs a symbolic image of the man as one who exceeds his own time, while Idris confesses his brokenness and his loss of authority before her. The dialogue then shifts from the level of speech to that of the body through his kissing the hand that interrupted his speech. The interruption is not verbal but bodily, which makes the body itself a parallel discourse. She then returned to make the Arab man a symbol of authority by likening him to a general and his female to a barrack such that the dialogue exceeded the individual relationship and became a critique of an entire cultural structure, transforming the Arab man into a political metaphor. This relationship is founded on a sharp duality of submission, rebellion, and destruction. Love is thus transformed into an arena of conflict, then of coldness, then of rupture and ruin.
In his conversation with the brother of the girl, he loved:
“I do not know who you are.”
“It does not matter who I am. Will you have coffee, tea, or juice?”
“I do not drink anything.”

I spoke to him about proposing to his sister, and it was as although death were upon his face. I immersed myself in explaining the story, but he had not been present in it from the beginning ...” (Yabrir, *Cold as a Female*, 2013, p. 88).

This is a speech scene based on a hidden conflict between the authority of the question and the embarrassment of desire and love. The girl’s brother opens the scene with a decisive question about the identity of his interlocutor, yet he does not seek knowledge by it; rather, it is a declaration of superiority, authority, and the inflation of the self. Its underlying meaning is as follows: who are you to knock at our door? Idris responds with an answer that exposes his socially unacceptable position, and from here, the coldness and frigidity of the relationship are constructed. The dramatic irony becomes evident when Idris begins to explain the story of his love for the girl, while her brother had been absent from that story, which indicates the presence of a gap. Love is a subjective experience belonging to the heart and emotions; it is felt and enjoyed, just as one suffers from the other’s coldness and expresses that suffering. Marriage, by contrast, as a social institution, is one in which the relationship between woman and man is governed by recognised rules that define rights and duties and is subject to the supervision of society and the family.

To this scene is attached another in which the relationship between Idris and his beloved becomes tense and in which rupture is declared through the presence of a suitor for the girl.

3. The Speech Scene Embodying Inner Conflict: This is more clearly evident in *The Angels of Lafrane* and may be perceived in the following speech scenes:

“You will be my wife; you shall have what Najat has, and you shall bear what she bears... You are both friends; you will not differ.” She did not utter a single word and surrendered to a hysterical laugh, mingled with tears and weeping, while he was calming her and asking her to think about the matter, to move beyond deficient feminine thinking and the dream of a man who has not married” (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 29).

This is an intense speech scene that reveals psychological conflict and the dominance of masculine discourse. Abd al-Baqi’s statement, “You will be my wife; you shall have what Najat has, and you shall bear what she bears”, amounts to possession and certainty of acceptance rather than request or proposal. The phrase “You will be” has a coercive certainty that leaves no room for choice. This discourse is reinforced by the statement “to move beyond deficient feminine thinking and the dream of a man who has not married”, in which a disparaging view of female consciousness appears, as it is considered deficient and in need of correction, thereby reflecting an authoritarian structure that marginalises the woman’s self and negates her independence.

This domination is met with silence as a form of psychological language. The sentence “She did not utter a single word” points to an existential incapacity, to a moment of shock, to inner brokenness, indeed to collapse before a sudden force. This collapse then erupts into hysterical laughter mingled with weeping, portraying a state of psychological disintegration. Abd al-Baqi

thus attempts to incorporate Yamonda into the logic of authority by calming her and making her accept him.

In this scene, dialogue shifts from communication to the revelation of a moment of existential conflict, in which language becomes an instrument of authority, while silence and hysterical laughter become instruments of impotent inner resistance.

The speech scene also contributes to deepening the psychological dimension of the novel and reveals the disintegration of relationships, the collapse of trust, and the transformation of dialogue into a space of conflict rather than understanding. This is clearly evident in a dialogue that takes place between Najat and Abd al-Baqi in *The Angels of Lafrane*:

"What is the matter with you? It seems that you have begun to enjoy remaining alone."

"Exactly, for I have been sitting here for a month."

"Abdou, I think you have gone mad! You are going out now and apologising to Yamo. I want you to do it now."

Najat was speaking while suppressing her anger, whereas he was shouting and deliberately making Yamonda hear... She placed her hand over his mouth, imploring him to be silent, but he pushed her away violently. "Perhaps you think my house is a hotel or a cabaret for dancers. This is Abd al-Baqi's house; it cannot tolerate those of ill intent and those who come from darkness ..." while he continued dissecting the morals of the one who rejects what is lawful and describing her as a dubious woman" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 73).

As previously noted, this is a scene of confrontation and conflict between husband and wife, based on tense dialogue fluctuating between the language of questioning and the language of shouting, thereby revealing the dysfunction of the relationship. The tension is not confined to words but is also embodied in bodily gestures: she placed her hand over his mouth, beseeching him to be silent, as a sign of containing the outburst; he then pushed her away violently, a bodily act of aggression that confirms rupture and rejects containment.

The scene of psychological tension and conflict of identity is renewed through the dialogue that takes place between Najat and Abbas when she asks him whether he wanted anything:

"What could I possibly need? In the past, I wanted nothing but you."

"Let us forget the past, Abbas."

"Is it fitting that we forget the past, or that we cling to it? It is the most beautiful thing, Najat."

"You are more important than I am and more important than the past."

"truly? In the past, I used to feel that I was the less important one."

"You were never that."

"I was naive because I did not force either you or Zaynab into anything, and I left you both the choice of pushing me into silence. I ought to have fulfilled my role as a man towards you both."

"You were our man always."

"So much so that I allowed you both to fall."

"There was nothing in your hands" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, pp. 111–112).

The scene opens with an existential question, "Is it fitting that we forget the past, or that we cling to it?", a question that does not seek an answer so much that it reveals a state of hesitation and division between the desire to free oneself from the past and the longing for it. This grants the dialogue a poetic function because it transforms the past into a living entity, and dialogue becomes a means of summoning memory and psychologically reconstituting it. Abbas sees the past as the most beautiful thing, yet at the same time, he attempts to move beyond it, thereby revealing a poetic paradox. The dialogue then shifts directly into painful confession: "I was naive... and I left you both the choice of pushing me into silence... I ought to have fulfilled my role as a man toward you both." Abbas thus expresses his brokenness and confesses his incapacity, and the poetics of this dialogue are embodied in his movement from the position of agent to that of victim.

The dialogue then reaches its climax and turns from confession into explosion: "Abbas sprang from his place, his tone growing sharper, and now what do you think of me? I surpass you both; I outdo you both in achievement. Here, I am infected with AIDS. Do you know from where AIDS comes? It comes from your filthy world. You did not enjoy yourself; it was not written for you that your lives should be crowned by it. I, however, did manage, with one concentrated leap, to excel" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 112).

This declaration represents the dramatic turning point, as the disclosure of the shameful illness is not merely information but a symbolic event reflecting the collapse of the self, the feeling of shame, and the desire for revenge, as he accuses Yamonda and Najat, thereby intensifying the conflict in the dialogue. This had been preceded by tension and bodily agitation described by the narrative, which endowed the scene with a kinetic quality and made the body an extension of language. The raised tone and bodily outburst embody the inner explosion. The scene is then placed within a poetic paradox, in which superiority is linked to illness, thereby reflecting a tragic vision of the self that sees in its fall a form of symbolic triumph.

The speech scene also appears in the short and condensed phrase "Yamonda, may God forgive Abbas, he has found peace" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 167). This phrase, although composed of only a few words, conveys both the news of death and consolation at once, thus transferring the character from a state of hope to certainty of loss. This news also produces an immediate existential transformation: "but she collapses to the ground" (Yabrir, *The Angels of Lafrane*, 2010, p. 167). The effect of the previous utterance is thus transferred directly to the body, and the speech scene becomes an active force that causes the character to fall. The word thereby becomes an existential act, and the phrase "Abbas has found peace" constitutes a narrative turning point because it brings one phase to an end and opens a new page of loss and emptiness. At that stage, Yamonda had no path to life other than the path of Abbas, before herself and before the other.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the foregoing, it may be said that dialogue in the novels of Ismail Yabrir under study is not a neutral verbal exchange; rather, it is a space of tension, a mirror of conflict, and

an instrument for revealing inwards, affective, and troubled worlds. This is particularly embodied in the character of Idris in *Cold as a Female* and *The Madman's Testament* and in the characters of Yamonda and Abbas in *The Angels of Lafrane*.

In these novels, a monologue is transformed into a space of confession and expression of brokenness and fragmentation and into a field for the articulation of existential questions in which the character is disclosed. It is an inner voice charged with fear, anxiety, and hesitation, through which the psychological and social dimensions of the Algerian character of Djelfa after colonialism, during the Black Decade, and before it, are manifested, together with their impact, which helped to account for Idris's madness. It is also regarded as a voice of emotional pain in *Cold as a Female*, through which language is transformed into an affective space that precedes the story and governs it, and it is a voice of memory in *The Angels of Lafrane*, summoning the past with all its pain while living the present.

Silence is an element parallel to speech and is indeed more eloquent than it is. In these novels, it is not merely a semantic void but a semantic intensification shaped by suggestion through the expression of incapacity, resistance, weakness, brokenness, refusal, and superiority.

Body language appears as a complementary discourse that accompanies spoken language and reveals, through a gesture, a glance, a movement, or the trembling of lips, what words are unable to utter, thus becoming signs that contribute to the construction of a speech scene.

The speech scene represents the integrated aesthetic unit that transforms dialogue from an instrument of narration into an intense dramatic moment in which Idris's disturbance and madness are manifested; it is transformed into an arena of confrontation between the self and its memory, embodied by Yamonda, and into an eloquent silence narrating Idris's emotional disappointment. Here, the poetics of dialogue are constructed.

Hence, the poetics of dialogue in the novels of Ismail Yabrir are founded upon the interaction between the inner voice and outer discourse, making use of poetic displacement, the linguistic economy, the density of meaning, and paradox, which renders dialogue an open aesthetic horizon through which the intellectual vision is disclosed and through which the complexity of the human being in confronting the self, the other, and the world is revealed.

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