



Contemporary Algerian Novel and World Literature: Dimensions of Intertextuality and Human Values in the Novel "The Andalusian House" by Waciny Laredj

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Abstract:

World literature is considered a human heritage, as it brings peoples together by transcending time, place, and the language in which it was written to achieve universality. It addresses shared human issues; this is what has made it a focal point for novelists in the modern era, particularly with the emergence of experimentation and the opening of the narrative text to all literary arts. The narrative text, with its flexibility, has been able to emulate all texts and has proven to be a structure within which all literary genres merge without one infringing upon the artistic specificity of the other. It is capable of assimilation, development, and keeping pace with everything new.

The employment of world literature as a human characteristic came to extend bridges of cross-fertilisation that unify literature and make literatures melt into a single crucible, which is the literary text, within which all differences dissolve to produce a human creativity in a new guise that aligns with the changing circumstances of life, thus making it suitable for reading in every time and place.

Keywords: World Literature – Contemporary Algerian Novel – Experimentation – Genre Intermingling – Humanity.

1- Introduction:

The contemporary Algerian novel has witnessed significant and remarkable development through the adaptation of its styles and writing techniques to keep pace with the requirements of the era, and to enhance the aesthetic, intellectual, and social vision of novelists towards their surrounding reality.

The narrative text has proven its ability to open up to everything that serves its creative discourse, being a text that emulates all texts and a structure within which all literary genres merge. It is capable of assimilation, development, and keeping pace with everything new, for "the strength and weakness of the novel lie simultaneously in its being a genre without law on one hand, and in its containment of all neighbouring genres on the other, which is what is termed dialogism, making the novel an imperialist genre that devours everything in its path"¹



This is evident in the contemporary Algerian novel, which has been able to venture into experimentation by breaking generic boundaries, aiming to enrich its text with various literary forms. Its intermingling with world literatures within its fabric was one of the pillars upon which the contemporary novelist worked, in order to extend bridges of human fusion that unify literatures in terms of moral, intellectual, and social values, making literatures melt into a single crucible – the literary text – far from regional, national, and linguistic narrowness, thus becoming a purely human discourse within which all paradoxes dissolve to produce a human creativity suitable for reading in every time and place.

2- Manifestations of World Literature in the Novel "The Andalusian House" by the Novelist Waciny Laredj:

This cross-fertilisation between world texts is what we find in the writings of the contemporary Algerian novelist (Waciny Laredj), manifesting in many of his narrative works, including the novel "The Andalusian House". This is a novel in which the writer moves between the past, present, and future, narrating the history of the fall of Andalusia and the accompanying tragedies that befell its people, the Moriscos, at the hands of the Spanish and Christian churches, represented in the Inquisition and others. He recounts how the fleeing and displaced Moriscos moved from Andalusia to Algeria, then transitions to the history of Algeria from the Ottoman rule through the French colonial presence, passing by independence, followed by the corruption that Algeria witnessed after the revolution and its attainment of independence.

The reader of "The Andalusian House" notices a beautifully elusive structural construction, where the fictional imagination is almost mercurial, with the realistic voice noticeably prevailing within it. This is not coincidental but rather employed by (Waciny Laredj) to convince the recipient of its credibility. It adopted the artistic, creative literary language as its medium and mask to convey reality within its narrative discourse in an engaging, convincing, and effective novelistic manner. It gathered within its folds different historical periods, between past and present. The novelist also invested in names of real characters and places, and we find him mentioning some dates of real events. It is a novel distinguished by the openness of its text to various arts and different literary genres, which enabled it to raise several human issues that touch the lives of all people across all ages and different places, as it calls for the rejection of wars, religious tolerance, and coexistence in light of religious and doctrinal plurality and diversity, so that humanity may enjoy peace, security, and freedom in this life.

For this reason, we find that the novelist (Waciny Laredj) has intertextually engaged with the novel "Don Quixote" and the character of its author "Cervantes" to give his narrative discourse a global human dimension, represented in the novel "Don Quixote" and its writer "Cervantes", which is considered the first novel in the history of literature in general.

3- The Presence of "Don Quixote" and the Character of "Cervantes" in the Novel "The Andalusian House" and the Dimensions of Intertextuality:

There is no clear and precise definition of the term world literature; there is disagreement regarding it, with multiple concepts corresponding to the varying opinions of researchers. In this study, we will examine world literature in terms of the process of mutual influence and enrichment between literatures, which is what (Goethe) went towards, to whom the term "world



literature" is attributed in 1827. He sees that world literature has a significant role in strengthening human relations between peoples: "The word national literature means little today; we are moving towards an era of world literature, and everyone should contribute to accelerating the coming of this era, but while appreciating everything that comes to us from outside, we must not put ourselves in its tow nor take it as a model..."²

From this, we find that world literature is literature that has been able to hold an important position outside its regional borders due to its wide circulation and readers' attraction to it, thus moving from its native language to be translated into the world's languages, and from its geographical scope to global expansion, meaning "its emergence from the scope of its people's language to other languages, to receive from them what satisfies its need, or to impart to them from its intellectual and artistic currents what enriches them"³.

It was also defined by Sa'id 'Allush in his book (Dictionary of Contemporary Literary Terms) as: "Every specific literature that has managed to transcend its geographical and national borders to embrace universal human visions characterised by comprehensiveness."⁴

The narrative text has benefited from these world literatures, possessing the flexibility that makes it a confluence of several arts that intertwine to weave a text open to everything beautiful, thereby enriching its narrative discourse without losing its literary lustre nor the specificity that distinguishes it from other literary arts. As an example of this, we find the writer (Waciny Laredj), whose narrative style is distinguished by employing various world literatures. In the novel "The Andalusian House", we find that intermingling with the novel (Don Quixote) and the character of (Cervantes), the latter who crowned Spanish and world literature with this global masterpiece, which has become one of the foundations of the modern novel, written between 1605 and 1615, also known as "The Ingenious Gentleman" "Don Quixote of La Mancha", authored by "Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra" and written in Spanish, he was "...born in the city of Alcalá in 1547, and was the second son of Rodrigo Cervantes (...). After the family stayed in the city of Valladolid for a while, they moved in the mid-1550s to Madrid, only to leave it later, and in 1666 they returned to Madrid, where they settled permanently."⁵

The global novelist "Cervantes" was born forty-five years after the fall of Granada, then studied and became a proficient poet. He enlisted in the army after being in Rome in late 1569, and this period was a crossroads in his life. He was captured by sailors of the Ottoman army in Algeria, and his captivity lasted for five years, during which the poet tried to escape, but all those attempts failed. During this time, despite the recommendations that "Cervantes" received, the Dey of Algeria refused to release him, so "Cervantes" suffering continued during his captivity in Algeria until his mother sent the ransom amount imposed by the Dey of Algeria for his release.

He was then freed and returned to his homeland in Spain, only to find himself in another predicament: his weak financial resources, which prompted him to exploit his talent in writing plays and stories. This period coincided with his embarking on writing his immortal novel "Don Quixote" starting from the 1590s AD.

He completed some parts of this novel during his stay in Algeria as a captive, so his life was not separate from the circumstances of the novel's creation. "...Cervantes lived a miserable life,



and one idea dominated his mind: to become a hero, as was indeed the case in the Battle of Lepanto in Algeria, and so he earned the esteem of 'Don Juan de Austria' and his fellow captives."⁶

This confirms that the relationship between "Cervantes" and the novel "The Andalusian House" is a close one, where the character of "Cervantes" intertwines with the hero of his novel "Don Quixote", for "Don Quixote" is a valiant knight who took upon himself the mission of saving the world from injustice, evil, and corruption.

It is known that Spain was under Muslim rule for several centuries, represented in Andalusia, which was one of the prominent cities of the Islamic Caliphate at that time.

The observer of "Don Quixote" finds more than one connection between storytelling and ancient Arabic narrative, which influenced "Cervantes" in Spain. During his detention in Algeria by the Ottoman army as a captive for five years, he became acquainted with well-known examples of Arabic literature, such as epics and biographies (sīyar), making this novel one of the greatest novels in history, as recognised by UNESCO.

The novel "Don Quixote" is considered one of the most important human works that appeared concurrently with the period of the expulsion of Muslims from Spain "Andalusia" – those referred to as the "Moriscos". It is a novel that narrates chivalric events of a noble knight named "Alonso Quijano". It came with a humanistic imprint that enabled "Cervantes", thanks to its content, to make it suitable for all times and places. This is confirmed by one Spanish critic who says: "When some Spaniards, affected by the misery of their past, the harshness of their present, and the hostility of their tough future, gather, the spirit of 'Don Quixote' descends upon them, uniting the melting heat within his strange character among those scattered hearts, stringing them together like beads of a necklace, instilling in them patriotic feelings, and placing behind the bitterness of their characters a shared national pain"⁷. This is a reference to the human dimension present in this narrative text, brimming with human values that call for perseverance in the struggle to support good – values embodied in the character of "Don Quixote", who carries all the ideal meanings and expresses all the virtues that reformers advocated.

There is near consensus among scholars and critics on considering "Don Quixote" as an expression of a noble and authentic spirit that sometimes evokes laughter and satire, yet it is a sophisticated literary work distinguished by its content that carries all the meanings of human values. This is confirmed by (Peter Motteux) in the introduction to his translation of this novel: "...a translation that appeared in 1700. In it, he considers himself a saviour of 'Cervantes', who suffered from his translators who distorted his image by trying to arouse contempt towards him. He says: 'I have taken upon myself the task of saving Cervantes' hero from his previous translators, and to release him from his bonds, so that he may seek happier adventures in better attire.' Moreover, 'Motteux' expressed his belief that 'Don Quixote', despite the wild fantasies that afflict him, which sometimes reach the point of madness, is no different from the essence of the ordinary human being"⁸.



"Cervantes" has bequeathed to humanity a literary work that has remained brilliant through the ages, which is what made the hero of his novel, "Don Quixote", transform into an imagined creative literary character.

We also find that the character of "Don Quixote" has intertwined with the character of its author "Cervantes" to the point of merging on many occasions, as they were both created to defend their principles and take a stance against the injustice inflicted upon them, in solidarity with the individuals and groups whose destinies decreed they be oppressed.

This character was invested in by the novelist "Waciny Laredj" in his narrative text "The Andalusian House" for the aforementioned reasons, planting it within the folds of his narrative discourse to give different connotations and a deeper dimension within his narrative fabric.

The character of "Cervantes" is considered one of the most prominent characters woven into the narrative, whose presence in the novel is tied to its temporal dimension associated with the fall of "Andalusia" and the displacement of the Muslim Moriscos from their land, and the killing and torture of those who remained in Spain by the Christians, from the Inquisition to the Spanish army, on the orders of the Church. It was also linked to a spatial dimension, as the novel's events unfold between "Andalusia" – which is the homeland of "Cervantes" and the homeland of the novel's hero "Galileo el Rojo" – as well as Algeria, where "Cervantes" was captive for five years, which is also the country to which "Galileo el Rojo" emigrated. This region witnessed many wars and piracy between the armies of that area during this time period.

3-1- Deconstructive Intertextuality and the Enigma of Cid Hamet Benengeli:

(Waciny Laredj) began his novel "The Andalusian House" by including a translation of its title as "La Casa Andalusí" – in Spanish, thereby announcing that the subject of the novel is an Arab-Spanish duality. The first part of the novel comes under the title "Interrogation of Masika", with "Masika" being a Spanish name, evidence of which appears in the first line of the novel, where the novelist says on her behalf:

«I am Masika, and if you wish: Sika, daughter of the Spaniard, as my friends at school called me, not because my mother is Spanish – she is like me, a plant of this maritime land – but because our origins are Morisco, like thousands of the inhabitants of Algeria.

I never stayed in the Andalusian house even for a single day, and I am not the heiress, legitimate or illegitimate, of its properties. Perhaps my mother's hidden feeling and the attraction of her distant origins were what led me towards this house, then towards this good man, my uncle Mourad Bashta, or perhaps... because I was only the most capable of reading the hidden symbols that were slaughtering each other in his eyes, and understood him more than anyone else could, including his dearest grandchildren.

The story is very complicated, but I will try to deconstruct it to make it palatable and acceptable."⁹

This name is also considered one of the maqams of Andalusian music, deeply rooted in the authenticity of the Andalusian heritage. Here, we find the novelist has indirectly linked her name to the Andalusian house, around which the novel's events revolve. The character of "Sika" or "Masika" in the novel has a distinctive presence, being the narrator of the novel's events. We find her, after introducing herself, introducing the character of "Mourad Bashta" –



the legitimate heir of the Andalusian house – and the reasons that made her adopt the cause of her grandfather "Galileo el Rojo" (Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil), in her statement:

«...he who led me towards this good man, my uncle Mourad Bashta, or perhaps... because I was only the most capable of reading the hidden symbols that were slaughtering each other in his eyes, and understood him more than anyone else could...»¹⁰

In these opening lines of the novel, "Masika" attempts to introduce the novel's subject, placing the reader before its first thresholds, where she says: «Everything began from that mysterious moment when I left the student class and ran back towards him after my uncle Mourad Bashta (...) had explained to us the story of the Andalusian house and showed us the manuscript with the strange smell that remained stuck in my nose, because I smelled my mother's scent in it»¹¹. And also in her statement: «From that moment, I felt that my destiny had become tied to his. I was young and did not know the fates that awaited me, even when I grew up, nor do I know how I left my childhood so quickly... I felt a strange happiness because my destiny was linked to the life of this good man.»¹²

We find that "Mourad Bashta" narrated to her the story of his grandfather's manuscript, which forms the core of this novel, and also recounted the history of the Andalusian house. She is both the narrator of the novel's events and the one narrated about. This close relationship that bound her to "Mourad Bashta" made her feel committed towards him, the Andalusian house, and her grandfather "Galileo el Rojo's" manuscript. We sense this when she describes her feeling towards "Mourad Bashta":

«...for Mourad Bashta was something else, deeper than my father.»¹³

She endured the hardship of searching for the manuscript, out of her feeling of the necessity to preserve it, in loyalty to Mourad Bashta: «I suddenly made the case of the lost manuscript my primary goal.»¹⁴

As also stated in her words: «...so I search for anything that might guide me to it. I never tired on any day, and I never despaired. I believe that from that moment, the idea of gathering and protecting Bashta's sorrows from damage was born in me.»¹⁵

"Masika" then begins her journey searching for the manuscript of the grandfather "Galileo el Rojo". After working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the simultaneous translation department, she was able to move from time to time searching for the manuscript in museums and libraries. When she went to Spain, she tried to find a clue to guide her to its location.

«When I went to Spain, I searched in the Escorial documents and the old library of Toledo for what Galileo mentioned about his life and the displacement of the Moriscos and Marnies...»¹⁶

The "Escorial" library is renowned as a Spanish architectural masterpiece guarding rare ancient Arabic manuscripts, which the Spanish call the eighth wonder of the world.

The old library of Toledo is the Library of Toledo (pronounced Toledo in Spanish), the former capital of Castile, a place of coexistence of religions between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. "Masika" read those documents to verify everything she had read in the manuscript, finding that everything mentioned in it was real, which confirmed to her that the character of (Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil) was real and not a figment of imagination, when she says: *«...which confirmed to me that Galileo was not a deluded man»¹⁷, and this confirmed to her beyond any



doubt that "Galileo el Rojo" or (Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil) had indeed met "Cervantes", the author of "Don Quixote".

«My research confirmed to me, beyond any doubt, that Galileo, or Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil, actually met the red man, Cervantes, and that what transpired between them was a reality that many historians avoided, and I even reached a strange truth I had never read before among the major specialists in the Spanish Golden Age. The man who Cervantes hid behind in his great novel Don Quixote was Galileo, as the similarity in names was strange and interwoven. Cervantes mentions in the prologue of Don Quixote of La Mancha, in many places in the book, that the one who narrated these stories to him was Cid Hamet Benengeli. Fearing the Inquisition, Cervantes did not alone bear the burden of a novel that mocked everything. The real Arabic name for Galileo is almost the same, with some modification originally due to Spanish pronunciation: Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil? The Spanish 'j' is pronounced as 'kh'. I do not know if my discovery is important for those who have long searched for the secret of the mask behind which Cervantes hid, but I am attached to it, and this coincidence greatly pleased Mourad Bashta. He said, not hiding his happiness, 'These are among the book's secrets and hidden symbols that the manuscript and the author Cervantes did not mention or declare.'

Galileo is not only the Morisco who saved him from certain death, at a time when the commissioner of the Holy Inquisition, Juan Blanco de Paz, had sold him, but he is also his hidden part in writing and his saving mask from the courts of death... Strangely, I found everything Cervantes narrated closely related to Galileo. I reread Don Quixote many times, in more than four languages: Spanish, French, English, and German, and I smelled the same scent. I realised why Lalla Marina was so fond of this book, and asked for the text itself to be brought to her when it was published.»¹⁸

In these lines, "Masika" discovers the close relationship between "Cervantes" and "Galileo el Rojo", as the latter was the narrator behind whom Cervantes hid in narrating the events of his novel "Don Quixote", and that "Galileo el Rojo" is himself "Cid Hamet Benengeli", who saved "Cervantes" from certain death. This is also what she found in the testimony of an elderly man she met in the Spanish city of "Alcalá de Henares" – which in Arabic means "Castle of Fire", located in the city of "Madrid", one of Spain's World Heritage sites, and also the birthplace of "Miguel de Cervantes" – the same city of "Cisneros", the tyrant who invaded the city of Oran in 1509. The old man narrated to her the story of the Moroccan sailor, in which "Masika" found many features of "Galileo's" life story, as whenever the old man mentioned him, «he said: 'el Rojo.'»¹⁹

This aroused her astonishment and wonder about the reason he knew the story of "Galileo el Rojo", in her words: «The Morisco was a good sailor, who participated in many wars before renouncing Christianity and converting to Islam upon entering Algeria. He was married to a Jewish woman who left everything behind and followed him to live the harshness of exile in Oran, until she was killed by one of the pirates because he wanted to seize her house that she had built in the great pier of Oran. The house was a masterpiece; I hope to visit it one day. This man is the one who saved Cervantes from certain death, and it seems he was summoned to the



capital of Algeria to work as a translator for the Agha of Algeria, Hassan Veneziano, and there he met by chance Cervantes, who was a hostage.»²⁰

In this part, we notice a temporal and spatial link that brings together the course of events within the narrative text. They take place in the same historical period and in the same places, i.e., between Spain and Algeria. The character of "Galileo el Rojo" is a Morisco man who was displaced from his homeland, Andalusia (Spain), to Algeria. As for Cervantes, he is also a Spaniard who was captured by sailors from the Ottoman army in Algeria, in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, and was imprisoned in Algeria. "Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil" – i.e., "Galileo el Rojo" – became a translator for the Agha of Algeria. It should be noted that the term Moriscos refers to Muslims who remained in Andalusia after they renounced Islam and embraced Christianity to escape displacement, killing, and torture by the Church, while others fled to North Africa, i.e., the Maghreb countries.

"Masika" also uncovered an important truth: that the character narrating the great novel "Don Quixote" by Cervantes is the character of "Galileo el Rojo". Cervantes resorted to an old artistic device, claiming he was merely a transmitter and translator of this novel, because it was taken from a manuscript by an Arab historian named "Sayyid Ahmed Benengeli", and he recorded this name in Latin letters as: "Cid Hamet Benengeli".

According to scholars, this name is an Arabic or Morisco name for an Andalusian family, and the meaning of "Benengeli" is, in Arabic translation, "Cervantes" himself. "Cervantes" had some knowledge of Arabic, having spent a long time in captivity in Algeria, and he wrote his masterpiece "Don Quixote" after leaving Algeria, as some scholars have indicated. This character is the narrator of this novel, and Cervantes described him as wise.

The man behind whom "Cervantes" hid was "Galileo el Rojo", the Morisco who saved him from death when the commissioner of the Holy Inquisition, called "Juan Blanco de Paz", sold him. The latter was a monk from the Dominican order: *«He was captured in Algeria between 1577 and 1592, and was imprisoned with the writer "Miguel de Cervantes", who became his cellmate»²¹.

«Among his most famous encounters with "Cervantes" was that during the latter's attempt to escape from captivity in Algeria, thanks to the money he obtained from a Valencian merchant present in the capital at the time, "Cervantes" had managed to secure a frigate capable of carrying sixty captives. When the operation was about to succeed, "Juan Blanco de Paz", who was one of his companions, betrayed him and exposed his affair to "Hassan Pasha", whereupon "Cervantes" was transferred to a more secure prison...»²²

"Masika" then returns to narrate what "Mourad Bashta" told her, after she had corrected some of what he had narrated regarding his grandfather's lost manuscript, saying: «I did not add much as I faithfully recorded everything Mourad Bashta said, except for some corrections regarding the meanings of the Aljamiado language, whose meanings often escaped him.»²³

The "Aljamiado" language emerged as a result of the pressure exerted by Catholic authorities and the Inquisition on Andalusian Muslims to abandon Islam, forcing them to embrace Christianity and speak Castilian instead of Arabic, aiming to erase their identity. They were threatened with either converting to Christianity or being expelled and exiled from their lands.



Some of them decided to outwardly display Christianity while secretly practising Islam, and to support what remained of their culture and identity by resorting to using the Aljamiado language of Andalusia. This was the language that "Sika" mastered and in which the manuscript was written to escape the Inquisition. However, we find that the old man in "Alcalá de Henares" had combined the manuscript of "Galileo el Rojo" in the place where the manuscript of "Cervantes" might be found, in his statement: «I have spent a lifetime searching for everything related to Cervantes, and I have never known this manuscript, nor even heard of it, but a colleague, who provided me with much news about it, told me it is in the National Library in Paris. I am currently verifying that, and I may travel to Paris for that purpose.»²⁴

Thus, everything that "Cervantes" narrated in "Don Quixote" was closely related to Galileo, as stated by "Masika": «...Strangely, I found everything Cervantes narrated closely related to Galileo. I reread Don Quixote many times, in more than four languages: Spanish, French, English, and German, and I smelled the same scent.

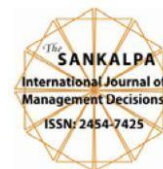
I realised why Lalla Marina was so fond of this book, and asked for the text itself to be brought to her when it was published, until it disappeared into the blind sea, or drove her towards the graveyard of the Gulf of Strangers.»²⁵ After reading Cervantes' book, Lalla Marina found that the central character and narrator of the events of this book was her father "Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil". "Selina" describes her father's state as she examines the book: «Every day she read a large part of it, fearing death would surprise her before she finished it. She would read it, then forget it a little and try to see Galileo's image, secluded on Persian or Turkish carpets, in the palace of Hassan Veneziano, narrating the secrets of the harsh world, giving the Spanish hostage another chance at life. She would scrutinise every detail of the book, word by word, sentence by sentence, breath by breath, shudder by shudder, and she easily knew that the man narrating in Don Quixote was, in the end, her son.

What distance is there in naming between Cid Hamet Benengeli and Ahmed bin Khalil? No distance except the distance of Spanish pronunciation, which altered the original name. I am certain that the man who narrated the adventures in Don Quixote was none other than her father, and that the story narrated by the book, she had previously heard from Galileo, her father's friend, who overcame the dangers of the Holy Inquisition that threatened him in his life, before his death, which gave her some happiness, because her father never stopped raising his fear for him and for his life.»²⁶

Here there is a clear connection between the character of "Galileo el Rojo" and the character of "Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil" – i.e., "Cid Hamet Benengeli" – they are, in fact, the same person. It is stated on the tongue of "Cervantes" that he will make "Ahmed bin Khalil" a part of his novel "Don Quixote", in his words:

«--My way of not forgetting you is to place you in the heart of the coming letters, O Cid Hamet Benengeli.

-Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil, or Galileo, is easier for you and for those who hear you. I said it laughing; a shy smile brightened his features:



-No, you are not Galileo; I insist that you are Cid Hamet Benengeli. You will be the master of my coming letters, and therefore I will keep your name as I desire it, not as you want it, for it is from me and carries your spirit.

-As you wish. You refuse to correct your pronunciation.»²⁷

This is what was previously indicated, as the novelist made "Galileo el Rojo", the hero of his novel, the same narrator of "Don Quixote" by "Cervantes". We also find in another dialogue between them:

«-It seems you know details of this country more than I do.

-I would have died in silence had it not been for your coming. From the moment you entered the palace of Hassan Veneziano, I felt as if something had completely changed. I am grateful to you. You made me narrate my harsh sorrows. I am the man who bet on the story before his life. You have become part of me and of the great tale (bakhia).»²⁸

And in another place: «...Cervantes also, whom I will remember for a long time as I bid him farewell at the port of Al-Mahrousa on the morning of 24 October, when he boarded the ship of Más Antón Francés, heading towards Denia and Valencia. He said while gripping the ship's rope.

"Perhaps that was for the last time, from the port of Al-Mahrousa:

-My way of not forgetting you is to place you in the heart of the coming letters, O Cid Hamet Benengeli.

-Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil, or Galileo, is easier for you and for those who hear you.

I said it laughing; a shy smile brightened his features:

-No, you are not Galileo; I insist that you are Cid Hamet Benengeli. You will be the master of my coming letters, and therefore I will keep your name as I desire it, for it is from me and carries your spirit.

-As you wish. You refuse to correct your pronunciation.

I never intended it that day; his words were full of symbols and signs that I had to decipher in moments of rest, but I was certain that he would narrate our story there, in a shared land, and cast it from the other side beyond the kind and violent sea.»²⁹

Here is a clear statement that "Cervantes" made "Galileo el Rojo" a part of his great story (the bakhia), an old Spanish word meaning tale. The novelist also anticipated the future of this story through the voice of his novel's hero, "Galileo el Rojo", stating that it would be told in a shared land, referring to Spain, as it was the homeland of both. "Cid Hamet Benengeli" is "Galileo el Rojo", the Morisco man who helped "Cervantes" in translation from Arabic to Spanish, as well as translating the Aljamiado language. This character is united with the name "Cervantes", as he is the same as "Benengeli" – in Spanish, "Cervantes" comes from "Ciervo", which means "stag". The characters of "Cervantes" and "Galileo el Rojo" were brought together by history and a shared destiny, amidst the tragedy of estrangement, displacement, captivity, and the Inquisition here and there. "Galileo el Rojo" says in his dialogue with "Cervantes":

«-He who waits is better than the despairing. I know well, Miguel, what it means to stand on the edge of an empty coast, waiting for a ship that comes and never comes.



You look to the horizon and it does not appear? Or stand at the same port and wish the opposite: that the ship tasked with transporting you to a land you were never prepared for would sink.

-Do you think it is a simple matter? My situation is no better than yours, even when the ransom is paid. I know in advance that I must prove to them there that I did not conspire with the Turks, and that there is nothing of the Jews or Muslims in my blood. As much as I am happy to be released from detention, I am also afraid of what awaits me there? »³⁰

The hero of "Don Quixote" is Cervantes himself, the writer of this novel, which is what most scholars of this novel have concluded. To them, "Waciny Laredj" adds the character of "Galileo el Rojo", whom he hid behind the mask of "Cid Hamet Benengeli", to convince the reader in a way that he is the Morisco narrator of "Don Quixote", basing this on the history of "Cervantes" during his long captivity in Algeria, where he met "Sayyid Ahmed bin Khalil", and they became close to each other, which made the character of "Cid Hamet Benengeli" occupy the position of the narrator of the events of his novel "Don Quixote". The novelist intended, through employing the character of "Cervantes" within his narrative discourse, to gather the fragments torn by wars and the suffering endured by the peoples of Andalusia, whether Muslims or others of all faiths, and to thereby show the tragedies that unite under the word "humanity". No doctrines or religions can differentiate between the feelings of a human being as a human who has suffered the horrors of war, displacement, captivity, humiliation, torture, etc.

«I am glad you have read the deep secret within any victory or any defeat. The two matters are but passing fluctuations of one state: the collapse of man himself as a value from the very beginning. I sometimes imagine that humanity could have replaced the tragedies of war with something more beautiful – the blessing of reason – but the path it charted for itself from the beginning prevents it from that, and will lead it to its certain demise. What makes us differ in the end? I am almost like you, my friend. I must learn how to love a land in which neither I grew up, nor my family, nor even my ancestors; our graves are there, and where graves grow, something of us sleeps. I must endure this estrangement and create my new cemetery. Perhaps I will be one of its first salts in harsh exile. What is the meaning of land and exile in the end? Who among us is exiled, and who is the prisoner? And who is in his land, and who is outside it? Whenever I hear you speak, I am assured that this man is also speaking about me. Blindness conquers every living atom remaining in humans. We spend our lives avoiding it, but in every defeat or victory it stretches its long neck to confirm to us that it is still here, and that we must make another effort to avoid its fires.»³¹

This human tragedy was embodied by the novelist "Waciny Laredj" within his narrative text to reinforce his point, by summoning the global character "Cervantes" to give his narrative discourse a deeper dimension, manifested in his critique of the dire situation within that geographical area during that historical period, aiming to reveal the inhumane practices imposed by rulers and armies of all factions. "Cervantes" speaks about his military diaries and the policy of racial discrimination imposed by Spanish Christians against Muslims after the fall of Andalusia. The writer says, through the tongue of "Cervantes": «Strange suspicions hovered around our origins, and we had to prove that there was nothing of the Moriscos and Marnies in our blood? Imagine? To then be able to wear the official military uniform and join the campaign



of Debeiko. I entered stupidity forced, wondering deep down: is it only a matter of a document? How can you control your blood, when they know well that blood coming from afar no one can control? Who knows today, after eight centuries or more, that our blood is our blood? What about the Muslims who mixed with us, in our land? What remains of them today? And what remains of us pure, after all this time? Their blood is in us and our blood is in them. Do we deny all this with a piece of paper that any fool can grant us for a bribe? What genius is this in which man shrinks to reach the lowest levels, directly after the animal? »³²

Here, the novelist raises the issue of identity for the Spanish Christians and Arab Muslims, the inhabitants of Andalusia who had settled in Spain after the Islamic conquests and resided there for nearly eight centuries, until Andalusia fell and returned to the hands of the Spanish Christians. This shows that peoples, whether Christians or Muslims, had intermingled their blood over time, and there was no longer any pure blood highlighting the identity of either. However, the Spanish authorities exerted pressure on the inhabitants to prove the purity of soldiers' blood from Arab lineage, to be accepted into the army for the Debeiko campaign. This provoked the indignation of both "Cervantes" and "Galileo", because it is the peoples who pay the price of wars, regardless of their ethnic affiliations.

«Do you know, Galileo, that I dream every night of saying all this in a book that encompasses human passions, their hidden greed, their irresistible natures, and their fear of the obscure stuck to them, which they drag behind them wherever they go? To say it in a way that ensures reaching the hidden depth within them, through mockery and satire – my two strongest and most cunning weapons against the stupidity of the age and its people. It is not easy, and perhaps I will need another, more tolerant time for my folly and madness, and a different age, and perhaps I will also need other air to accomplish this madness, to breathe it freely, as the birds of this beautiful dawn do every morning? »³³

Both of them suffered the horrors of war and paid a heavy price for it, as expressed in the dialogue between "Cervantes" and "Galileo".

«We both lost something precious. I lost part of my body in the war of Lepanto – my arm – and you lost a homeland. Neither can the arm be replanted to grow on its own, nor can the first homeland be planted anew to grow. Yet we must get used to loss and living.»³⁴

We also find the writer "Waciny Laredj" in another part of the narrative, speaking through "Cervantes" in his dialogue with his novel's hero "Galileo el Rojo": «You and I appear in this void as two lost atoms in a vast world, full of thick dust that leaves us no chance for meeting or rest. I cannot say this before the Holy Inquisition, but the law of expulsion, displacement, and torture was disgraceful and vindictive. This will only generate more hatred and rancour in the end. In the wars and massacres to come, we will not be present, but there will certainly be those who fuel them, and there will also be a seed of us that tries to extinguish them. It may succeed or be killed, but its pride lies in having tried. Among all those who have crossed our lives with injustice or with right, one face we remember: he gave us his heart and asked for no reward for his words or his compassion, even if it leads him to the gallows, he faces his death with high pride. Good is inherited, but unfortunately, grudges are also inherited. We have, dear friend, the weapon of mockery and satire; they can do nothing against these.»



I do not know how we parted that day, nor even how we first met. But whenever I heard Miguel speak of his sorrows and his cracks, I felt that what was between us extended to years, perhaps to centuries long past. I felt his closeness, his sadness, and his joy. I wished he would stay long in Al-Mahrousa; there were many things between us we could not say, but I wished more that he would regain his freedom and then choose his path. I know things do not come easily, no matter what. Miguel, or the red man, possessed the luck of waiting and dreaming, and the harshness of their disappointments.»³⁵

They share the place, times, sorrows, past, and destiny. The manuscript of "Galileo el Rojo" narrated many events of the Moriscos displaced to the Maghreb, and the oppression they suffered inside and outside their lands. They were not the only ones afflicted by the curse of those wars; this war affected all the peoples of that region. It did not differentiate between Muslim, Christian, or even Jew. This is what the novelist attempted to convey within his narrative discourse: that humanity has no nationality, no religion, no creed; it is the innate nature upon which God created all humanity. This is embodied in every letter of the novel "The Andalusian House", a text brimming with human spirit, rejecting war, discrimination, and killing, so that humanity may enjoy peace. This is what "Cervantes" was seeking and fighting for, as well as the grandfather "Galileo el Rojo", who yearned to return to his homeland on the other side of the sea, but his dream of returning there was never fulfilled. His final resting place was with his beloved "Sultana" in the "Miramar" cemetery overlooking the sea, close to the scent of his homeland on the other side. This cemetery, where "Hanna Sultana" was the first to be buried, followed by "Galileo el Rojo", was called the Graveyard of the Gulf of Strangers, indicating that those buried there were strangers, not from this land. It contains graves of the dead from all religions. It is the place that "Mourad Bashta" always loved and where he asked "Masika" to bury him after his death, when he said: «Sika... I want to be buried here, in the Miramar cemetery, inaugurated by Hanna Sultana, then my first grandfather Galileo el Rojo, before it was filled by those who came after them. This place is not only because it holds all the people I loved, but because it is the only cemetery where all religions have dissolved, receiving the Christian, the Jew, the Muslim, the Buddhist, and even the atheist.»³⁶

These statements indicate that humanity is above all religions, all customs, all doctrines, and everything. It is the religion that all humanity should believe in and embrace, across all places and ages.

3-2_ "Sika" and the Duality of Love and Exile:

The story of "The Andalusian House" ends as it began, when (Waciny Laredj) titled the final chapter of his novel "Sika's Soft Touch", while the first chapter was titled "Interrogation of Masika". This latter character represented so much in the life of "Mourad Bashta"; for him, she was lost love and passing time, beauty in all its details. He was bound to her by more than one connection: they belonged to the same land, both in their origins extending to Spain and in the land where they grew up. They were the product of all those circumstances contained in the novel "The Andalusian House".

«Among all the female faces that crossed my path and left a deep imprint on my life, the face of my beloved Sika remained the most enduring and purest. Perhaps because she was a young



girl, and before I could open my eyes to her, she grew up too quickly? Perhaps because she was beautiful when I first discovered her mature features? Perhaps because she held some of the details of Hanna Sultana's face.»³⁷

She embodied in her person all the joys and sorrows that inhabited the soul of "Mourad Bashta": «Perhaps it was none of this or that, not this or that, but it was an impossible love, whose hidden secret is known only to the sea and the Graveyard of the Gulf of Strangers, which has changed its name and has recently become known as the Miramar Marine Cemetery.»³⁸

In the end, he returns to his harsh and eternal exile that exhausted him, to be buried in the Graveyard of the Gulf of Strangers. His end coincides with the end of "The Andalusian House": "The Andalusian house died, and some of its echoes were buried"³⁹. "Mourad Bashta" was one of the echoes of that house.

Narrative writing in (Waciny Laredj's) novel "The Andalusian House" takes the form of a narrative tale in which converge all the signs and discourses emigrating from various Arabic texts, or from Western, global texts especially, in all their imaginative, historical, geographical, ideological, human, and artistic contexts.

"The Andalusian House" was replete with a number of artistic and creative features that made the narrative text a literary text in which diverse human cultures, including world literature, intermingle. The characters employed by the novelist were linked to the place that was the stage for the novel's events, «because there must be a mutual influence between the character and the place in which they live, or the environment that surrounds them, so that the structure of the narrative space can reveal to us the emotional state experienced by the character, and may even contribute to the internal transformations they undergo.»⁴⁰

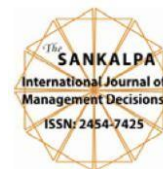
4- Conclusion:

From what we have discussed above, it is clear that the distinctiveness of "Waciny Laredj's" writing style lies in his investment in those texts, reformulating and employing them at the imaginative level, thereby breaking the realistic within his narrative text, as he summons spaces, times, and events with realistic reference. This intermingling of discourses summoned from other texts, such as his employment of the character "Cervantes" and his global novel "Don Quixote", appears as a manifestation of discursive and generic intermingling, being a structural achievement to which the creative narrative language contributes textually within a new context, thereby giving deeper connotations that keep pace with contemporary developments and link the past to the present to anticipate the future through them. This is achieved through the presence of a human dimension that establishes the unity of literature despite all intellectual, social, and doctrinal differences, and even differences of place. The novelist (Waciny Laredj) worked within his narrative text to unify what all humanity suffers from and aspires to. He made room for discursive and generic intermingling by intentionally fusing several discourses to create a new text bearing within it connotations that reinforce his aspirations, by rebelling against the authority of the closed genre, to bring his text out into wider worlds with an elusive language that suggests its realism, as it derives its existence from reality, blending the real and the imagined with a brilliance that mimics the recipient's references, cleverly and artistically deluding him of its realism. (Waciny Laredj) succeeded in

integrating the reader into his narrative text, which gathered within it a mosaic of all spectrums, races, and religions to reach the idea of tolerance and the rejection of wars and division, and that humanity is the umbrella under which all of humanity should unite.

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