TOPIC: A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE NOVELS OF ELIAS KHOURY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO "YALO" AND "KA'ANNAHA NA'EMA"

The Thesis has been divided into four chapters in addition to conclusion. Each chapter has been divided into a few sub-chapters.

As of the methodology, both descriptive and analytical methods have been accepted and applied. The chapters are as follows-

Chapter-I: Introduction

Chapter-II: Life and Works of Elias Khoury.

Chapter-III: A Critical Study on the Themes and Styles of Elias Khoury's Novel "Yalo".

Chapter-IV: A Critical Study on the Themes and Styles of Elias Khoury's Novel "Ka'annaha Na'ema"

Conclusion:

The **first chapter** deals with an introduction, which states the importance of the research, its objectives, and the method used by the researcher in his study as well as including two sub chapters, from them one is comprises a historical background on the origin and development of Arabic novel to the approximate period the thesis covers; the half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the 21st century, and another one comprises a contemporary Arab novelists of Elias Khoury to evaluate the position of Elias Khoury among them.

The fascinating *Arabian Nights* had the seed of a novel in a most rudimentary form, but the infusion of artistic elements to metamorphose them into novel proper and transforming the traditional *maqama* into modern novel had to pass through several decades and to rest on the

deliberate and conscious endeavours of several men of letters especially in Lebanon and Egypt.

Some critics tried to link the roots of Arabic novel with the narrative writing found in classical Arabic literature. But those works cannot be considered as novel. Yet one can say that they have certain narrative elements which could have served as the basis for novelistic development for the man who sought to infuse a life into Arabic literature in the later part of the 19th century.

But most of the critics argued that the first true novel in Arabic literature is *Zeinab* which is published by Muhammad Husayn Haykal in 1913. This is considered as the first fledged novel of literary merit in Arabic, in spite of the many serious shortcomings that are inevitable in all pioneering works.

The development of novel in modern Arabic literature can hardly be seen in isolation from the renaissance in the Arab world. The popularity of the novel genre was engendered in large part by the serialized publication of historical romance novels. This tendency was one of several factors that made the development of an Arabic genre which would replicate the structures, styles, and generic purposes of the nineteenth-century novel in the West.

Arabic novel literature has been developed in the beginning of the 20th century by the writings of prominent novelists of the Arab world. The Pioneering Generation of Novelists was Egyptian. Arabic novel literature was developed in various countries of Arab World like Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Saudi Arab, Morocco, Libya etc.

The **second chapter** covers Elias Khoury's life, and his literary works such as 12 novels, four volumes of literary critical work and some of his

plays. These works are covered in such a way that it will show his unique and innovative style of writing for which he is famous.

Elias Khoury, the leading personality of modern Arabic intellectual of Lebanon, was born in 12th July, 1948, the year of the Palestinian catastrophe. He grew up in a Christian Orthodox family, with all the myths of oriental Christians, mainly the myth of being the descendants of the Arab tribe of Ghassan, who came from Hauran in Syria and who were kings. His native village was situated in the Beiruti neighbourhood Ashrafiyyeh, which is also known as Little Mountain because it is a small hill in east Beirut. Ashrafiyyeh was like a village inside a city where mainly a Christian orthodox neighbourhood was lived.

Elias Khoury started his early education by attending in a protestant school in Ashrafiyyeh, which, like most Lebanese schools at the time, followed the French curriculum. He studied his primary and secondary education in this school with the Palestinian refugees. After completing his secondary education, he moved to Beirut University where he completed his under graduation course in history and sociology and at that time he was just 19yrs old. After completing his graduation, he was gaining his M.A. with a thesis about the *Nahda,* the so-called Arab renaissance of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's, and the Muslim intellectual and reformer al- Afghani (1838-1897). Then he went to Jordan to visit a Palestinian refugee camp and then enlisted in Fatah, the largest resistance organization in the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Then he left Jordan in 1970 after the Palestinian Guerrilla forces in the kingdom were crushed in Black September and travelled to Paris to continue his studies. At the Sorbonne University in Paris, he wrote his dissertation on the Lebanese civil strife of 1840-60, a period of

Druze-Maronite rivalry inflamed by Ottoman rule. It struck him how little had been published by Lebanese about the conflicts they'd experienced.

He began his academic career in the early 1980's. He has taught modern Arabic literature at different universities in Lebanon and the United States. He taught literature and comparative literature at the Lebanese University, the American University of Beirut, and the Lebanese American University. At the end of 1990s, he began teaching at Columbia University and New York University, where he is a global distinguished professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic studies.

Elias Khoury is a political activist. His engagement in politics started in the late 1960s and developed along with his cultural and literary productivity in 1970s. He found himself travelling to Jordan to visit Palestinian refugee camps and joining Yasser Arafat's *Fatah*, the largest resistance movement in the Palestine Liberation Organization from 1973 to 1979. Khoury took on the post of editor-in-chief of the culture section at the Lebanese daily *al-Safir,* a position he kept until 1991. Throughout these years, the cultural journal *Mawaqif* founded by Adonis and the literary critic Khalida al-Said, was the most important avant-garde platform for intellectuals, writers, and artists across the whole region. Khoury joined its editorial board in 1972. In retrospect, he considers the latter half of the 1970s to be the decisive formative phase in his intellectual life. Elias Khoury is a public intellectual who plays a major role in the Arabic cultural scene and in the defense of the liberty of expression and democracy, and he is a cultural activist who directed the theatre of Beirut and co-directed the Ayloul Festival of Modern Arts in Beirut.

Elias Khoury has written 12 novels, four volumes of literary criticism. He

has collected some short stories. He has also written some plays. Elias Khoury's works have been translated into English, French, German, Hebrew, Portuguese, Italian, Catalan, Norwegian, Spanish, and Swedish. In most of his novels generally we have found about the Palestinian politics, culture and trauma and torture at the time of Civil war.

In the early 1990s Khoury wrote his first play *Mudhakarat Ayyub (The memoirs of Ayyub)* which is performed premiered on the fiftieth anniversary of Lebanese independence in 1993. The theme of the play was wartime memory of Lebanese civil war. It contained a scene in which the face of a kidnap victim under interrogation was hidden by a mask. Khoury has based his character on a composite of several people who had disappeared during war.

Elias Khoury was also a director and performer of play. In 2000 Khoury undertook a similarly subversive confrontation with the memory of the civil war in *Thalathat al-musallaqat (Three Posters),* a video performance created in collaboration with the Lebanese actor *Rabih Marwa'* that was shown as part of the annual Aylul Festival, which he organized between 1996 and 2001. *Three Posters* critically tackles the issue of suicide attacks, which were initially carried out by secular, leftist movements resisting the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Contrary to popular perceptions, these suicide attacks were not invented by Islamic fundamentalists; they began as a strategy of the national Lebanese left. The play is meant to provoke a discussion about how something which began as a secular fight for freedom could end up as an Islamist strategy. Even for the Islamists it is a military tactic. It reflects the utter hopelessness of a people that has suffered from the occupation for more than 30 years. Taking as its starting point an uncut version of a

video in which a suicide bomber declares himself a martyr before carrying out his mission.

Elias Khoury was also a critic of modern Arabic literature. He has written four volumes of literary criticism which are as follows: *Dirasat fi naqd al-shi'r, 1979 , Al-dhakira al-mafquda, 1982 , Tajribat al-ba'th 'an ufq, 1984 ,Zaman al-ihtilal, 1985.* Among these critical works of Elias Khoury *Dirasat fi naqd al-shi'r, 1979, Al-dhakira al-mafquda, 1982* are the famous critical works of Elias Khoury.

The book *Dirasat fi naqd al-shi'r* attempts to read the contemporary Arabic poetry. It is written on the poetry of on the poetry of Badr Shakir as-Sayyab, Adonis and Mahmoud Darwish. As Elias Khoury says in an interview that "Poets like Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, Adonis and Mahmoud Darwish played a great role in pushing the Arabic language forward but I think that the real innovation in the language happens in prose and not in poetry.

Another famous book of Elias Khoury on criticism is *Al-dhakira al-mafquda (Lost memory)* which is published in 1982. This book is a collection of readings that cash wrote a relatively long period 1972-1981, and includes a wide range of interests and pursuits, he doesn't aspire to be more than a literary career was marked by her shaking as the threshold of the transition from a so-called modern 1950s stage full of possibilities and questions, collect the essays in the book is in a sense an attempt to announce the end of the stage, trying to point to the new is ambiguous, the stage ends when finished or semi-finished references, stating Writing a reference itself, meaning that now must be present, and that is in itself a reference to read past and future, the Orientalise article within the search within the literary text itself. It does not mean that they are free from any

ideological theme, each interpretation cash leaning one way or another, to ideological building, or to the general perspective, but the ambition is to reach the critical reading to transparent discovering structural composition of literary text, in the discovery process, not tried the cash only text interpretation, but also tried the same tools.

Elias Khoury has written 12 novels in Arabic. Most of his novels are translated into various languages, such as English, French etc. Among those 12 novels *Al-jabal al-sagirah' (The Little Mountain, 1977), Abwab al-Medina (The Gates of the City), 1981, Al-wujuh al-baida*' (*White Masks' , 1981), Rihlat Ghandi al-Saghir (The Journey of Little Gandhi, 1989), The Kingdom of Strangers, 1993, Bab al-shams (Gate of the Sun 1998), Yalo, 2002, Ka'anaha Nae'ma,(As though she were sleeping)2007, Sinalkul,2012* are most famous.

Khoury's novels are intricately intertwined with the Lebanese civil war or the memory of it. If at first he regarded his literary writing as a kind of sideline to his journalistic work, with *Little Mountain* he shifted his priorities. His first novel, *'An alaqat aI-da'irah (1975; About the Inter-relatedness of the Circle)*, tells of the life and experiences of a young boy, Mansour, at an orphanage, and his initiation into a world filled with social and religious authorities that eventually leads to his death. Elias Khoury published this novel at the beginning of 1975, just before the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. With piercing insight and sensitivity, he was able to foretell of the calamities awaiting his country at the time.

The **chapter three** is about the part of the topic, namely a critical study on the themes and styles of Elias Khoury's novel *Yalo*. Khoury's theme is the effect on the human mind of torture, shown through many vivid and excruciating scenes. Yalo ironically congratulates his tormentors for the

inventiveness of the forms of torture he employ and on his capacity to extract confessions from the accused as easily as extracting his soul. However violent torture may be, its physical effects wear off quickly and all that remains is the spiritual effect, which makes us feel the soul is about to depart.

In Khoury's novel *Yalo*, he chooses the theme of the Civil war in Lebanon. The Civil war was took place in Lebanon during the 1975-1990 and was officially ended by the Taif Agreement. It's the novel which tells the tale of non-irrigated date to Beirut before and during the war with unique scenes of this war through Yalo the real hero of this novel. The experience of the novelist Elias Khoury takes the true tales and stories of the form feature in the novel through unique narrative techniques.

Elias Khoury's novel Yalo includes two appendices. The first appendix contains the facts of the main character's trial while the second is a diary entry detailing the experience of Yalo in Roumieh prison. Trauma in the case of Khoury's novel figures on two levels: prison life and the ever-present background of war. A prisoner's diary, the appendices to Yalo consciously manifest the relationship between the act of remembering and the act of writing.

The novelist Elias Khoury uses narrative style to write the novel *Yalo.* He begins the story the novel with the narration of a third person. It portrays the life of the protagonist *Daniel Jalu* nicknamed as *Yalo* who was born into a family of Syriac Orthodox. He is being interrogated for multiple crimes, including robbery, rape and storing arms and explosives. Under trial he was forced to make confessions by the interrogator. Each time he makes his speech, he was interrupted by the interrogator, asking him to fill the gaps of his narrative as it is incomplete. Thus *Yalo* goes over his

confession over and over again, giving us further insights into the character and his life.

In the earlier part of the novel, *Yalo* emerges as a character that has little inclination to reflect on the situations in which he finds himself. He seems overwhelmed by them and assumes a largely passive attitude towards external challenges. By presenting his thoughts and feelings as they are, however, and not mediated through an omniscient or judgmental narrator, the text helps its readers relate to *Yalo*, possibly sympathize with him or possibly even dislike him. On the other hand, later on in the novel, the activity of writing will eventually lead Yalo to comprehend better the causes of the misunderstandings between him and others.

Most of the remaining chapters of the novel are taken from the confessions. *Yalo* himself has been forced to write in prison which is alternated with chapters narrated in the third person. In fact, after he has failed to defend himself from the accusations of having raped and stalked his beloved *Shirin,* the police force him to write the story of his life as a kind of confession of his crimes, those which he has committed and, especially, those which he has not committed. It becomes clear that *Yalo* has indeed been guilty of criminal activities while working as a night watchman at *Mishal Sallum's* villa. But after being tortured he agrees to confess to having worked for a terrorist group which had planted bombs in Beirut, and this is clearly untrue.

The most prominent feature of his writing to set him apart from the other novelists studied here is his language. His style represents a significant shift towards the more agile syntactical structure of the vernacular language, while fundamentally remaining a standard variety of written Arabic, understandable to all literate Arabs. The style is not an aesthetic exercise. It is a suitable vehicle for an oral-like narration, in a style much influenced by the oral tradition, of a large number of stories which reflect

on various matters, including war and violence and their impact on the victims and marginalized individuals from the lower strata of society. In developing such a style, draws on the folk tradition of storytelling, with its repetition of situations and sentences and lack of unnecessary detail. The language and the highly fragmented narrative are innovative features, to which Khoury adds a self-reflective dimension.

The **fourth** chapter deals with the critical analysis on the themes and styles of Elias Khoury in the novel *Ka'annaha Na'ema.* Khoury's fiction is known for its complex approach to political themes and the effects of war on human behaviour, which he has not only witnessed but also personally experienced. The novel *Ka'annaha Na'ema (As if She Were Sleeping)* is set on the eve of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war that forever changed the political, cultural and social landscape in Lebanon. Khoury explain that he wanted to show this society before catastrophe came to it. Khoury first sought a way to effectively narrate the immediate present, in particular the immediacy of wartime. When the civil war in Lebanon began, Khoury searched for literary accounts about previous wartime in Lebanon and found that literature left out or hid this reality. Nothing conveyed the immediate experience of war. Seeing this void, Khoury aimed to create an accurate portrayal of wartime through his novel *Ka'annaha Na'ema.*

Khoury wanted to explore through his work how Arabic language might be liberated. Ever respectful of writing in a modern language that emerged from an ancient language, one with a sacred root, Khoury believed the language's long history and evolution had become both its beauty and burden. He knew the language needed a change and sought to create a link between spoken dialects and written forms of Arabic. This innovation stemmed organically from his desire to express the immediate

present and allowed him to incorporate multiple narratives within the same work.

Khoury was feminizing language and, subsequently, feminizing imagination. Khoury believes literature differs from religion in that literature has the potential to be feminine. He wanted to explore a way to liberate and feminize Arabic language through narrative. Doing this also enabled him to move beyond the scripted tropes of "orientalization" expected in Arabic literature. Falling prey to expectations and giving readers something they've already had results in orientalism. To avoid this, Khoury believes, writers must write what uniquely exists for him or her to write.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH WORK:

We feel very fortunate to study the life and writings of Elias Khoury in the form of this research work. During this extensive study on the topic we tried our level best to make the research work as good as possible. However, the major findings of the research are highlighted below:

1. Influence of literature on Khoury's life and writings: Elias Khoury influenced by many books which changed his life. Khoury influenced by the book *The Stranger* written by French novelist Albert Camus which he reads at the age of 14 and this book impacts very much in his life. Khoury influences by the poetries of Al-Mutanabbi, Mahmoud Darwish and Abu Nuwas. Khoury was also influenced by short-stories and religious stories which are told by his grandmother a Syrian servant of a city Hauran.

2.Violence in the novels of Elias Khoury: Elias Khoury has created a broad spectrum of images, motifs, symbols, metaphors and other narrative stylistics revolving around the concept of violence during and after the civil war, and also in relation to the Palestinians' struggle and

resistance to achieve freedom and justice. Violence figures in Khoury's fiction as a process integral to power relations between individuals and groups and within institutions. It is a process that leads to specific consequences, despite its seemingly chaotic nature. Indeed, Khoury has created a narrative discourse on the notion of violence through his fiction.

3. Memory and Identity in the novels of Elias Khoury: Memory is a central topic in all of Khoury's novels, as it is in his literary criticism and journalism, as well as his work in theatre, film, and video performance. In his work of literary criticism *The Lost Memory* (1982), he explains that the civil war took place not only in reality but also in memory, due to memory itself becoming a point of dispute. Like the buildings and other land- marks in Beirut, memory was also destroyed, until only fragmented memories remained scattered here and there between the rubble, and it seemed as if the people had lost their memory. In the context of Arab culture and identity politics, the construction of a historical memory delineates the encounter between past and present. Khoury refrains from consolidating Lebanese identity.

4. Dreams and reality in the novels of Elias Khoury: Elias Khoury convinces the people about two things. The first one is that, all of the people live in a double life i.e. dream life and real life. But normally people don't have to remember their dreams even they remember very little of their dreams. The second one is the reality that the people have to come out from the dream world into the real world to take the taste of death.

5. Narrative Style in the writings of Elias Khoury: Khoury's writing style departs from the typically realist modes of his peers and more closely resembles the stream of consciousness of a writer like William

Faulkner. He favours repetition as a stylistic device, and the endings of his stories often circle back to their beginnings. Point of view in his novels doesn't so much change as dart from one character to another. His experimentation with narrative style can be a bit challenging, but it certainly makes for a unique perspective in Arab letters.

6. Use of classical language in Khoury's Writing: Elias Khoury uses classical Arabic in his writing. He uses classical language in most of his famous novels like 'Ra'ehat al-sa'bun' (Smell of the soap) , 'Ka'annaha Na'ema' (As if she were sleeping), 'al-wujuhu al-baydah' (The white Faces) etc.

7. Use of poetic verses in the writings of Elias Khoury: Though Elias Khoury was not a poet he loves poetry. In his novel *Ka'annaha Na'ema (As if She Were Sleeping)* he uses some erotic verses from classical Arab poets such as al-Mutanabbi and Abu Nuwas.

8. Feminizing the language in Khoury's writing: Khoury always have the idea that one must feminize the language, literature, and one must go deep in this feminine aspect of life which can lead one to represent the profound, the most human and the most oppressed.