

***Traditional and modern narrative strategies in autobiographical works
by Raḍwā ‘Āšūr***

The aim of the proposed paper is a presentation of traditional and modern narrative strategies in three autobiographical works by Raḍwā ‘Āšūr (1946-2014). She was a socially committed professor of English literature at Ayn Shams University in Cairo and an author of nine historical and contemporary novels as well as two collections of short stories. In her literary output there are also three autobiographical works.

The first one is her debut, a travelogue entitled *Ar-Riḥla. Ayyām at-ṭālība al-miṣriyya fī Amrīka* (“The Journey. Days of an Egyptian Student in America”, Bayrout 1983), in which one can find references to the *riḥla* genre (especially to the Arabic travelogues from the 19th century) as well as to modern Arabic autobiographies written in the first half of the 20th century.

The second one is an autobiographical novel entitled *Aṭyāf* (“Specters”, Cairo 1999), in which there are references to the form of works representing classical Arabic *adab* literature as well as to modern narrative strategies, as for example the technique of a false document.

The third one comprises fragments of Ashour’s autobiography written during her struggle with a serious disease which took place in the time of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 and in the following years. These autobiographical fragments are divided into two parts: *Atqal min Raḍwā. Maqāṭ ‘i min sīra ḍātiyya* (“Heavier than Radwa. Fragments of an Autobiography”, Cairo 2013) and *Aṣ-Ṣarḥa. Maqāṭ ‘i min sīra ḍātiyya: al-ḡuz’ at-ṭānī min Atqal min Raḍwā* (“Scream. Fragments of an Autobiography: the second part of *Heavier than Radwa*”, Cairo 2015). This work can be perceived as the latest type of Arabic autobiography, which crosses the borders of autobiographical genres and uses different modern narrative strategies, as for example references to the audiovisual materials; and at the same time it connotes the narrative structure of stories within stories, typical for the classical Arabic folktales— because the author incorporates in her narrative the words of other people. Thus, Raḍwā ‘Āšūr was trying to combine modern Western literary strategies with traditional Arabic ways of constructing literary texts.