
**TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE AS REFLECTED IN THE LONG WAY BACK
BY FUAD AL-TAKARLI**

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses tolerance and acceptance in *The Long Way Back* by Fuad al-Takarli. The main objective of the study is to show how the main characters of the novel, in the end, are agreed to be respectful and tolerant. The study also describes the unpleasant circumstances that the Iraqi family witnessed during the 16s. The research is a qualitative one. The analysis is the technique which was used in this research. Using the theory of tolerance, the result of the study indicates that, the novelist, in many situations seeks to show one important thing that, there is hope and elements of mutual understanding were contained in the novel. Though, frustration and despair covered great parts of the novel, the article will seek to show the state of tolerating, after analyzing some quotes that reflected from the attitudes and behavior of the main characters in *The Long Way Back* novel from the perspective of tolerance theory.

Keywords: Tolerance theory, Acceptance, Iraqi literature, *The Long Way Back*, Fuad al-Takarli.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tolerance between the husband and his wife or friends requires great strength that enables each one to ignore the mistakes committed by his or her lover in order to maintain the mutual understanding that must not be destroyed by one or two mistakes. Since, the husband and wife are the family that a person must preserve because it is the first and kind word that must not perish with changing circumstances (Ghaith, Mohammed; 2022). Rather, as the fires of hatred increase in this world, the friendship relationship must be watered with the water of love and affection. Levinas (as cited in Robbins, 2012) states "my orientation toward the other can lose the avidity of the gaze only by turning into generosity, incapable of approaching the other with empty hands" (p.136).

In fact, a person is sometimes controlled by a negative self that urges him to take revenge on those who wronged him, but the good soul refuses to do anything and forgive and knows that the best sinners are those who repent (Ahlam& Ghaith, 2023). Tolerance between friends and spouses requires a strength that exceeds the strength of revenge, and a rational person is the one who does not throw himself into the nonsense of enlightenment, but rather always strives to be the white hand that extends to help everyone. Tolerance is only a part of justice, when a person forgives his enemy and their relationships return to the way they were, pure and flawless. Therefore behaving in such a way helps a person to reach true reconciliation with himself. (Ahlam& Ghaith, 2023) Friendship in which tolerance prevails can be considered as an effect manner to achieve anything in this world (Ghaith & Duaa, 2022). Though, it is true that everyone can make_mistake, he / she must also be made to forgive, as this brings calm and renewal to the soul.

The wife is not the perfect person that everyone aspires, on the contrary, she is that person who is prone to mistakes, forgetfulness, fatigue and exhaustion. (Mustafa& Mahdi, 2021). Consequently, every person should forgive his wife and his friend and letting forgiveness be the master of the situation between them. Forgiveness leaves a good effect on the soul, especially among friends who lean on each other and are together like one body. As the prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said " The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever ". (Bukhari, 6011)

Perhaps, forgiving others and stay away from hatred and grudges is difficult but it's beneficial so that the love between you will last forever and not be disturbed by temptation. Staying away from hatred and grudges so that you can be in good spirits and stay away from trivial matters. We should tolerance and forgive and let our hand be the upper hand that initiates peace. Forgiveness between friends is like water that is poured on relationships, renewing and revitalizing them. Disagreement always exists between the people of the earth, but forgiveness is a fine quality that no human being is able to possess. It's very generous to be that person who can forgive and ignore the mistakes of his wife or his friends, and as was said before, the master of his people who ignores them, that is, the one who does not stop at small matters, and it is better for a person to emulate this quality with the people that closest to him. Forgive those who sin against you and be the initiator of all good things, especially with friends whom God has made a firm support for man. Staying away from hatred and grudges raises the soul to the highest and makes it honorable above others.

2. DISCUSSION

The term ' tolerance' is defined as " The willingness to accept or tolerate the behavior or opinions of someone or something that you may not agree with" (Oxford, 2010). Toleration generally refers to the idea of respecting the diversity of cultures and beliefs. It encourages refraining from the notion of revenge and forgetting the painful events that occurred in the past. It urges to have respect and positive thoughts towards others and not having quick judgments against them. It means a sense of mercy, kindness and elevation from petty things. The image of tolerance is clearly present in Quran. For instance, in Surah Ash-Shura Allah offered some important insights related to the notion of tolerance, when he mentioned " And whoever is patient and forgives- indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of resolve". (Surah Ash- Shuraa, 43) We notice from the noble verse that it commands believers to forgive and avoiding harming and insulting others. It is important to point out that the Holy Qur'an contains many other references for establishing the value of tolerance, whether within Muslims only or among Muslims with others. The negative self in a person is the one that gets angry, takes revenge, and is punished, while the true nature of the person is purity and tolerance of the soul, and serenity and tolerance toward others. Pollock (2016), on the other hand, shows that the idea behind forgiveness and tolerance is not to approve the other's action and forgiving their offenses rather it simply indicates giving hope that could have happened differently in the past.

In *The Long Way Back*, al- Takarli highlights the issue of tolerance and the individual's crucial relationship with the family, society, and the political situation at that time. Since, the novel is not a superficial family story, but it was full of intellectual and psychological situations which was written in poetic language. In *The Long Way Back*, before shedding lights on the theme of tolerance, it is better to reveal al-Trakali's description of how Iraqi people facing their fate which suspended between doubt and certainly. Although, it is sad and dark novel that includes

many different tragic events. For instance, the main characters live in a struggle of love for their cousin Munira in which one of them (Midhat) wins, only to discover that she lost her virginity on the wedding night by Adnan, her cousin, for a reason that had nothing to do with her. A matter that causes her husband, Midhat to run away," while he [Adnan] was leaning against her, he had managed to draw one of her legs towards him and keep hold of it. She felt no pain as she hit the ground but as she became aware of her naked thighs she realized the extent of her humiliation. She was being treated like a dirty animal and had this overwhelming desire to cry with sorrow and anger and shame" (The Long Way Back, 2011, p.202). The presence of Munira in the novel gave it a romantic dimension, as she is the bright face and the bright sun that illuminates the darkness of the house. Therefore, the oppression against women is applied effectively when the author describes how she [Munira] was treated. She is a symbol of the tragedy that tormented under the burden of rape. The narrator states "her head turned involuntarily for a moment and she was staring straight into his burning eyes and up his broad nostrils, smelling the sweat on his fiery body. She took hold of his shoulders, trying again to break free from him, and felt his body bend towards her violently and his mouth clamp on to hers. She shuddered, then took in a mouthful of air to avoid suffocating" (p.202).

Another extract shows the miseries and how the citizens struggled which represented with the character of Husayn returning from Kuwait who and all Iraqis were excluded due to political reasons. He left everything even his family and his wife [Madiha] and wandered the streets of Baghdad, drowning in alcohol, Abd al-Karim states "I had heard he [Husayn] was back from Kuwait... . He was unshaven, and his beard was black and greasy. His hair was unkempt, and his breath smelt of arak"(The Long Way Back, 2011, p.30-31). On the other hand, as I have discussed, despite the tragic nature of the novel, it has moments of tolerance, joy and humor.

The author tries to give life another meaning through the use of tolerance. For instance, Madiha, despite her brokenness and become unsatisfied with her living circumstances with her husband [Husayn] who left her with her two daughters who were abandoned by their father too, especially when Nuriya [Madiha's mother] expresses this case so she states " He [Husayn] hasn't given them a penny for two years now". The wife reacts differently to the pressures of her husband that oppress her. Madiha took care of her two daughters in one hand and took him to the sanatorium on the other hand. A good example of the concept of tolerance is exemplified in The Long Way Back by al-Trakali. It is when the mother got into rational conversation with her daughter about the drunk husband and asked her to be patient and tolerant, she says " Listen to me! Why are you complaining?... Patience is a virtue. This is just the way things have turned out for you, dear, and you never know when your luck will change" (The Long Way Back 2011, p.9-10).

In the extract above, the phrase ' Patience is a virtue' serves as a primary indicator to the suffering of Iraqi family at that time. And as a result of living in a homeland with all its contradictions, brokenness and disagreements. There are other scenes in The Long Way Back novel that shows how the some characters acted according to the concept of toleration and acceptance. This is evident in the following extract where the husband, Midhat tries to forget and forgiving everything unintentionally committed by his wife. He explained this meaning before his death when he says:

"I had wanted to fly above the sky with her, leaving all these different worlds of mine behind me. The thing was, she had said

nothing to me. And I had understood nothing and continued to understand nothing. I looked across courtyard towards her room, feeling desolate. She seemed like the last beacon of hope in my life"(The Long Way Back 2011, p.349).

In the passage above, again the strategy of toleration is also depicted. What happened to Munira on the night of the wedding and the escape of her husband, Medhat and how was treated and considered as a symbol of the tragedy that tormented under the burden of rape. As a result, through the eyes of Medhat, al- Takarli succeeded to create a new romantic scene related to Munira based on acceptance and tolerance. The extract can be considered as a path to purity and getting rid of burdens that have become too heavy to bear. Bonhoeffer (as cited in Frick, 2019) "believes that the power of love is the foundation of cohesion for human community"

The novelist succeeds in achieving reconciliation between Medhat and himself. Struggle, he reached a state of tolerance and acceptance towards Munira, to be firstly his lover and secondly his wife. Witenberg (2007) defined tolerance as "the conscious affirmation of favorable judgments and beliefs involving principles of justice, equality, care and consideration for the plight of others" (pp.435)

In short, the novel *The Long Way Back* represents a picture of a shattered family destroyed by society troubles during a specific period of time. It focused more on three main actions which are the death of Medhat and his brother Fuad as a result to political and social problems in one hand and the rape incident that happened to Munira by her cousin [Adnan] on the other hand. In addition to that, the novel revolves around one important idea in the existence, which is the idea of death, versus the idea of life with all its complexities and intertwined events.

3. THE LONG WAY BACK

The *Long Way Back* novel is a masterpiece written by the creative Iraqi novelist Fuad al-Takarli. It was first published in Arabic in 1980. It is a wonderful text and one of the most beautiful works written in the world of Iraqi novel. What qualifies for it to be an authentic and pioneering novel, is that it was completed in a literary context devoid of serious literary works, and this is what distinguishes it and gives it the quality of originality. The main characters of the novel are Munira, Medhat, Madiha and Abd al-Karim who lived in a same house.

The novel reveals the extent of the prowess of its writer. The first eight chapters deals with the characters and their relationships with each other and their surroundings. The other chapters, some of them describing the tragic event that happened to Munira as a result of the brutal behavior of by her cousin [Adnan]. She plays a key role in the events of the novel. There is no point in telling stories without an identity, thus, Al- Takarli deep knowledge of the issues of Iraqi society, its customs and traditions helps him to paint a clear picture for Iraq at that time. He used his talents to offer keen insights of the suffering his people. Consequently, it deserves to be called an Iraqi novel.

4. CONCLUSION

Fuad al-Takarli's "*The Long Way Back*" explores issues of acceptance and tolerance via the experiences of the individuals and the larger social backdrop that is shown in the story. These themes, which highlight the difficulties and victories faced by people trying to make their way through a complicated world, are delicately weaved throughout the narrative.

The story's resolution highlights the characters' changing attitudes towards acceptance and tolerance. Characters face their preconceptions, anxieties, and biases as the story progresses, and in the end, they come to a point of better understanding and empathy. This change is not just personal; it is a reflection of broader cultural movements that value diversity and inclusiveness.

The way in which Fuad al-Takarli portrays acceptance and tolerance forces the reader to consider their own biases and beliefs. The epilogue is a moving reminder of how adaptable humans are and how important it is to be open-minded and kind in a society when conflict and division are commonplace.

In conclusion, "The Long Way Back" is an engaging examination of acceptance and tolerance that culminates in a resolution that encourages reflection and hope. Readers are encouraged to reflect on the deep relevance of accepting diversity and enjoying our common humanity via the author's skillful narrative.

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