



Social and Political Criticism in the Novel (*Shikaju*): An Analysis of Genetic Structuralism in Contemporary Arabic Literature

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Abstract

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This article analyzes the narrative structure of Alaa Al Aswany's novel *Shikaju* (*Shikaju*) using the genetic structuralism approach developed by Lucien Goldmann. This approach is used to examine the relationship between text structure and the socio-political conditions underlying the creation of the literary work. The research focuses on the dynamics of globalization and acculturation experienced by the characters, particularly in the context of life in Egypt and the United States, which have different social and cultural backgrounds. The results show that the novel's narrative structure reflects a complex identity conflict resulting from the encounter of two different cultures. The characters in the novel experience an identity transformation marked by a tug-of-war between traditional Eastern values and modern Western values. This conflict is not only personal but also reflects broader social realities, such as discrimination against immigrants, stereotypes against Muslims, and an identity crisis amidst globalization. Furthermore, the author's narrative structure demonstrates a close relationship between the characters' individual experiences and the socio-political conditions surrounding them. The novel also reveals the tension between idealism and reality, and shows how the characters attempt to negotiate their identities in stressful situations. Thus, it can be concluded that the novel *Shikaju* is not only an aesthetic work of literature, but also a critical reflection of the social, cultural, and political dynamics occurring in contemporary global society.

INTRODUCTION

culture of a certain area within a certain period of time.(Nasution, 2016) Novels often also tell the cultures that background the author's life. But even though it is very close to reality, it does not mean that the novel becomes *Squirt* directly from a reality. As Damono expressed, literary works are a reflection of cultural life. To what extent literature reflects the life of the people.(Putri & Nursaid, 2023) The concept of 'mirrors' is of course still vague, because the actual society is not the same as the conditions of society depicted in a novel. This is because novels or literary works in general can be intervened through the author's worldview. This concept is also in line with Kufafiy's opinion who argues that literary works are essentially a reflection of the environment in which the author was born. Novels as a reflection of reality are also one of the creative ways of authors or writers in conveying certain messages and ideologies.(Husnaya & Halim, 2023). Therefore, an ideology can come from the author's paradigm and can also be the author's response to the environment in which he is located. Literary works are constructed by the social, political, and cultural structures of society. One of the literary works that illustrates this is the novel *Shikaaju*, The literature in it voices the contemporary issue of the contrast of two cultures coexisting, and at the same time refutes Samuel Huntington's theory that the source of interreligious conflict is caused by the harsh teachings of Islam, but it is inversely proportional to the lives of Muslim immigrants who have no place in the country of refuge. This novel shows several things that represent cultural discrimination as an impact after the events of September 11, 2001, which caused hatred and doubts about the match of non-Muslims against Muslims in their country (Muhammadiyah, 2024).

This is the central focus of the novel *شيكاجو (Shikaju)* In which there are various dimensions, both political, social and cultural, all of which are mutually sustainable. At first, Aswani departed from direct political writing at the time this novel was made as a form of representation at that time, placing political rejection and persecution in all its forms, as an important link that represents from the novel various dynamics of the problems of Muslim immigrants in non-Muslim majority countries ranging from conflicts of cultural differences, religious persecution and social injustice. As a literary work that speaks to social and political history as well as culture, the novel *شيكاجو (Shikaju)* has a flexibility of truth to the facts that occurred in the social structure of Egyptian society when this work was born. In addition to having this elasticity, he also keeps a strong data accuracy to the problems displayed by his work. In fact, it is the author's worldview that connects literary works with people's lives (Mushfiroh et al., 2024).

Therefore, it is undeniable that novels have a strong ability to explain

various sociocultural elements that develop in society, so that they are able to provide a more comprehensive understanding of cultural values in each phase of the development of the times. Novels not only present stories, but also record social dynamics, value conflicts, changes in mindsets, and power relations that live in society. In this sense, the novel serves as a mirror as well as a construction of social reality, where individual and collective experiences are represented through language full of meaning. As Lucien Goldmann points out, literary works cannot be understood in isolation from the totality of social life that gave birth to them, because they contain a structure of collective consciousness that reflects the worldview of a group of people.(Fatiha et al., 2024) Thus, the analysis of the novel becomes important not only to reveal aesthetic aspects, but also to trace how social and cultural values are constructed, defended, or even criticized through literary texts. Novels can be a dialectical space between tradition and modernity, between old values and new values, and between ideals and social realities that are constantly changing. Through the right approach, the study of novels is able to reveal hidden ideologies, patterns of social relations, and the dynamics of cultural change that are often not explicitly visible in daily life. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding literary works as a source of social and cultural knowledge that is relevant to the conditions of contemporary society. In the midst of globalization and cultural transformation that is so fast, there is a shift in values that affect people's perspectives and behaviors.

Therefore, this study is significant to examine how novels represent these changes while providing critical reflection on existing social realities. In addition, this research is also important as an effort to preserve and reinterpret local cultural values contained in literary works, so that (Janah et al., 2025)remain relevant and not eroded by the times. Furthermore, this research has an academic contribution in enriching the treasures of literary studies, especially in the perspective of literary sociology, by placing novels as objects of analysis that are not only seen from an intrinsic perspective, but also from their relationship with the social structure that underlies them. Thus, this research is expected to be able to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between literature, society, and culture, as well as become a basis for future research in examining social dynamics through literary works.

METHOD

The research used is included in the category of literature research (*Library Research*), which is research that relies on the collection and assessment of data from various written sources that are relevant to the object of research.(Marlion et al., 2021) In this case, the researcher collected various documents, both in the form of books, articles, and other references related to the study of literary

sociology and cultural conflict. This literature research is carried out through a critical and in-depth review of literature materials to gain a broader understanding and as a basis for analyzing data. (Supiarza, 2022) The data sources in this study are divided into two, namely primary and secondary data sources. The primary data source is novel شیکاجو (*Shikaju*) which is the main object of the study. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are in the form of various supporting literature such as books, journals, and other scientific writings that have relevance to the research topic. This secondary data serves to strengthen the analysis and provide additional perspective in understanding the phenomenon being studied (Fatkhurohmah et al., 2024).

The data collection technique used in this study is a documentation technique or literary data collection. The researcher conducts intensive and repeated reading of the novel to gain a deep understanding of the content and context of the story. Next, the researcher applies a recording technique by recording important parts that are relevant to the focus of the research. This recording process is an important part of qualitative research, as it allows researchers to organize data systematically and simplify the analysis process. In analyzing the data, the author uses the content analysis technique (*Content Analysis*), which is a method used to study in depth the messages contained in literary texts. This analysis aims to reveal the meaning, themes, and socio-cultural values contained in the novel. (Widiastuti, 2021). The data analysis process was carried out using an interactive model developed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which included three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. At the data reduction stage, the researcher screens and focuses the data on things relevant to the research. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a systematic narrative to facilitate understanding. (Dhien et al., 2022) The final stage is the drawing of conclusions as an answer to the formulation of the research problem. In addition, this study uses a genetic structuralism approach developed by Lucien Goldmann. This approach is used to understand the relationship between the structure of literary works and the social structures that underlie them. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to uncover the cultural conflicts experienced by the characters in the novel شیکاجو (*Shikaju*), as well as critically analyze them in a broader social context. Thus, this research is expected to be able to provide an in-depth and comprehensive picture of the dynamics of cultural conflicts in literary works and their relevance to people's lives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Facts of Humanity

The humanitarian facts contained are the problem of discrimination against Muslim minorities which is the impact after the September 11 attacks, violence and racism, Betrayal and Sacrifice, and the picture of humanitarian facts in this novel is also shown by the occurrence of interesting attraction between two

camps, namely Arab and Western society, especially seen in the amalgamation, namely the marriage of two ethnicities which become one family which is reflected in this novel. As one of the parts of genetic structuralism, the fact of humanity is interpreted as all forms of human activity, both verbal and physical, that seek to be understood as science. In this book, many social facts are encountered, although it is undeniable that they also give rise to individual facts. As explained by Faruk, that social facts have a role in history, these human facts can be in the form of social, economic and political relationships. The several forms of human facts in the form of social facts and the form of political and economic relations will be described as follows:

Humanitarian Facts in the form of Economic Relations

In this novel, it is clearly illustrated how the economic condition of the Egyptian State during the time of Husni Mubarak. The increasing poverty rate makes the community suffer more (Ahyar, 2012:267) and asks Husni Mubarak to step down from the presidency he held. Here are the economic aspects that occur in the novel شيكاجو (Shikaju) First, the level of poverty that occurs in Egyptian society. The economy in a country is a benchmark to give an idea of whether the country is a developed or developing country (Miriam, 1997: 3). Second, there are limited jobs for Egyptian people. They demanded jobs for the unemployed. This demand was conveyed by young people who had just graduated from university who did not have a job. Third, the price of apartments is too expensive for all levels of society, especially for the lower economic class. In a general sense, a house is a man-made building that is used as a residence for a certain period of time. Fourth, the large number of company employees who were laid off (Termination of Employment). The issue of layoffs is the most sensitive in the world of employment and needs serious attention from all parties, including human resources managers, because it requires capital or funds at the time of withdrawal and at the time of the employee's termination. In addition, many writers have failed to publish their works even though the work has reached the publisher. They have been played by publishers. The publisher said that their leadership had changed, so the previous process had to be stopped

Humanitarian Facts in the form of Political Relations

During the reign of Husni Mubarak, Egypt succeeded in continuing Egypt's strategic relationship with the United States initiated by Sadat. Egypt's closeness during the Mubarak period to the United States is undoubted, even Egypt during the Mubarak period had a very strong dependence on financial assistance from the United States. Formally, Egypt during Mubarak's time was a republic with a court system. However, in reality all power lies in the hands of the president, in reality Egypt is a limited democratic country, where the president does not give

full political freedom as in previous years (Najib, 2013:223). The above statement is reinforced by a novel excerpt containing the following conversation of zaina and shalah: 'Our country is great shalah, but it has long been in the dark, our people have a high position.

If democracy were realized, Egypt would be a strong state within ten years' In the excerpt of the above novel tells about the shalah's prohibition against adultery against the government, and warns him of the risks he will face later with the Egyptian police, but Zainab remains determined because he thinks of the Egyptian people who have been hurt, It can be seen that he expressly said 'in order for democracy to be realized, I will not leave my country', as a form of sarcasm against the Shah who chose to leave his country only because of his personal interest, namely to continue his profession. In Arab countries the establishment of democratic institutions has not been achieved, social disparities are still visible. The Arabs are not only constrained in their relations with the state, but even their own institutions.

They are alienated in religious structures, families, educational institutions and social organizations excluded from participation in future decision-making and their own destiny. Hence the growing gap between dreams and reality (Halim, 1993:27). Because of all the complicated problems in Egypt, this is what causes writers to take part in responding to the problems that are happening, including one of them Al-aswaniy, to voice the aspirations of the Egyptian people against the injustice they experience, which in it is full of scathing criticism of the government and the order of life in Egypt, so that it is clear that in the novel شيكاجو (Shikaju) has a social fact that has a relationship with politics which aims to be a criticism of the ruler of the Egyptian government at that time.

Humanitarian facts in the form of Social and Cultural Relations

Alaa al Aswany's novel, titled شيكاجو (Shikaju) highlights many important issues such as immigration, the issue of assimilated culture, religious discrimination in America and political oppression in Egypt. For Al Aswany, he sees literature as an expanse of freedom that is supposed to examine areas that people don't talk about, to show us things that we may feel but don't see (Rohan, 2002:32) finding that most of his characters are Egyptian students and faculty members from the University of Illinois Medical Center in شيكاجو (Shikaju) By choosing America as his character setting, Alaa al Aswany raises very pressing questions that need answers, especially in post-9/11 America such as, the extent to which immigrants should be loyal to their old country and whether people can adjust their identities and values sufficiently to become fully assimilated members of a new society. The socio-cultural gap can be seen in the following novel quotes.

هذه الحقيقة : أنا أمريكية ، وقد ربت ابنتي على القيم النهائية من التخلق الشرقي .. لتوصل إلى شرف الإنسان بأعضائه

Fact: I'm an American, and I raised my daughter with American values. I got rid of the manners of the east forever.. I no longer associate one's honor with his family members! (Al-Swany, 2007:78) From this quote, it is narrated in the novel that Ro'fat feels that he has truly become an American with a strong affirmation, Ro'fat who is now free-minded and modern educates his daughter. So that it can be observed, then it is concluded that Ro'fat Tsabit's way of thinking is the same as that of the people of the United States.

على أن مشكلة رأفت أكثر خطورة ؛ لأنه لا يحتمل أن ترتبط ابنته بعلاقة خارج الزواج، رغم مراعاتها للثقافة الغربية لأنه يتأخر عن عقلية الرجل الشرقي الذي يهاجمها ويسخر منها. ... بالتوازن بين ثقافتين .. لكن رأفت يحتم ثقافته ويحملها داخله في نفس الوقت ، وهذا ما يعقد الأمر

However, Ra'fat's problem is more complex; He did not accept an extramarital relationship with his daughter, and despite his lengthy defense of Western culture, he still carried the mentality of Easterners who attacked and mocked him. ... There are many Egyptians who gave birth in America and managed to maintain a balance between the two cultures.. But Ra'fat hates his culture and brings it into him at the same time, and this complicates the problem. (Al-Swany, 2007:78) The above quote shows the condition of Ro'fat who is in a state of dilemma. After that, Sarah, still chose to leave the house and chose to live with her lover, because Ro'fat was unable to control his anger, he even hit Sarah. Such conditions show the existence of a shock culture contained in Ro'fat. When Sarah succeeds in being educated to be an American according to what she aspires to, Ro'fat actually feels unacceptable and wants Sarah to comply with his desire to live with him and his wife.

وبعد أحداث سبتمبر ، كان رأفت يجاهر بآراء ضد العرب والمسلمين قد يتحرج منها أكثر الأمريكيين تعصبا .. كان يقول مثلا : " من حق الولايات المتحدة أن تمنع أي شخص عربي من دخول أراضيها حتى تتأكد من أنه شخص متحضر .. لا يعتبر القتل فرضا دينيا

After the events of September 11, Ra'fat would publish his views on Arabs and Muslims that would embarrass even the most intolerant Americans. He used to say, for example: "It is the right of the United States to prevent Arabs from entering their land until they are convinced that he is a civilized man. Not to fight a war that is considered a religious obligation." " (Ala Al-Aswaniy, 2007:45) The above narration provides an explanation that as an Egyptian (Eastern) who was born and grew up to adulthood in Egypt, he does not always have a way of thinking like the Egyptian (Eastern) who views the reality of obscurity with a strong foundation of religious and cultural values. Ro'fat's new life in the United States, which he has lived for more than thirty years, has been able to completely let go of the tradition of Islamic life to have the opposite way of thinking to Islam. In the above quote, it is told that Ro'fat has anti-Arab and Islamic views as the trend that occurred on September 11 that discredits Arabs and Muslims. The

above quote also shows that Ro'fat has a sense of nationalism as well as a way of thinking and ideology that exceeds that of the United States itself.

هذه الحقيقة : أنا أمريكي ، وقد رببت ابنتي على القيم الأمريكية تخلصت إلى الأبد من التخلق الشرقي .. لم أعد أربط شرف الإنسان بأعضائه التناسلية !

Here's the truth: I'm American, and I raised my daughter with American values. I get rid of eastern manners forever.. I no longer associate a man's honor with his family members! From the quote, it is narrated in the novel that Ro'fat feels that he has truly become an American with a strong affirmation, Ro'fat who is now free-minded and modern educates his daughter. So that it can be observed, then it is concluded that Ro'fat Tsabit has a way of thinking like the people of the United States who consider the life of the people of Egypt, and the Middle East in general.

وفي حضور المصريين بالذات ، يخلو له أن يستعرض في زهو إمكانيات أجهزته الحديثة ، ثم يسألهم ساخرا : " متى تستطيع مصر أن تنتج مثل هذا الجهاز . بعد كم قرنا ؟ " ثم ينفجر ضاحكا وسط حرج الحاضرين .. وعندما يتفوق طالب مصري في القسم لا بد لرأفت أن ينخزه ، يتقدم إليه ويصافحه قائلا : " أهنأك لأنك تفوقت بالرغم من التعليم البائس إلى تلقينه في مصر .. يجب أن تشكر إلى أمريكا على ما وصلت إليه

On his arrival in Egypt, he liked to show pride in the capabilities of his modern devices, then he asked them sarcastically: "When will Egypt produce such a device? After how many centuries?" Then he laughed out loud in the midst of the embarrassment of the audience. When an Egyptian student excelled in the subject, Ra'fat had to sarcasm him, he came up to him and shook his hand, saying: "Are you there, because you excel in spite of the miserable education you received in Egypt... You have to thank America for what you've accomplished." (Al Al-Aswaniy, 2007: 45-46) When he came to Egypt, he always showed off his coolest things. Then he asked in a mocking tone, "When could Egypt make something like this..... A century after Kaian? Then there was laughter in the audience. And when Egyptian students excel in their majors, Ro'fat feels appreciated. He stepped forward and clapped his hands while saying, "I congratulate you on your success. Even though you are from a low education in Egypt, you should thank America for your success in America."

The above phrase was conveyed by Ro'fat to his students during the learning process in class. In front of his students, the majority of whom were Americans, Ro'fat so arrogantly mocked his own home country, Egypt. It also indicates that Ro'fat deliberately mocked Egypt in order to gain recognition from his students that he had the same advanced way of thinking and desire modernity as the people of the United States. As an immigrant from Egypt, Ro'fat absorbed all the ways of thinking of the United States towards reality as a whole, including his way of thinking about religion. Ro'fatz's way of thinking as contained in the above quotation shows that there is a comparison and opposition. He views Egypt as a country full of tyranny, while the United States

as a country full of justice. He sees Egypt as a country full of tyranny, while the United States as a country full of justice. He views Egypt as a State that practices restraint and confinement while the United States is a State that gives freedom to everyone. He views that the Egyptians have an unhealthy lifestyle that is indicated by their fat stomachs, while the United States implements healthy patterns and lifestyles as evidenced by their ideal body appearance. Ro'fat's way of thinking is that Egypt is a backward, backward country and far from modernity.

The Worldview of the Author of the Novel (Shikaju)

The author's worldview, namely Ala al aswanya, can be reviewed through the social conditions of Egyptian society. After knowing what social conditions of Egyptian society caused them to abandon their denial, as explained by the previous sub-chapter, then we can analyze the author's view, that is, the author has the following view:

Islamophobia in the form of Discrimination

The most common form of Islamophobia that afflicts Muslims are the insults, insults, hatred and ridicule directed at Muslims by non-Muslim communities. Hate speech can be detrimental to the victim because it includes the good name and self-esteem of the victim and is not based on evidence that can be accounted for. Simply put, the swearing, the ridicule of Muslims is only based on the emotions of the perpetrator. This emotion begins to grow when the perpetrator or his family experiences crimes, terrorism, and everything that is labeled as criminalization so as to harm him or even to the point of eliminating the lives of others who are known to be masterminded by Muslims. This died of its own trauma in the memories of the victims, so that gradually the fear turned into hatred that was not based even on Muslims but also on places of worship and religious symbols.

In addition to verbal discrimination (Hate Speech), there are also forms of cultural discrimination such as the way of dressing to the way of thinking and traditions of Muslims are also things that leave trauma and psychological pressure on the victims. The forms of discrimination that appear in the novel will be described as follows: There is a dialogue between Syaima and his mother about his departure to America, where the mother is afraid to let her daughter go to America as a secular country, which is very different from the eastern culture of the Shayma. The advice conveyed by his mother is 'Your problem, O Syaima you are stubborn like your father, you will regret it. You don't know what the west is, you went to America at a time of discrimination against Muslims, while you were wearing a hijab? In the above quote from the novel, it appears that the mother's concern when her Muslim son stopped by a non-Muslim country, when Shima arrived in America, it turned out that the mother's worries

came true.

This can be seen from Novel's quote about the whereabouts of Syaima who has arrived in America, but there is a bad situation experienced by Syaima, namely 'The airport security employee doubted him, and made him wait outside the queue. He was forced to present evidence, and the employee examined him carefully and doubtfully, until his face turned pale, and his hands trembled' The above quote, as if representing an anti-Muslim attitude through the abaya and large hijab worn by Syaima, made him suspicious of the airport security officers. Then shortly after Syaima's arrival in America precisely in the women's dormitory, Syaima found herself again discriminated against in the form of an agreement, caused by a fire carried out by Syaima, which angered the dormitory police and expressed hatred as follows: 'Listen, O my mate, I do not know what kind of food you eat from your country. But I advise you to change your diet because it almost caused a fire in this University.

Cultural Backwardness and Skepticism Towards the West

The conditions of dependence of the Arab nation, backwardness, patriarchal and authoritarian relations, social and political fragmentation, class differences, successive historical defeats and general repression have left Arab societies uncultured, as they lose control of their resources, and fail to develop a vision for the future (Halim, 1993: 27). According to Patai, there are five stages of the social development of the Arab nation: first, the condition of unconsciousness, before contact with the west, the Arabs in general were not aware of the decline of their culture. This is due to the fact that there is no history available in late medieval Arabic and the Arab pride focused on the Arab golden age. Second, Napoleon Bonaparte's occupation of Egypt examined Western scientists on the social phenomena of Arabia paving the way for an awareness of stagnation and technology. Third, the stage when new insights into Arab stagnation are digested then give rise to efforts to achieve progress by westernization. At this stage, the Arab state is often associated with Turkish domination for four centuries which includes and exploits the Arabs (Raphael, 2002:190).

Isolation within the State

Arab society seems to be less functioning because it is constrained by authoritarian regimes and institutions that make them powerless and subject to the will of the rulers. Generally this happens in almost all Arab countries, in the context of Egypt for example, the State's efforts to nationalize all business sectors are its way to curb its people. Culture as the legitimacy of power is often made as a tool of hegemony, because of its close relationship with human life. Its existence attached to the course of life makes it fertile ground for the ruler to spread hegemony. In the context of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak exercised his

hegemony to perpetuate his power.

Criticism of the Ruler

The main focus in Egypt's social and political dynamics stems from authoritarian rules and practices. Palmer, for example, mentions the characteristics of Egyptian political dynamics cited by Hasanen; First, the presence of Islam that supports Islamic governance and practices. Second, the mass political passivity created by long foreign domination and repressive authoritarian rule. Finally, there is distrust between the public and the government. As a result, Egypt has not been able to develop a democratic political community (Nuruzzaman.138-140). This is clearly illustrated in the novel Shikaaju when Egyptian immigrants who migrated to America criticized the ruler (President of Egypt) The Egyptian immigrants aspired to fight for the rights of the Egyptian people. On the day of the President's visit to America, so that they could convey that Egypt had arrived, hundreds of Egyptians, led by Naji Abdul Shamad and Karam Dus as well as John Graham, gathered in the midst of the crowd because of the impulse of their character and condition, like an old American defending the rights of the Egyptian people. until he ignited the flame of the spirit of demonstration. They greeted each other in a loud voice and they also wrote posters with Arabic and English writing:

'Free the prisoners!'.... 'Stop the torture!'....

'Stop the emphasis on non-Muslims!'...

'Bring down the criminals!'....'Do democracy in Egypt!'

Demonstrations challenging the president during his visit are common for Westerners. But for the security guards of the Republic of Egypt they see that this time the number of demonstrators is very large, where the sound of shouts and chants among them is like a buzz that echoes in all directions, making General Munawi worried. So he complained to the commander of the American security forces and asked him to allow him to break up the demonstration. But the commander of the American security forces replied: 'American law prohibits the dissolution of demonstrations.' The enthusiasm of the demonstrators was ablaze. The voices of those who were screaming shouted the President's resignation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of analysis and discussion of research data from Novel *Shika>São Paulo* is a cultural realist novel that borrows social history from the time of Husni Mubaraok at the time it was written and proves that literary works are a whole, in addition to having an intrinsic element, literary works are also inseparable from their extrinsic elements. Therefore, literature not only has aesthetic value, but also inherently contains a wide range of socio-cultural content. From the results of the reading of Genetic Structuralism to the novel *شيكاجو (Shikaju)* Alaa al-Aswaney's work, it is concluded that there are cultural problems and there have been various responses to cultural changes that have occurred, starting with assimilation or there are those who are able to fuse their identity with the dominant culture, but there are also figures who are unable to maintain their original identity which is the heritage of their ancestors, but instead feel proud to have succeeded in releasing the Middle Eastern cultural identity that they have because they are considered ancient, backward and a shame because we live in a country full of tyranny of authoritarian rulers and far from human values. But there are also characters in the novel who are proud to have their new identity in western culture but do not want to let go of their middle eastern identity because of their birthplace.

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