



SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN THE SHORT STORY *FĪ AL-QIṬĀR* BY MAHMUD TAYMUR (LUCIEN GOLDMANN'S GENETIC STRUCTURALISM)

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This study aims to analyze social inequality in the short story *Fī al-Qiṭār* by Mahmud Taymur. The main theme of the short story is about the problems of free education for farmers. As reflected in the narrative focus on the Ministry of Education's efforts to promote education and combat illiteracy. The research method used in this study uses a qualitative descriptive method. The data collection technique uses the observe-sort-record technique. The short story is analyzed using Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism theory. The results of this study are: (1) there are two types of human facts in the short story: individual facts and social facts; (2) there is the author's worldview, which includes conservative and progressive perspectives. The short story discusses the problem of social inequality and class differences, and at the same time highlights the gap between the upper and lower classes with the dynamics of education as a central issue being debated. The narrative in the short story reflects conservative and progressive perspectives. The short story contains a distinctive antagonistic issue with several characters or figures in the story who oppose education for farmers, while other figures also support education as a means to improve the lives of farmers. The author's point of view actually supports the idea that education can bridge the social gap that occurs and at the same time raise the dignity and status of marginalized communities, as symbolized by farmers used by the author in the short story.

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INTRODUCTION

In literature, the author lives within society, both as an individual and as a member of a social group. Their involvement in the social group encourages them to absorb the aspirations, ideas, and emotions held by that group, eventually leading to the emergence of class consciousness. This class awareness is then used by the author to voice the concerns of their group through the literary works they produce. Therefore, a literary work is not only the result of the author's imagination and creativity, but also a reflection of the author's worldview, especially their worldview as a representative of their social class (Farid, 2021).

In his short story *Fī al-Qiṭār*, Mahmud Taymur portrays the challenges of modernization in Egypt. This topic is of particular interest because modernization brought about various problems, as illustrated by Taymur through the perspectives of several characters regarding the education of farmers. Mahmud Taymur was one of the pioneers of literature and theater in Egypt and widely recognized as a seminal figure in the formative stages of modern Arabic short story literature, having played a pivotal role in shaping its thematic and structural foundations (Mahmood, 2014). He went to Paris to study law but returned to Cairo following the outbreak of World War I in 1914. From that point on, he shifted his focus to writing stories and plays, which were influenced by the realist movement. One of his notable works is *Fī al-Qiṭār*, a truly original Egyptian short story, neither translated, adapted, nor localized. Many researchers and literary historians regard this story as the first literary text to be classified as a short story in both Egypt and the Arab world. It was first published in the *al-Safir* newspaper in 1917. The story later appeared in the short story collection *Mā Tarāhu fī al-'Uyūn*, published in 1927, which is recognized as part of the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*.

The term short story in the realm of Arabic literature, it is often referred to as *qiṣṣah qaṣīrah*, *qiṣṣah ṣaghīrah*, *uqṣūṣah*, *ḥikāyah*, or simply *qiṣṣah* (Wijaya et al., 2021). As for novels, they are referred to as *riwāyah* or *qiṣṣah muṭawwalah*. The modern concept of the short story only emerged during the modern era, following the translation of European literary works into Arabic. A short story is a type of fictional literary work that presents aspects of human life in a concise or brief written form. A short story can be analyzed through its intrinsic elements, particularly the social and historical context in which it was created in order to uncover the author's worldview. Genetic structuralism, as proposed by Lucien Goldmann, explains that authors construct narratives within literary works that are situated in a specific society, time, and place, thereby offering particular insights into that society. Goldmann introduces the concept of *homology* between the structure of a literary work and the structure of society, not as a direct parallel, but rather as a reflection of the worldview present within that society (Husnaya & Halim, 2023).

Based on the explanation above, the short story *Fī al-Qiṭār* is suitable to be analyzed using Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism approach, as it presents a strong socio-historical background rooted in a specific social group namely, Egyptian society. *Fī al-Qiṭār* tells the story of a narrator who suffers from poor psychological conditions and boards a train to enjoy the beautiful scenery in an attempt to heal. While on the train, the narrator's personal crisis begins to fade and shifts toward the central crisis of the story a social crisis. This social crisis is centered on the issue of farmers'

education. In this context, the author represents Egyptian society at the time through dialogues between various individuals who discuss the crisis in agricultural education.

Various studies related to worldview within the framework of genetic structuralism using short stories or novels as the material object have been conducted. Among them are "*Dewi Anggraeni's Worldview in the Novel My Pain My Country: A Genetic Structuralism Study by Lucien Goldmann*" by Derri Ris Riana, published in Volume 11, No. 1 (2021), pages 27–45 (Riana, 2021). Another is "*The Author's Worldview in the Short Story Collection Those Who Survive and Slowly Perish by Okky Madasari: A Genetic Structuralism Study*," written by Ardi Wijaya et al., published in Volume 5 (2021), pages 645–656. Additionally, "*The Worldview of William Faulkner in the Short Story A Rose for Emily (A Genetic Structuralism Study by Lucien Goldmann)*," was written by Kahar Dwi Prihantono and published in Volume 9, No. 2 (2021), pages 149–166 (Prihantono, 2021). Another work titled "*The Parallel Reality in Ra'aytu Ramallah by Mourid Barghouti and the History of Palestine (A Genetic Structuralism Perspective)*" was written by Dadang Ismatullah and was accepted and published in 2022 (Ismatullah, 2022). From these studies, it can be concluded that the short story *Fī al-Qiṭār* has not yet been analyzed using the genetic structuralism approach.

This study employs a genetic structuralism approach to analyze social inequality and the worldview presented in the short story *Fī al-Qiṭār*. It is expected that, theoretically, this research will contribute to the body of knowledge in literary studies, particularly in the application of genetic structuralism. Practically, it aims to enrich the understanding of both researchers and readers in general regarding the intricacies of a literary work when examined through the lens of genetic structuralism.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research. Meanwhile, data collection techniques are derived from library research. The data obtained are then adjusted to analyze social inequality and the author's worldview in the short story. The data collection technique in this study involves carefully and intensively reading Mahmud Taymur's short story, followed by note-taking to gain a deep understanding of the story.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the explanation above, the following are the research findings regarding the human facts and worldview in Mahmud Taymur's short story *Fī al-Qiṭār*.

Human Facts

As one component of genetic structuralism, human facts are understood as all forms of human activity, whether verbal or physical, that are studied and explained by science. In his book, Faruk also explains that human facts consist of two parts: individual facts and social facts (Amanda et al., 2024; Helaluddin, 2019).

Individual Fact

Tabel 1.

Text	Translation
تناولت ديوان ((موسيه)) وحاولت القراءة، فلم أنجح. فألقيت به على الجوان، وجلست على مقعد واستسلمت للتفكير كأنني فريسته مخالف الدهر؟	<i>I took Musset's notebook and tried to read it, but I couldn't. Then I threw it onto the table. I sat on the bench and decided to think about it. I felt like prey caught between the claws of time</i>

The excerpt above illustrates that the narrator feels bored and sad, while the atmosphere in the house that morning was very bright, yet it did not align with what the narrator was feeling at the time. This feeling of sadness is referred to:

Tabel 2.

Text	Translation
كأنني فريسته مخالف الدهر	<i>I felt like prey caught between the claws of time</i>

This means that the narrator is in a phase of life full of pressure, constantly moving without giving any space to breathe. Therefore, the narrator tries to dispel his sadness by attempting to read a book, but his sadness overwhelms his desire to read.

Tabel 3.

Text	Translation
وسرت وأنا لا أعلم إلى أي مكان تقودني قدماي إلى أن وصلت محطة باب الحديد و هناك وقفت مفكرا ثم اهتديت للسفر ترويجا للنفس، وابتعت تذكرة، وركبت القطار للضيعة لأقضي فيها نهاري بأكمله	<i>I walked without knowing where my feet were taking me until I finally arrived at Bab al-Hadid train station. I stood there, thinking, and then decided to travel to cheer myself up. I bought a ticket and boarded the train to go to a small village to spend my afternoon.</i>

Walking while enjoying the outdoors can help improve one's mood. This aligns with what the narrator does, who wants to dispel the sadness in his heart by walking and going somewhere.

The individual fact in Mahmud Taymur's short story *Fī al-Qiṭār* reinforces the previous excerpt, showing that when someone experiences psychological states such as a stressful phase of life, sadness, and boredom, these are natural human feelings. Therefore, besides engaging in hobbies like reading, going for a walk outside is also a way to overcome sadness and boredom.

Social Fact

Tabel 4.

Text	Translation
وقال: يريدون تعميم التعليم ومحااربة الأمية حتى يرتقي الفلاح إلى مصاف أسياده، وقد جهلوا أنهم يجنون جناية كبرى	<i>Huh, they want to equalize education and fight illiteracy until the farmers rise to the same status as their masters. They don't realize that they are making a big mistake.</i>

The above statement is from a Circassian man. He feels that by giving free education to the farmers, they will become more arrogant. On the other hand, the village chief also supports the Circassian man's opinion by saying:

Tabel 5.

Text	Translation
وقال: يريدون تعميم التعليم ومحاربة الأمية حتى العمدة حفظه الله طفاني مؤنة الردفقال للشركبي وهو يبتسم ابتسامة صفراء: صدقت يابيه ولو كنت تسكن الضياع لقلت أكثر من ذلك. إننا نعاني من الفلاح لنكبح جماحه، ونمنعه من ارتكاب الجرائم	<i>Huh, they want to equalize education and fight illiteracy until the farmers rise to The village chief next to me responded first to the Circassian man's words with a cynical smile. "You are right, sir. If you lived in the village, you would say even more than that. We are already fed up with the farmers; we want to silence them and prevent them from committing criminal acts"</i>

Then, the young man, who could no longer bear hearing the statements made by the Circassian man and the village chief, expressed his opinion:

Tabel 6.

Text	Translation
الفلاح يا حضرة العمدة لا يدعن لأوامركم إلا بالضرب أحسنتم لأنكم لم تعودوه غري ذلك، فلو كنتم صنيعكم معه لكنتم وجدتم فيه أبا يتكاتف معكم ويعاونكم، ولكنكم مع الأسف أسأتم إليه فعمد إلى الإضرار بكم تخلصا من إساءتكم، وإنه ليدهشني أن على إخوانك الفلاحني تكون فلاحا وتنحي باللائمة	<i>"Mr. Chief, the farmers do not obey your orders except through whips and blows because you have not treated them otherwise. If you treated them well, you would find that the farmers could become brothers who support and help you. But unfortunately, you mistreat them, and the farmers are forced to do wrong to you because they want to escape your oppression. I am surprised that you are a farmer yourself, yet you criticize the farmers your own brothers.</i>

The social fact in the above narrative is the social gap between the upper class and the farmers. The upper class, such as the Circassian man and the village chief, do not agree that farmers should receive free education. They fear the impact if farmers gain free education, that the farmers will become more knowledgeable, the upper class will no longer be able to deceive them, and the farmers' dignity will rise. Therefore, the statement by the village chief that the farmers would commit criminal acts because of the education they receive reflects their unwillingness to be equal with the farmers, who are not on the same level as the village chief and the Circassian man. In fact, by gaining education, farmers at that time could live prosperously without oppression and become brothers who help each other.

Author's Worldview

The author's worldview in this context relates to the perspective of the author as the creator of a literary work. According to Goldmann, a worldview is a total understanding of the world with all its problems. This means the analysis is not conducted on the content itself but more on the structure of the story. The author's

worldview can also be defined as a form of mediation (compromise) between the structure of society and the elements of the literary work. The worldview arises from the collective consciousness of the social situation (social strata) present. This worldview is born from the relationship between the collective subject and the surrounding situation (Helaluddin, 2019).

The author's worldview that underlies the creation of the short story themed *Fī al-Qiṭār* in the short story collection is both conservative and progressive. The characters in this story debate about education for farmers. Each character holds different opinions based on their backgrounds. There are two perspectives in this short story: first, the conservative viewpoint, which is a social approach that tends to uphold traditional values and reject radical change. Characters holding this conservative view include the Circassian man, the village chief, and the Sheikh. The following is the narrative of the Circassian man representing his viewpoint.

Tabel 7.

Text	Translation
إن السوط لا يكلف الحكومة شيئاً، أما التعليم فيتطلب أموالاً طائلة، ولا تنس أن الفلاح لا يذعن إلا للضرب؛ لأنه اعتاده من املهه إلى اللحد	<i>A whip, a whip does not burden the government at all, but education requires a lot of money, and don't forget that farmers only accept being beaten because they are accustomed to it from cradle to grave.</i>

They believe that farmers can only be controlled through beatings and violence, rejecting the idea that education can improve the farmers' conditions. They see education as a threat that could change the social order. Therefore, if farmers receive the same education, they assume the farmers will rebel against their work leaders. This is further emphasized by the village chief's statement: "You are right, Sir, if you lived in the village, you would say even more than that. We are already fed up with the farmers; we want to silence them and prevent them from committing criminal acts."

The village chief asserts that if farmers receive education, there is a high chance they will commit criminal acts, even though the village chief himself was born and raised in a village.

Second, the progressive viewpoint. The progressive perspective is a movement that desires rapid advancement and aims to represent the interests of ordinary people through political change and government support. In this short story, it can be seen that free education for farmers is provided by the government. This can be viewed from the following text.

Tabel 8.

Text	Translation
فقلت له وأنا ممسك الجريدة بيدي: ليس في أخبار اليوم ما يستلفت النظر، اللهم إلا خبر اهتمام وزارة املعارف بتعميم التعليم ومحاربة الأمية	<i>I said, holding the newspaper in my hand, there is nothing in today's news that catches my attention, except the news about the Ministry of Education aiming to universalize education and combat illiteracy</i>

The characters who hold the progressive viewpoint are the narrator (“I”) and the student. Both of these characters support education as a means to improve the lives of farmers.

Tabel 9.

Text	Translation
فقلت له: إن الفلاح يا بيه إنسان مثلنا، وحرام أن لا يحسن الإنسان معاملة أخيه الإنسان	<i>Sir, farmers are human beings like us. It is not right for one person to treat their brother poorly.</i>

The statement above is a narrative from the narrator who sides with the farmers. Since farmers are also human, whipping and beating them is a violation of human rights itself. This treatment occurs due to social inequality. Because farmers come from the lower class, the Circassians, who belong to the upper class, act arbitrarily. The narrator and the student also reject and oppose the view that farmers should be treated harshly like slaves; they believe that farmers deserve to live with adequate education. Therefore, the author’s perspective supports the idea that education can bridge social gaps and uplift marginalized communities. With education for farmers, social inequality will no longer exist because farmers also deserve to have equal rights.

CONCLUSION

The short story *Fi al-Qiṭār* by Muhammad Taymur centers on the main theme of free education, portrayed through the narrative of the Ministry of Education’s efforts to popularize education and combat illiteracy. The plot follows a linear progression, depicting the narrator’s journey from his room to the train station, then onto the train where he interacts with other passengers, and finally disembarks. The story’s setting includes various locations such as a garden, room, train station, and train carriage, with the timeline spanning from a bright morning throughout the day. The characters are depicted in detail, showcasing a diverse range of personalities from a turbaned sheikh to an authoritative village chief. Extrinsically, the story reflects the social gap between the upper and lower classes, with education as the central issue of debate between conservative views that resist change and progressive views that support modernization and social improvement. The author conveys that education has the potential to improve the living conditions of farmers and bridge social inequalities, reflecting social dynamics relevant to Egyptian society at that time.

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As the sole author, I was fully responsible for all aspects of this article, including writing, data collection, translation, and the publication process.

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