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**A study of the Fantastic narrative in the novel “Dafātir al-warrāq” by  
Jalal Barjas based on Tzvetan Todorov’s theory**

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**Abstract**

The new Arabic novel cannot reach its creative climax, and it cannot maintain its continuity except by inventing new mechanisms that carry rhetorical connotations and discourses in all its dimensions. Miraculousness is one of the eminent experimental and literary phenomena that preoccupied the thought of critics and scholars. In this type, there is a penetration and breaking of everything that is realistic and familiar and the creation of another world that causes confusion and astonishment in the mind of the reader. The contemporary Jordanian novel tried to build a modern text novel and was able to transcend the narrative traditions and enter a new experience in a way that presents a narrative technique represented in the miraculous and the exotic. We have chosen the novel “Novels of Warraq” by ‘Barjas, Jalāl, which won the Booker Prize in 2021 AD, as a model for this study, for reasons including the lack of university studies in it. In the search for manifestations of the miracles in “Dafātir al-warrāq” we relied on the most appropriate approach, which is the descriptive-analytical approach, and then on the structural approach in analyzing the narrative text. In the end, we reached the most important results, the most important of which is that this novel can be considered one of the examples of miraculous literature according to Todorov’s theory. Because we see in this novel how elements such as timing, narrator, point of view and focus are reflected and embody the structural and grammatical aspects, and we face unusual events and transformations in them as topics that appear semantic side of the text.

## **Keywords**

Dafātir al-warrāq, Jalāl Barjas, narrative, miraculous literature, Tzvetan Todorov

## **Introduction**

The new Arab novel cannot reach its creative peak and cannot maintain its continuity except by inventing new mechanisms. Perhaps we can consider the miraculous among these mechanisms. The miraculous is one of the prominent literary phenomena that has occupied the minds of critics and scholars. The miraculous novel is a type of novel in which the author refrains from simulating reality into a type of writing and narration that transcends the laws of reality to the laws of imaginative art. The Arab novel in general and the Jordanian novel in particular have been able to achieve a distinguished artistic richness through their openness to innovation. Among contemporary Arabic novels, there are many examples in which elements of the grotesque and the fantastic appear. The novel “Dafātir al-warrāq” by Jalal Barjas is considered one of the most important contemporary Jordanian novels, as the hero of the novel takes on the image of a rebel who wants to achieve justice, truth, and equality in an unjust world. He is close to the problematic hero who has lofty values in a decadent world, and his taking on the role of Diogenes is only an expression of this trend.

## **Methodology**

There is research that has tried to look at narrative texts from a new perspective, using some contemporary theories. The theoretical basis for most research into the fantastic genre is some theories of the French structuralist theorist and literary critic Tzvetan Todorov, which are based on a work of his called «The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre». Todorov believes that the reader should consider the characters in the novel alive and real, meaning that he might find such a world unreal before or after this story. The second condition is that the reader, no matter how skeptical, must trust the main character of the story. The reader of this novel also trusts the main

character, Ibrahim Al-Warraq, and the other characters. He despairs, like the main characters like Abraham and Narda, and searches for a way to escape. The reader has complete confidence in the characters and sees himself in their place while reading the novel, as if the events had happened to him. When the tale is conveyed in the dialect of each character, Burgess and his artwork also do a great job of pulling the reader in and immersing them in that world. The reader must refrain from providing a poetic or metaphorical reading of the narrative in order to meet Todorov's third requirement. The tale of the paper notebooks is unusual even though it is based on actual events that happened to real people. Thus, the three conditions that Todorov mentioned for the miracle can be seen in the novel “**Dafātir al-warrāq**”, although there is a slight difference. The next step in Todorov's theories is how to justify these events. This study will show whether the narration of “**Dafātir al-warrāq**” is miraculous.

## **Results**

It may be concluded from a review and certain discrepancies that this work satisfies Todorov's three requirements for amazing literature. Todorov's criteria and explanations for fantastic literature were satisfied by a number of grammatical, syntactic, and semantic components found in the book “**Dafātir al-warrāq**” which also served as a great example of this kind of writing..

## **Conclusion**

The philosophical novel, The Warraq Notebooks, employed the characteristic of the miraculous to address thorny issues in which the past and present, good and evil, and the marginalized classes of society struggle. It presented images of the tragic reality that is full of injustice and cruelty and transcended the limits of time and place miraculously. In the novel, **Barjas, Jalāl** does not tend to convey reality as it is, but rather he tends to go to reality with the tools of imagination.

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