

Najib Kailani and the Construction of Eastern Identity: Representation of Society in Egyptian Arabic Literature

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ABSTRACT

*The profound impact of colonialism and Westernization has often been overlooked in studies examining the portrayal of Eastern identity in Arabic literature. This research examines two novels by Najib Kailani, *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* (1960) and *Mawakib Al-Ahrār* (1985), which reconstruct two distinct colonial periods using Egypt as a narrative setting. The primary aim of this study is to identify and analyze the narrative techniques employed by Kailani to depict Eastern societies and his endeavor to construct and preserve an Eastern identity. Using a qualitative method grounded in the theoretical approaches of narratology, representation, identity, and Occidentalism, this research addresses an urgent and novel gap by elucidating how Eastern identity is constructed in Arabic literature as a response to colonialism and the hegemony of Western discourse. In doing so, it adopts an epistemological approach rooted in Eastern perspectives. The study argues that the novels reaffirm the role of Arabic literature as a medium of resistance and a means of strengthening the collective identity of Eastern societies in the face of colonial and cultural hegemony.*

KEYWORDS

Arab; Identity; Najib Kailani; Representation; East.



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INTRODUCTION

Eastern and Western discourses are often positioned as the two poles of civilization that are the benchmarks of global dynamics (Rasid et al., 2021). This discourse reflects the world's perspective on the interaction of Western powers and Eastern societies (Syamsuddin, 2018). However, inequality arises when the West's view of the East becomes biased and hegemonic (H. Ahmad et al., 2022), even making the representation of the East a means of affirming superiority in imaginative discourse. Therefore, to restore the discussion by putting Western civilization back to its scientific limits (Hanafi, 1981), researchers researching works of contemporary Arabic literature.

Thus, the study of علم الإستغراب (*Ilmu al-Istigrāb*) or westernalism exists as a response to the ambiguity between *Al-Ana* (ego/East) and *Al-Akhar* (other/West). Westernism plays a role in maintaining a balance related to the study of human culture. In the realm of cultural research, this theory is used as a guideline in studying one's own culture through one's own lens (Hanafi, 1991). Therefore, Eastern literary works are an important medium to return the discussion of identity to a scientific and authentic framework. Based on these considerations, the researcher chose Westernalism as a study to analyze Eastern cultural products with the aim of restoring *Al-Ana* to the place of origin, to remove the feeling of alienation, and to remind them of their old traditions (Hanafi, 1991).

In the treasures of Arabic literature, names such as Abdurrahman Munif, Najib Mahfudz, and Najib Kailani stand out with works that are not only aesthetic but also reflective of socio-political conditions. In this study, the researcher chose the writer Najib Kailani who used his literary works to raise issues such as freedom, equality, sovereignty and the identity of a nation,

especially the nations in the East (Sunarto & Hafidzulloh, 2021). As an Arab-Egyptian writer, Najib Kailani is directly connected to his social status to a community of people (Damono, 1978). Therefore, the ideology that the author adheres to cannot be separated from his background so that it is inserted implicitly and reflects his social background. His novels have also become imaginative discourses and media to criticize the social and political conditions of these regions, such as *اليوم الموعود* (*al-Yawmu al-Maw'ūd*) Dan processions of the free (*Mawakib Al-Ahrār*).

The first novel in this study is titled *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* (1960) which translates into Indonesian as "The Promised Day". YM is a Kailani novel that was published in 1960 and won a literary and art award in the same year. YM takes place in Egypt during the Ayyubid Caliphate under the rule of Sultan Malik Al-Saleh Najmuddin Ayyub. In his illness, he received news of the aggression of the 7th Crusaders led by Prince Louis IX to conquer Egypt, which was then the center of the main Islamic power in the East. As the leader of an Islamic caliphate, he did not give in to his pain and fought directly on the battlefield. This war also burned the fire of the spirit of the Egyptian people to join the fight on the battlefield against the invaders from the West (Kailani, 1960).

Then, a novel titled *Mawakib Al-Ahrar* (1985) which also translates into Indonesian as "The Accompaniment of the Independent People". The novel is set during the French invasion of several territories *Ottoman Empire* or the Ottoman Empire, such as Egypt and Syria – led by Napoleon Bonaparte. At the same time, the Egyptian Muslim community experienced the anxiety of fighting against the French. This unrest was caused by the Ottoman Empire as a colonizing nation having the same religious identity, namely Islam, however, both had different ethnicities. In this novel, the Ottoman Empire that ruled Egypt was predominantly Mammalian and Turkish – not Arab (Kailani, 1985).

Previous studies on *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* (Karimi, 2019; Nurhasanah, 2021) and *Mawakib Al-Ahrār* (M. A. B. Ahmad et al., 2022; Latifi, 2015) has been carried out within the scope of the study of literary sociology and historical approaches. However, these approaches have not directly touched on the issue of Eastern identity in the context of representations derived from the region's own epistemological framework. In this case, Novelty This research lies in the use of the Westernism approach to read the Arab-Egyptian literary narrative in a more reflective and contextual way from the Eastern point of view, namely Westernism.

Meanwhile, studies that use westernism as an approach have been applied in the Indonesian context (Tohari, 2022), or in Arabic literary works that represent pre-state societies that are still bound to a tribe-based social structure (Reflinaldi, 2019). Therefore, *state of the art* This research lies in the application of Westernism in analyzing two novels set in modern Egypt as a nation-state with complex historical and cultural dynamics. This approach not only allows for the reading of Arabic literature within the framework of its own identity, but also expands the scope of the study of Westernism in a region that has a central role in the history of the modern East.

The advantage of this research compared to previous research is in the offer of perspective in integrating the Westernism approach with a narrative reading that critically reveals the construction of the collective identity of Eastern society. Focusing on the work of Najib Kailani, this study offers a more systematic and conceptual mapping of how representations of Eastern societies are formed, negotiated and positioned in postcolonial

contexts. This research is an important novelty in the study of Arabic literature because it provides an alternative model of analysis that is not only free from the dominance of the Western paradigm, but also affirms the values of intellectual autonomy from the Eastern world itself.

Historically, in the practice of colonialism in the Arab world, the colonizers tried to eliminate the Arab culture that had established itself in society. The colonizers tried to erase the Arabic language, Arabic schools and Islamic religious teachings so that it had a negative impact on these countries. Its societies began to lose their identity and identity such as language, culture and even history (Hanafi, 1991). Fanon (1963, in Hall, 1993) mentioned that people who experience problems in maintaining their identity is a common phenomenon in the midst of colonialization and globalization. The cause is the actions of the colonizers who are not only satisfied with controlling a territory, but also trying to damage their cultural and social values. Therefore, the Hall (1993) affirms that identity owners should strive to rediscover that identity. The affirmation of identity for the colonized people acts as a medium of creativity and is a great strength that is only possessed by the previously marginalized society (Hall, 1993).

In a community, identity is formed based on the similarity of experiences and cultures. The similarity then presents a sense of "*one people*" or "one identity" to its owner based on the same historical and cultural values (Hall, 1993). As a construction, the Hall (1993) Mention identity is a production that is never perfect and is always in a process. Practically, identity is a complex and multidimensional concept of meaning, characterized by various different forms of representation (Hall, 1993). In social spaces, collective identities include religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality (Appiah, 1994). The list is also dynamic to the individual or collective and can change over time and context, thus forming a *collective social identity* or collective social identity (Appiah, 1994).

Since the first revelation in the Qur'an, Surah Al-'Alaq verses 1-6, iThe identity of Arab culture underwent a renewal from the tradition of jahiliyah to the consciousness of الأصالة والمعاصرة (al-aṣālāh wa al-mu'āṣirah), namely originality and contemporaneity, which marked the transformation of values and perspectives in Arab society (Hanafi, 1991). The identity entered Egyptian territory through the spread of Islam carried out during the time of Caliph Umar bin Khattab of the Rashid Khulafaur, through the commander 'Amru bin Ash in 614 AD and later became governor. In its development, Hanafi (1991) worried that the established identity will lose its originality. Therefore, westernization has become a new phenomenon faced by Arab nations because it has begun to affect every day cultural devices, such as Arabic as a language of conversation beginning to be mixed with vocabulary from the West. Or worse, the Arabs do something called التقليد or *at-taqlid* (blind follow-up) (Hanafi, 1991).

These concepts will be used in this study to explain the construction of Eastern identity possessed by Egyptian Arab Muslim communities in both novels. Therefore, the formulation of the problems identified from this study is: How is Eastern identity represented through narratives, characters, and plots in two novels by Najib Kailani, *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* and *Mawakib Al-Ahrār*, as a form of resistance to the discourse of marginalization, colonization and westernization?

Meanwhile, its urgency lies in its contribution in explaining how Eastern identities are formed, maintained, and negotiated in literary works, especially amid the pressures of colonial and global discourse. By examining Najib Kailani's novels, this research not only contributes

to the study of modern Arabic literature, but also expands the discourse of identity and representation in the postcolonial context.

This research is the result of a literature study with two types of data sources, namely primary and secondary. The primary data source of this research is novel *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* and *Mawakib Al-Ahrār* by Najib Kailani. Then, supported by secondary data sources such as articles, *bookchapter*, as well as books related to this research as a literature review and theoretical foundation. In the process of reading closely the object of the novel, the data that has been collected uses qualitative methods in the form of words, phrases, and dialogues contained in the novel. From the results of the reading, the issue of Eastern identity became a finding for further research. In collecting data from the two novels that are narrative texts, the researcher uses the narrator, focalization and fable methods in Mieke Bal's narrative (2017) which is used to analyze the narrative structure in the novel.

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the narrative techniques used by Najib Kailani in describing Eastern societies as well as his efforts to shape and maintain Eastern identity through his two novels, *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* and *Mawakib Al-Ahrār*. The benefits of this research are not only limited to academic contributions to the study of modern Arabic literature, but also to broaden the discourse on identity and representation in postcolonial contexts, as well as offering an alternative model of analysis that is free from the dominance of the Western paradigm while affirming the values of intellectual autonomy from the Eastern world itself.

Next, the researcher will analyze these data using the representation and identity approach presented by Stuart Hall (1990, 1993, 1997), Kwame Anthony Appiah (1994) and the Westernism approach offered by Hassan Hanafi (1981, 1988, 1991). These approaches formulate the concept of identity related to the social, cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic dynamics of Egyptian society in Najib Al-Kailani's two novels. Especially the Hanafi who in their westernization made Egypt as a territorial area of their study, so their theory was relevant to study the identity of the East and its position between Eastern and Western civilizations.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical library research approach. The research design is focused on conducting an in-depth examination of the representation of Eastern identity in two novels by Najib Kailani: *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* (1960) and *Mawakib Al-Ahrār* (1985). The primary data source for this research is the text of both novels, while secondary data sources include journal articles, books, and other scholarly works relevant to the topics of identity, representation, narratology, and Occidentalism. Data collection was carried out through close reading of the novel texts to identify narrative elements such as narrator, focalization, and fable, as well as expressions of Islamic values and responses to colonialism. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively using Mieke Bal's (2017) narratology theory to dissect the narrative structure, along with the representation and identity approaches from Stuart Hall (1990, 1993, 1997) and Kwame Anthony Appiah (1994) to interpret the construction of collective identity. The framework of Occidentalism (*al-istigrāb*) by Hassan Hanafi (1981, 1991) was used as an epistemological lens to read the text from an Eastern perspective and reveal the autonomous position of Eastern societies in facing Western hegemony. The analysis was conducted thematically by tracing how Islamic values, resistance

to marginalization and colonialism, and attitudes toward Westernization are presented through narrative, characters, and conflict in both novels. Data validity was ensured through persistent observation and theoretical triangulation by confirming findings through the theoretical perspectives used. With this approach, this study aims to provide a holistic understanding of the narrative strategies and representation of Eastern identity in modern Arabic literary works.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Egyptian Society Builds Awareness Through Islamic Values

The novels *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* (YM) and *Mawakib Al-Ahrār* (MA) by Najib Kailani are historical novels set in Egypt during two periods of colonialism. In terms of narrators, the narrator in both never refers to himself as part of the actor in the story. He reports the situations and conditions he observes, then becomes the agent who relays the story to the reader. As a narrator, he knows many things that happen in the two novels such as the characters, the series of events, what the actors do in it and the intentions behind the actions of the characters. Therefore, the narrator in both novels is an external *narrator* or external narrator.

The focalization presented in both novels uses two focusing methods. First, through *character-bound focalizer* or a focatizer that is tied to a character. This focatizer participates in the fable as an actor, therefore, also referred to as *internal focalization*. Second *noncharacter-bound focalizer* or a focatizer that is not tied to the figure, therefore, it is referred to as *external focalization*. This outside oscillator acts as an anonymous agent and does not take part in the fable as an actor (Bal, 2017). Therefore, there is an alternation between the narrator and the focatizer in both novels in presenting the Eastern Identity and responding to the arrival of the West – such as colonization and westernization.

Apart from the narrator aspect, the two have a fable in common *location*, namely Egypt as the location of the story (Kailani, 1960, 1985). The depiction of Egypt as a location fable in this story is characterized as a place identical to Egypt. This aims to make the reader imagine Egypt as a storytelling space so as to provide a clear space and context for the events to be told (Bal, 2017). The difference in its narrative aspect is found in the elements of fables *Event* and *Time*. Broadly speaking, YM's novel makes the event of the 7th Crusade which occurred around 1249 AD (Kailani, 1960). Meanwhile, MA's novel chooses the occupation of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte's troops from France in 1798 AD (Kailani, 1985).

Geographically, Egypt is a neighbor of the city of Medina which is the center of Islamic power. Egypt also established bilateral relations with Medina led by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Haif, 2015). However, Islam only entered the Egyptian territory through the spread of Islam carried out during the time of Khulafaur Rashidin by Caliph Umar bin Khattab. The deployment aimed to liberate Egypt from the cruelty of Emperor Heraclius of Byzantium and also to maintain the stability of the Islamic territory of Medina (Haif, 2015).

Along with the spread, Islam became the religion of the majority of Egyptians. Therefore, the actors in both novels apply what Hanafi calls a return to the classical tradition of Islam (Hanafi, 1988), such as the Quran and Hadith needed by Muslims to rise again in social transformation (Hanafi, 1981). Thus, the characters in the story also have the same social identity collectively (Appiah, 1994), which is the religion of Islam (Kailani, 1960, 1985). Such identities are formed in Egyptian society based on their cultural, historical and social similarities (Hall, 1993).

In YM, the actor Sultan Al-Malikus Saleh Najmuddin Ayyub of the Ayyubid Dynasty as an actor in the story who believed in the Qur'an as a guide before facing the war against the Crusaders, in his reply to Prince Louis IX:

"ووصل كتابك، وأنت تهدد فيه بكثرة جيوشك (...) وسيعلم الذين ظلموا أي منقلب ينقلبون، فإذا قرأت كتابي هذا فكن فيه على أول سورة النحل (أَتَى أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوهُ) (النحل: ١) (...) ونعود إلى قوله تعالى وهو أصدق القتالين (كَمْ مِنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً يَأْذَنُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ) (البقرة: ٢٤٩) (...) و بغيك أيها الملك مصرعك وإلى البلاء تقلبك، والسلام"

"A letter has arrived from you. In it, you threaten with the large number of your soldiers. [...] And the unrighteous will know the truth. If you read this letter of mine, then read Surah An-Nahl whose verse reads: '*The power of Allah has come, so do not be in haste*' (An-Nahl:1). [...] and we return to the words of Allah the True, '*How many have been, where a small group is able to defeat a larger group, indeed Allah is with the patient*' (Al-Baqarah:249). [...] And beyond thy limits, O king, is thy death, and thou shalt be tormented by calamity. Salam" (Kailani, 1960: 66-67).

The quote became part of the sequence of events before the war. Previously, Sultan Najmuddin Ayyub received a letter from Prince Louis IX. According to the narrator, the letter made the Sultan's blood flow to his veins so that he was very angry. The letter from Prince Louis contained a threat to the Egyptian people if they won the war – Louis even explicitly mentioned that he would take women and children captive. Therefore, the Sultan's focus by including Islamic cultural heritage is a form of affirmation of *al-ana's* identity towards *al-akhar*. Because otherwise, *al-ana* will be seen weak by *al-akhar* from the beginning.

This Islamic identity is formed through the smallest components of a community such as the family. The family has a crucial role in passing on the values contained in identity to the next generation (Appiah, 1994). In the following excerpt, the role of the family plays a role in the formation of this Islamic identity:

إن الصليبيين في حملتهم السابقة على مصر قد قتلوا أباه (وهو من جلة علماء مصر). (...) فتقول له: "نم يا صغيري، ولتقرأ الفاتحة على روح أبيك ولتطلب من الله أن يدخله الجنة".

She says to him, "Sleep, my little one, and read the Fatihah on your father's soul and ".ask God to enter Paradise

The Crusader soldiers in previous aggressions against Egypt had taken his father's life (and he was one of the Egyptian scholars). (...)

Then his mother said, "Sleep, my son. Read Al-Fatihah for your father's deceased and ask Allah to admit him to Paradise" (Kailani, 1960:30).

Adnan bin Munzir acquired these values from his mother, a widow of a famous Egyptian cleric who was martyred in an earlier crusader aggression. His mother taught these values to be passed on to Adnan. Adnan's father may not have been directly involved in passing the value on to him. However, through the narrator's presentation that highlights his father's social status as a scholar, the fable has shifted from initially a news loss to Adnan's state of having to continue and even perpetuate that status.

Meanwhile, in the Supreme Court, Islamic identity is represented through the figure of Haji Mustafa Al-Busytaili. The actor experiences most of the sequence of events in the novel so he is also referred to as the main character.

هزّ الحسين رأسه، واحتقن وجهه الغضب، و تمتم: "أدرك ما ترمي إليه، و أنا طوع أمرك في أي ميدان تضعني فيه. ليس هناك أعظم من أن يضحي الإنسان في سبيل أمته و دينه . . كثيرا يا أبي ما كنت أقرأ التريخ، و أسمع الوعظ،

وأعيش بخيالي مع الأيام الكبيرة في تاريخنا، ولا أكمثك الأمر حينما أؤكد لك أنني كنت احلم بمثل تلك الأيام، برغم ما سيدور فيها من قسوة و تضحيات"
ابتسم الحاج في ارتياح، واستعاذ بالله وبسمل ثم قرأ "كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ"

Hussein nodded his head. Her soft face was red. He murmured: "I know what you mean. And I obey my father's commands wherever you put me. There is no greater human being than one who has sacrificed himself to his nation and religion. Father, I often read in history, listen to preachers, and I always fantasize about the glory days in our history. I'll be frank with you that I dream of days like that. Even though I have to go through the cruelty and sacrifice that will occur in it."

Haji Mustafa smiled in relief. He then recited taawuz, basmalah then chanted the verse: *"It is obligatory for you to fight, even though war is something you hate. Maybe you hate something, even though it's very good for you. And maybe you like something, but it's really bad for you. Allah knows, but you do not know"* (Kailani, 1985:43-44).

The quote shows the situation of a conversation between Haji Mustafa and his son Husayn when Napoleon Bonaparte's army had arrived in Egypt. The internal focus is tied to actors Haji Mustafa and Hussein who voice the virtue of jihad against enemies who want to seize their homeland, which is reinforced by quoting the postulate of jihad from the classical Islamic heritage, the Quran. Therefore, the fable in the quote shows that wars that look bad in the eyes of people because of bloodshed, become a jihad value because they defend their religion and their nation that was first attacked. The quote also shows that Haji Mustafa was actively involved and tried to perpetuate the identity to his son, namely ordering Hussein to join the war to defend his religion and nation accompanied by evidence in the form of fragments of Quranic verses as Islamic cultural heritage.

Another actor is Sheikh Ali Al-Junjaihi, a blind man who is also a hafiz. He was a friend of Haji Mustafa Al-Busytaili who was also gathering at Haji Mustafa's house to deliberate with other figures. Through Sheikh Ali, the narrator presents his position to return to Islamic tradition.

ترجع الشيخ، ووضع يمينه على يمين وجهه، وتنحنح، ثم استعاذ وبسمل وأخذ يقرأ: "إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُم بِالْفِ مِّنَ الْمَلِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ، وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرًا وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ"

The Shaykh sat cross-legged, his right palm resting on the right cheek of his face. Clearing his throat, he then recited taawuz, basmalah and chanted the holy verse of the Quran, *"Remember, when you asked for God's help, it was granted: 'Surely I will send reinforcements with a thousand angels in succession'. And Allah does not send reinforcements but as glad tidings and for your heart to be at peace. And that victory is only from the side of God. Indeed, Allah is Mighty and Wise"* (Kailani, 1985:11).

The conversation took place before Napoleon Bonaparte and French troops arrived in Egypt. This quote is supported by a fable of the sequence of events, in which, the narrator tells the story of a deliberation by Egyptian figures at the house of Haji Mustafa. At that time, other figures asked for his opinion to respond to the arrival of France. The sequence of events that shows the condition of 'preparation before the war', becomes an affirmation of Islamic identity for the Egyptian people in fighting for their nation and religion.

In the implementation of the first agenda of westernism, Our position on ancient heritage (*mawqifunā min at-turāsh al-qadīm*) or our position on old traditions applied through The Faith Approach (*al-Manhaj al-Īmānī*) which means the methodology of faith which is pure, namely acceptance of religious beliefs (Hanafi, 1988). Both novels actively build the acceptance of the faith through narratives and characters, so that a collective awareness of Eastern identity is constructed in them. YM's novel presents it through the figures of the sultan and Adnan. Meanwhile, the MA novel presents it through characters who are characterized as people, namely Haji Mustafa Al-Busytaili, Husein bin Haji Mustafa and Sheikh Ali Al-Junjaihi. These figures believed in the cultural heritage of Islam, the Qur'an as their main grip, and applied it when faced with the situation of war against the invaders coming from the West.

Thus, the collective identity of Egyptian people was formed on the basis of their strong similarity of cultural and historical backgrounds, particularly through their connection to classical traditions. This first agenda emphasizing the importance of placing *Al-Ana* (self) to be tied to past traditions and cultural heritage (Hanafi, 1991). The tradition refers to Islamic values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith, which are the foundation of social and cultural life. Attachment to this tradition is the basis for reaffirming identity *Al-Ana* (self) as a form of resistance to the entry of culture *Al-Akhar* (other) or Western (Hanafi, 1988). In this context, the affirmation of Islamic identity serves as a symbolic and cultural force for marginalized groups (Hall, 1993). This position became a starting point for Eastern society in consciously reconstructing its identity, as a form of resistance to the process of westernization that tended to get rid of its own cultural roots and cause alienation within themselves *Al-Ana* (Hanafi, 1991).

Egyptian People's Resistance to Marginalization, Colonization and Westernization

The Islamic values that make up the collective identity of Egyptian society in the novel must be confronted directly with a bitter reality, as they are marginalized by the rulers and colonized by the West. Hanafi (1991) also outlines some of the problems in reality (Fact) that will be faced by the Muslim community. Among them: Freedom against oppression comes from within (dictatorship); the liberation of the homeland from external attacks (colonialism); social justice between the rich and the poor; the unity of the ummah in fighting division; building the unity of the people to fight social, economic, political, and cultural backwardness; Self-Identity in the Face of *at-tagrib* (westernization) and *at-taqlid* (blind follow-up); and finally the unity of the masses in the fight against apathy (Hanafi, 1991).

In YM, although the Ayyubid Caliphate achieved a golden age for Muslims (Haif, 2015), Egyptian society was discriminated against by their own employers. This condition is represented by actor Adnan bin Munzir, his mother and Zumrudah (a slave owned by the family) (Kailani, 1960). This kind of discrimination is referred to as the oppression of the internal government (dictatorship) (Hanafi, 1991).

What happened to Adnan was that he did not have the freedom to voice the principle of his presumption of innocence to the legal institutions in the caliphate because he was immediately thrown into prison without a clear legal process. Here is an excerpt:

وغمغت الأم في صوت مرتعش النبرات: "ليتك لم تهرب من سجنك يا عدنان".
فتغير وجهه، وظهرت عليه علامات الغضب، وقال: "كنت أحسب على شوق ولهفته إلى لقائي"
(...)

و سكنت الأم بينما انطلق عدنان قائلا:

"عام كامل أقضيه في السجن بلا ذنب جيته، ثم تلوميني على فرارى؟ ومن ادراك أنهم كانوا سيطلقون سراحي أنا الآخر؟ أنسيت أنني غريم توران شاه ابن السلطان؟ ألا تعلمين أن من عادى السلاطين أو أبناءهم إما أن يذوق الموت، وإما أدأن يترك في ظلام الأسر تأكله القيود ويذيبه الظلام؟"

The mother pleaded in a trembling voice, "if only you hadn't run from prison, Adnan."
So Adnan's facial expression changed. Signs of anger are clearly visible. Then he replied, "I think you will be happy and happy to see me."

(...)

The mother was silent and Adnan said,

"I spent a whole year in prison without any fault I committed. Then you for running away? Who knew they would let me go eventually? Have you forgotten that I am the tumbal of Turan Shah, the son of the Sultan? Do you not know that those who resist the sultans and their children may die or be left alone in the darkness of prisoners, bound and ambushed by darkness?" (Kailani, 1960:28-29).

Through the quote, the narrator conveys an emotional conversation between actor Adnan and his mother. Adnan as an internal focuser voiced his inner experience of the injustice he received from the ruler. Adnan's perspective through direct quotations makes clear the marginalization he derives from self-government. The evidence of the dictatorship is also supported by actors who are afraid and do not seem to have freedom of opinion unless they obey the government. His mother blamed her son for escaping from prison, so Adnan was considered a citizen who did not comply with the 'provisions' set by the government.

Zumrudah was also a victim of the marginalization of Prince Turan Shah bin Sultan. The prince forcibly snatched it from the family with the help of an army of Mamluk soldiers to intimidate them. Which is presented in the following quote:

وفوجئ بعد أيام بكوكبة من الفرسان المماليك تدهم بيته، ثم تسوقه إلى السجن. (...) بينما صعدت زمردة ووقفت مذهولة لا تستطيع أن تتلفظ حتى بكلمة الوداع، و حينما نظر إليها عدنان وهم يجرونه خارج البيت، أشاحت بوجهها في مرارة وأطلقت العنان لدموعها كي تخط سطرًا جديدًا في صفحة حياتها الدامية، ويا له من سطر! (...) ولذا رأى أن يقذف بعدنان إلى السجن كبخطوة أولى، ثم يتبع ذلك بارغام زمردة على الانضمام إلى رهطه.

He decided to throw Adnan to prison as a first step, followed by forcing Zomoroda to join Rahta

A few days later, Adnan was surprised by a mob of **Mamluk** troops in his home, then escorted him into prison. [...] Meanwhile, Zumrudah screamed and was confused until she didn't have time to say goodbye. When Adnan looked at Zumrudah as the Mamluk troops dragged him outside. Zumrudah turned his gaze full of bitterness and could not carve out a new line of life in his sad life sheet. Oh luck! [...]

Therefore, he thinks that putting Adnan in prison is the first step. Only then did he force Zumrudah to join his other concubines (Kailani, 1960:37-39).

This quote supports the fable of the sequence of events, namely the arbitrariness of the ruler to the object of his power, especially related to the process of Adnan's imprisonment a year ago. The narrator does not just observe and explain the incident. He also focused from the outside on the injustice experienced by actors who are representatives of society. Fokalisator expressed his opinion about the injustice of the rulers to the actor Adnan, an ordinary citizen.

Meanwhile, within the MA, the Ayyubid Caliphate collapsed and was replaced by the Mamluk Dynasty (Haif, 2015). Here Egyptian society is increasingly marginalized by its rulers.

This situation has been presented from the beginning of the story starting through a description of the community and its rulers.

(...) وقصر الكبار من رجالات القاهرة تقف شامخة، كقلاع صغيرة. وأغلب هذه القصور يسكنها المماليك والأتراك، وعدد قليل من المصريين الأثرياء كالتجار وأصحاب المناصب. وخلف تلك القصور الشامخة وحدائقها الشائقة، تقع البيوت الصغيرة الكثيرة. (...)

وعدد من الأطفال الحفاة يتخطون ويسرعون هنا وهناك. ومن آن لآخر تظهر عربة مزركشة محلاة بالمعادن الثمينة، تجرّها الجياد المطهمة، يسبقها إثنان أو ثلاثة من العبيد المهرولين، ويدخلها مملوك كبير المقام د، أو تركي من عليّة القوم، ترتسم على وجوههم سيماء الكبرياء والثقة التي لا حدّ لها. وقد يخترق الشارع فارس من رجال مراد بك أو إبراهيم - قادة المماليك وحكام مصر - في رعونة وطيش، دون أن يخش زجرًا أو عقابًا. (...)

(...) And the magnificent palaces of Cairo's elite stand out from the small castles. Most of the palace was inhabited by Mamluks and Turks, as well as a handful of wealthy Egyptians such as merchants and officeholders. And behind the majestic palaces with their amazing gardens, hidden are small houses close together. (...)

Bare children running around here and there. Occasionally, a carriage inlaid with precious metals can be seen passing by drawn by beautiful horses, preceded by two or three slaves who are running fast. Inside the carriage, it usually sat a high-ranking Mamluk, or a high-class Turk. Their faces were filled with unbounded arrogance and confidence. Sometimes a cavalry guard from the army of Murad Bek or Ibrahim – the Mamluk leader and ruler of Egypt, rushed (paving the way for the nobles to pass) without fear of rebuke and punishment (Kailani, 1985:5-6).

The narrator in the quote is not part of the character in the story, and he only acts as an agent who conveys the story. However, he also focuses externally on class differences through the depiction of the dwellings between the rulers, the middle and lower classes and the differences in the daily activities of the elite and their people. In these quotes, the narrator not only narrates the condition of the Egyptian people with their rulers, but also comments on the arrogant facial expressions of the ruler and his luxury which he considers to be arrogant. Because of this external focusing, the fable has gone from depicting small events in social space, to a contrast between poverty and luxury, between vulnerability and arrogance that aims to highlight marginalization by its rulers.

Both novels present the problem of the Egyptian people being discriminated against by their internal rulers, where the authorities exercise power in a dictatorial, authoritarian and repressive manner. In both novels, the issue of dictatorship becomes more complex because both the ruler and the people have the same identity, namely the religion of Islam (Kailani, 1960, 1985). The similarity should present a sense of "*one people*" to its owners based on the same historical and cultural values (Hall, 1993). However, the paradoxical state depicted in the novel actually shows that the same identity is not always a guarantee of solidarity.

The narrator in both also explicitly mentions that the Mamluks were involved in marginalizing the Egyptian people. They did so when they acted as the official apparatus of the Ayyubid caliphate or when they became the official supreme ruler of Egypt. The Mamluks in the story are also not well represented in Islam, thus presenting a fable that can be interpreted as a break from classical traditions. Although the government was in the form of a caliphate, the Mamluks did not run it according to Islamic sharia which should be an added value to the cultural heritage owned by the ummah to be implemented in their daily lives, including exercising power. The Mamluks' disconnection from the classical tradition actually led to the

further alienation of the ego identity. And if the number of disconnection from classical traditions is higher and then accompanied by an increase in attachment to Western traditions, then this condition is interpreted as an increasingly 'westernized' ego (Hanafi, 1991).

In addition to being marginalized by the ruling government for not siding with the people, Egyptian society is increasingly marginalized due to colonialism and Western cultural infiltration. The phenomenon of the arrival of the West itself is responded to with various reactions by the East, such as accepting, rejecting or selective. This diversity of responses can be understood through the موقفنا من التراث الغربى (*Mawqifunā min at-turās al-garbi*) or our position on Western traditions. (Hanafi, 1991).

In YM, Adnan, who had previously experienced injustice by the rulers, changed the priority of his problems when he received the news of the arrival of the Crusaders in Egypt. This is illustrated in the following quote:

His hatred of the raiding invaders must be many times his hatred of Turan Shah, the Crusaders in their previous campaign against Egypt had killed his father (one of the great scholars of Egypt). Adnan was then a fetus in his mother's womb and then bequeathed him orphanhood before he saw the face of life, and deprived him of the bliss of fatherhood.

وحقده على الغزاة المغيرين يجب أن يكون أضعاف أضعاف حقه على توران شاه، إن الصليبيين فى حملتهم السابقة على مصر قد قتلوا أباه (وهو من جلة علماء مصر). وكان عدنان آنذاك جنينا فى بطن أمه ومن ثم أورثوه اليتيم قبل أن يرى وجه الحياة، وحرموه من نعيم الأبوة.

وهل ينسى عدنان أنه كان يسأل أمه فى طفولته عن أولئك الذين قتلوا أباه، فكنت أمه تجيبه قائلة: "إنهم هناك بعيدا خلف البحار لا سبيل إلى الوصول إليهم" ثم يبدى رغبته الشديدة فى الانتقام منهم والثأر لأبيه.

And did Adnan forget, when he asked his mother about who the people who had killed his father were? Then his mother replied, "They are far away, **across the ocean**, there is no way to them." Then he expressed his strong desire to take revenge on them and avenge his father (Kailani, 1960:30).

In terms of the sequence of events, the quotation shows the existence of a previous 6th Crusade event. The sentence used by the narrator reads "*did Adnan forget*" shows that the narrator is not only telling, but also directing the reader to remember and understand these historical wounds. Therefore, external focalists continue to corner the colonizers as destructive people. The location fable conveyed by Mother is 'خلف البحار' (across the ocean) which shows the location across the Egyptian sea (the Crusader army from the European continent) to actively affirm the position of the West as the perpetrator of this deep suffering. Therefore, through the perspective of actor Adnan and his mother, the outside focus conveys that the event presents a fable that forms a collective feeling about oppression.

Like YM, the narrator in the Supreme Court also describes the situation of the ruler who discriminates against his people, including Haji Mustafa. However, Haji Mustafa also determined his priorities when he received the news of the victory of Napoleon Bonaparte and his army defeating the Mamluks in the city of Alexandria. Here is an excerpt:

"بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، لا إله إلا الله، لا ولد له، ولا شريك له فى ملكه". وابتسم الحاج فى أسى، ثم تابع القراءة بصوت خفيض: "يا أيها المصريون، قد قيل لكم أنني ما نزلت بهذا الطرف إلا بقصد إزالة دينكم، فذلك كذب صريح لا تصدقوه، وقولوا للمفتريين أنني ما قدمت إليكم إلا لأخلص حقكم من يد الظالمين" وهزّ الحاج رأسه، إنها اللعبة المكشوفة التي يلعبها الغزاة الجدد. يا له رجل طيب ذلك المدعو نابليون! (...)

واستمر في القراءة: "طوبى ثم طوبى لأهالي مصر الذين يتفقون معنا بلا تأخير، فيصلح حالهم، وتعلو مراتبهم". ها هو "المسلمون نابليون" يلوح لمن يوالون بالفائدة العظمى، ويميّزهم بأعلى المراتب. (...) هكذا يكشف الذئب عن نواياه! إنه يقسم البلد إلى طوائف.

"By mentioning the name of Allah, who is all-merciful and all-merciful. There is no god but Allah. Who has no children and is not allied with anything in his power". Haji Mustafa smiled wryly, then continued his reading in a quiet voice, *"O Egyptians, you heard the news that my coming here is only to eliminate your religion. The news is clearly a real lie. Don't believe it. Tell those who distort the fact that I have come to you to free you from the shackles of tyranny."*

Haji Mustafa nodded his head. Actually, this is just a game that is clearly being played by the new aggressors. What a fine man Napoleon was called! (...)

Haji Mustafa continued, *"Good luck! So blessed were the Egyptians who supported us without hesitation. They will live a peaceful life and occupy a high position"*. This is "Napoleon the Muslim". It promises great profits to those who side with it by luring high positions. (...) This is how wolves reveal their intentions. He divided the country into groups (Kailani, 1985:39-41).

This quote contains the situation of Haji Mustafa who read a letter from Napoleon that was distributed to the Egyptian people after the victory from the Mamluks. Napoleon in the letter claimed that his coming was not to destroy the religion of Islam, but to liberate them from the (Mamluk) tyranny. The focus in this quote is firmly based on Haji Mustafa, who not only read the letter, but was also given space to interpret, comment, and even reject the letter. Haji Mustafa, as a representative of the East, refused to bow to colonial narratives under the guise of liberation and asserted that Eastern consciousness must be born from the experience of wounds, not from the false promises of power that came from outside.

Haji Mustafa is a representation of Egyptian society that applies Islamic values through a return to classical traditions. However, this method is only their main foothold in responding to the arrival of the West such as colonialism. Therefore, to present the position of the East against the West, the narrator says:

وفي ساحة واسعة، رأى الحاج مصطفى البشتيلي حشدًا ضخمًا من رجال الطرق الصوفية والدرويش والعامّة، وقد نصبوا محضر ذكر كبير وأخذوا يجأرون إلى الله: "يا لطيف الطف بنا. نحن عبيدك كلنا" وغير ذلك من عبارات الابتهاال والدعوات، يرددونها ألف مرة.
وقال الحاج مصطفى لولده: أنظر! إنهم يتخبطون. الدعاء وحده لا يُجدي يا ولدي، لابد أن يحملوا السيف ويهرولوا إلى ميدان القتال، تلك هي العبادة الحقّة.
وأشر بيده إلى ناحية أخرى قد تجمّع فيها بضع مئات من الشبان حول مدفعين قديمين يتعلمون كيف يطلقونهما. ثم قال: "هذا هو الأسلوب الذي يُجدي في الحروب".

In a large square, Haji Mustafa Al-Busytaili saw a crowd of members of the Sufi order, the darvishes and the general public. They performed a large dhikr procession. Together they prayed to Allah, "O Most Gentle One, have mercy on us. We are all Your servants" and other prayers. They repeated it thousands of times.

Haji Mustafa then said to his son, "Look! Actually, they are in a slump. Praying alone can't bring anything, my son. They should have taken up arms and plunged into the battlefield. **That is the true worship**".

He then pointed in the other direction, where, hundreds of the youths had gathered around two ancient cannons, to learn how they operated. Then he said: "That is the useful way in war" (Kailani, 1985:24).

In these quotes, the narrator conveys various attitudes that describe rejection of colonialism. Haji Mustafa's perspective plays a role in grouping these attitudes, namely passive religiosity and active jihad. Therefore, Haji Mustafa, who acted as an internal focalizer, criticized the Egyptian people who simply surrendered to God. He referred to other alternative actions, the focalizer emphasized the position that should be taken in responding to colonialism, namely physical resistance by fighting it directly on the battlefield. In this way, they will obtain the true jihad, which is referred to by the focalizer as "تلك هي العبادة الحقة" which means 'true worship'.

In this case, the attitude shown by Adnan and Haji Mustafa Al-Busytali is a form of resistance to Western colonialism. They rejected the arrival of the West because it was accompanied by manipulation that would be detrimental to Egyptian society. The rejection they show is not purely reactive or emotional, but is based on historical, ideological and spiritual consciousness to maintain the integrity of identity *Al-Ana*. Within the framework of Eastern identity, the attitude aims to avoid *at-taqlid* – blind adherence to the West (Hanafi, 1991). Therefore, identity affirmation is not just a form of nostalgia for the past, but a cultural and ideological strategy to maintain independence *Al-Ana* in the face of penetration *Al-Akhar*.

CONCLUSION

The analysis reveals that *Al-Yawmu Al-Maw'ūd* and *Mawakib Al-Ahrār* articulate a collective Egyptian consciousness deeply rooted in Islamic values and Eastern classical traditions, portraying an identity shaped through historical, social, and cultural dialogues that unify society around shared heritage. This identity emerges as a deliberate resistance to foreign cultural pressures, with the East critically engaging with Western influences while reaffirming its own classical legacy as a foundation against cultural erosion. Individual consciousness, anchored in the position of *al-ana* (self/East), not only sustains personal identity but also underpins the collective social identity, enabling resistance against internal dictatorship, colonialism, and Westernization. The study highlights how Arabic literature from Eastern perspectives—like that of Najib Kailani—serves as a powerful medium for reconstructing and defending Eastern identity amid global cultural contests. Future research could explore comparative analyses of other Eastern literary figures to broaden understanding of how regional literatures negotiate identity and resistance in the postcolonial era.

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