

Challenging Cultural Appropriation: Palestinian Cultural Identity in Radhwā 'Āsyūr's Novel *ath-Thanthūriyyah*

DOI:10.22515/ljbs.v8i2.6287



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submitted: 2/5/2023 revised: 2/8/2023 accepted: 4/8/2023 published: 8/8/2023 pages: 119-132

ABSTRACT

This article aims to describe the cultural elements of Palestinian people in Radhwā 'Āsyūr's novel, *ath-Thanthūriyyah*, which depicts Palestinian refugees' misery, Palestinian culture, and the struggle to defend Palestinian national identity as experienced by its main character, Ruqayyah. This study uses a literary anthropology perspective through the seven cultural elements defined by Koentjaraningrat. It employs a descriptive-qualitative approach with the data collected in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and dialogues in the novel. According to the findings, there are seven elements of Palestinian culture, namely language, knowledge system, technology system, art, religious system, social organization, and livelihood system. These cultural elements are presented as a form of resistance to cultural appropriation that happens because of the Israeli occupation.

Keywords: culture, identity, novel, Palestinian, Tantoura

INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Palestine and Israel does not only cause victims and refugees but also creates a cultural issue. For example, on December 2021, when The 70th Miss Universe beauty pageant was held in Eilat, several contestants were withdrawn because their countries disagree with the Israeli occupation. However, many other contestants were still taking part in the competition, including those coming from the Global South. During the pageant days, the contestants visited a Bedouin village. They experienced various Palestinian cultures like food, dance, and clothes. They posted their photos wearing traditional dresses or preparing typical Palestinian food with the hashtag 'visit Israel' on their Instagram accounts.

This phenomenon is criticized by many internet users. The Middle East Monitor reported many Twitter accounts commented on it. For example, @musfastamo tweeted "This video from Miss Philippines was an ad "Visit Isra*I". They are wearing traditionally Palestinian clothing, singing traditionally Palestinian folklore song, and in other pictures, they roll grape leaves, a traditional Palestinian dish". Another example came from @LaytHanbali. He wrote, "Miss Universe organizers in Israel and contestants are appropriating Palestinian culture with zero recognition of the hundreds of generations of Palestinians who passed this cultural identity down" (Rahman 2021).

Miss Universe beauty pageant contestants serve as global ambassadors. When they return home, they will share their impressions of the host country's culture with their fellow citizens. This can lead to widespread misunderstandings. People all over the world may believe that *Fellahiy* and *Waraq 'Inab* are part of Israeli culture. It also draws our attention to the existence of cultural appropriation issues. Culture is a nation's identity. In this case, Palestinian cultural heritage is a source of pride. It also contributes to the formation of Palestinian identity (Putri 2021).

Israel's identity is undoubtedly influenced by Palestinian culture. It can be observed by looking at a number of well-known foods, customs, and activities.

Initially, Arab-Palestinian culture, including traditional cuisine, was assimilated and adapted by Zionist settlers as desirable and practical, primarily as native and local. Due to appropriation, occupation, and nationalization, these cultural components are now synonymous with Israeli culture and identity, whereas the Arab-Palestinian origins have been neglected and completely forgotten (Mendel and Ranta 2016). In order for Palestine to continue to exist alongside other countries on the globe, Palestinians need to struggle to defend their culture.

**Literary Work:
Between
Fiction and
Fact**

Literary work is a direct reflection of reality. It does not arise from nothing. There are always sources of inspiration in human life. Cohen (2014) contends that literary work, like any other art form, is embedded in certain social, cultural, and historical contexts. Furthermore, Andrea Hirata stated in his *Rumah Pohon* that fiction is the best way to tell the fact. Literary works describe life aspects, including cultural issues, by combining the imaginary and reality. As a result, literary studies have taken on an important role in the scientific field. According to Sorek (2021), scholars are becoming more interested in literary studies. It has also been a respected and established academic field for the last two decades. Based on the explanation, it is possible to conclude that literary work can help to counter cultural claims. This case is about literary works that depict Palestinian society and culture.

Ath-Thanthūriyyah is one of Radhwā 'Āsyūr's works. It tells the story of Ruqayyah, a Palestinian woman from Tantoura. She witnessed and experienced the Nakba in 1948. Ruqayyah survived the tragedy, but she was forced to leave Palestine and live in Lebanon as a diaspora. She faced numerous challenges outside of her home country. She also witnessed the massacres at Sabra and Satilla. Although the novel depicts Palestinian refugees' misery, it also describes Palestinian culture and the struggle to defend Palestinian identity as a nation. This article investigates it using an anthropology of literature approach.

**LITERATURE
REVIEW**

Ath-Thanthūriyyah is Radhwā 'Āsyūr's masterpiece. As a result, many academics investigated this novel from different perspectives. Therefore, there have been previous articles about it. The first one is a journal article from Bustam (2014) under the title *Tantoura: Indahnya Pantai dan Kelamnya Sejarah: Analisis Ekokritik (Tantoura: The Beauty of Its Beach and the Darkness of Its History: Ecocritical Analysis)*. This research reveals that *ath-Thanthūriyyah* not only depicts Palestinian suffering but also tells about the wonderful nature, particularly the beauty of Tantoura village, which is located on the coast. Through an ecological analysis, nature is given a central role in *ath-Thanthūriyyah*.

The second is also a journal article that was written by Halizza et al. (2022), entitled *Changing the Largest Forces of Inequality by Ruqayya in Radwa Ashour's The Woman from Tantoura*. This article reveals the sexist oppression issue. It argues that Ruqayyah, main character in the novel, is able to resist the oppression by building solidarity based on empathy.

The third study is conducted by Nashef (2021) with the title *Suppressed Nakba Memories in Palestinian Female Narratives: Susan Abulhawa's The Blue Between Sky and Water and Radwa Ashour's Woman from Tantoura*. For a long time, the Israeli government denied that rape occurred as part of Israel's war on Palestinians. The majority of the files are still sealed and classified as top secret. Rape stories from Palestinian women who witnessed it, on the other hand, have recently emerged. Through literary works, this article reveals Palestinian women's narratives about rape, particularly during Nakba in 1948. Two female villagers survived exile, displacement, and rape to bear witness in these two novels.

The next article is authored by El-Mansi (2021) with the title *Blurring the Boundaries between History and Fiction in Khoury's Gate of the Sun and Ashour's The Woman from Tantoura*. The research idea comes from a question: To whom does Palestine belong? Since 1948 and beyond, the Zionist narrative has begun with the intention of committing genocide against Palestinians. It results in the Zionist dominance in Palestinian history. On the other hand, literary works serve as historical records. The paper itself examines how the two novels combine historical and fictional elements of Nakba Palestine and attempt to erase the Zionist grand narrative while at the same time also oppose the Arab-Palestinian mainstream narrative.

The final paper is *Gastrocriticism: Culinary and Palestinian Diaspora Community in Radhwā 'Āsyūr's Novel ath-Thanthūriyyah* and written by Utami (2022). The studied novel depicts the Palestinian people's tribulations. However, it describes a variety of traditional Palestinian foods as well. According to the findings of the study, Palestinians use cuisine to alleviate their longing for their homeland. Furthermore, the Palestinian diaspora community glorifies their traditional food by eating it on special occasions, telling their children about it, and giving it as a gift to friends and relatives.

Although there have been some studies on this novel, none has focused on Palestinian cultural identity. This latest study differs from the previous studies since it raises awareness of the fact that literary works serve as both cultural documents for nations and media for countering cultural appropriation.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Literary Anthropology

Literary anthropology is a new interdisciplinary approach. It integrates anthropology and literary theory. The term "anthropology" itself is derived from the Greek words "anthropos" (human) and "logos" (logic/science). Anthropology, in general, is a human-centered scientific approach (Ratna 2017). It delves into human life and culture. Furthermore, culture is a study that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, ethics, law, and customs. Meanwhile, literature is a real reflection that illustrates all aspects of human life. According to Raymond Williams, literary work represents a social and cultural perspective through language (Cohen 2014).

Based on the explanation above, there is a strong bond between anthropology and literature. Brandel argues that anthropology and literature both seek to recapture or recreate the world. The commitment of ethnography to a certain faithfulness to reality, on the other hand, represents an important political and ethical aspect of writing about life (Brandel 2020). A literary object is imaginative, creative, and artificial, whereas an anthropological object is more real and factual.

On the other hand, the strong connection between them gives rise to two terminologies: "literature anthropology" and "literary anthropology". The first definition states that literature uses language to recreate the entirety of human life and culture. The second term refers to anthropologists as writers. In addition to serving as a resource for anthropology, "literary anthropology" focuses on the role of writing for anthropologists and raises a number of issues. (Craith and Fournier 2016). This study is more oriented toward literary anthropology because it examines human culture and customs through literary works.

Ratna adds that the anthropology of literature approach can be used to discover literary work in two ways. The first method is to describe and anthropologically analyze the cultural elements. The second method is to describe directly for research purposes using anthropology of literature analysis (Waro'i 2019). According to Koentjaraningrat (2005), there are seven cultural elements as the main content of every culture in the world. The seven elements

are language, knowledge system, social organization, technology, livelihood system, religion system, and art. Each of these cultural elements is manifested in three ways; cultural system, social system, and physical cultural elements. To sum up, culture is formed by three things. They are what people think (ideas), what people do (activities), and what the results are (artefacts). Since the novel is about Palestinian society, this research focuses on Palestinian cultural patterns, which consist of a language, knowledge system, technology system, and art.

Cultural Appropriation

The concept of "appropriation" comes from the Latin verb *appropriare*, which means "to make individual's own". Based on the definition, cultural appropriation is the act of taking many forms like land, artistic styles, representations, artefacts, intellectual property, folklore, and religious symbol. Arya (2021) went on to explain that it emerges as a result of domination. In this case, it is an effect of Israeli' control over Palestine. Israel's prolonged occupation has also blurred Palestinian culture in its own homeland.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applies the qualitative method with a descriptive approach. It is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral and observable data behavior. It is a particular tradition in social and human sciences which depends on human observation (Santosa 2015). In the context of text interpretation, this approach to literary analysis employs narrative or description. As a result, the data of qualitative method consist of words, phrases, and sentences contained within the text (Ahmadi 2019).

The material object of this research is a novel written by Radhwā 'Āsyur's with the title *ath-Thanthriyyah*. This literary work was published in 2010 by Dar asy-Syurq Publishing. The process of data collection applied intensive-reading techniques in order to acquire an improved comprehension of the text. Afterwards, the data—which came in words, phrases, sentences, and dialogues—were categorized based on the research topic. Contextual investigation was then additionally utilized to corroborate the primary data through books and journal articles. In the following data classification, seven elements of Palestinian culture were textually and contextually analyzed using literary anthropology theory. This theory was used to comprehend the cultural elements of the Palestinian people that form the basis of their national identity.

DISCUSSION

Cultural Appropriation Issue in *ath-Thanthūriyyah*

Palestine's territory is shrinking as a result of the Israeli invasion. Inevitably, that expansion causes a cultural appropriation issue. For example, Palestinian-Israeli food culture. Some Arab-Palestinian residents have adopted an Israeli identity. It leads to the blurring of Palestinian culture. Ranta and Mendel (2014) exemplify the case in one of Israel's most recognized postcards. It is titled "Falafel is Israeli national snack" and depicts a portion of pita bread and falafel with an Israeli flag stuck on top. The national importance of this food and its connection to Israeli identity is clear in this postcard. What is so striking here is the fact that the food is actually traditional Arab bread, which is famous all over the Arab world. Unfortunately, it was rebranded and adjusted by Jewish Israelis as a typical Israeli snack.

Cultural appropriation is also discussed in *ath-Thanthūriyyah*. The incident occurs while Ruqayyah, the main character in the novel, and her family are in Piraeus, Greece, for her second son's wedding. After the wedding, they go for a walk on the beach and meet a man who claims they are from Israel based on their clothings as evident in the following excerpt:

قال سمير:

سألني بالإنجليزية هل أنتم من إسرائيل؟ استغربت سؤاله، فأشار إلى ثوبك وابتسم وقال: عرفت من الثوب.
و ماذا قلت؟
لم أقل شيئاً. تركته يذهب.
كيف تتركه يذهب؟!
هرولت وصال باتجاه الرجل وهرولنا وراءها وهي تنادي:
ياخواجة. ياخواجة. يا مستر.
التفت الرجل. وقف ينتظر السيدة الذي لفت ثوبها انتباهه. كان يبتسم ابتسامة عريضة.
أمسكت بقية ثوبها. قالت:
هذه نو إزرائيل. هذه ثوب فلسطيني طرزته بيدي
إزرائيل سرقة. سرقت أرضنا وشردتنا وذبحتنا. وحتى الثوب الذي أرتديه تطمع فيه!

Samir said:

"He asked me in English, are you from Israel? I was surprised by his question and he pointed to your dress, smiled, and said 'I know from the dress'.

"And what did you say?"

"I said nothing. I let him go"

"Why did you let him go?"

Wisal ran towards the man and we ran after her while she was summoning him.

"*Ya Khawwajah. Ya Khawwajah. Ya Mister*"

The man turned and stood waiting for the lady whose dress caught his attention. He was smiling broadly.

Wisal grabbed her dress and said:

"This no Israel. This is a Palestinian dress that I embroidered with my hand. Israel is a thief. Israel was stolen our land. Israel was displaced and slaughtered our peoples. And even the dress I wear" (Āsyūr 2010).

The sentences above demonstrate that cultural claims are real and have happened in our society, particularly in the Palestinian community, as discussed in this research. Cultural issues are often considered unimportant topics to talk about. Since culture is a national identity, a nation is known for its culture. When the culture disappears, the nation becomes extinct. Through her novel and its fictional characters, Radhwā 'Ā'syūr wants to convey that Palestinian people are rich in culture. She wants to release Palestinian culture from national Israeli identity.

**Palestinian Cultural
Elements in
ath-Thanthūriyyah
Language**

Language is a communication medium. According to Koentjaraningrat (2005), language is a written or oral human symbolism system for communicating with each other. Arabic language itself can be categorized into three variants. The first one is classical Arabic which is used in Holy Qur'an and hadiths. The second one is modern standard Arabic (MSA) which is used in official spoken channel and written media. The last variant is a dialectical or informal form which is used in social media (Abdelminaam et al. 2021). The dialectical form differs in some regions. *ath-Thanthūriyyah*, like other Arabic novels, is mostly written in modern standard Arabic. However, there are few parts written in dialectical Arabic i.e. Arab Levantine dialect. Levant itself is a designation for Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria territories. It can be seen through the following script:

واضح إن تبتة الكبيرة كانت عنصرية، كلامها عن العجر كلام عنصري، لا يصح، وضرب الأطفال أيضا غير مقبول.

It is clear that great *grandmother* was racist. Her talk about gypsies is racist, it is not true and beating children is also unacceptable ('Āsyūr 2010).

In modern standard Arabic, grandmother means *jaddah* and *geddah* in Egyptian dialect. However, the sentence above uses the term *tītah* or *teta* (the underlined word) to mentioning 'grandmother'. The term *tītah* or *teta* is often used by peoples in Levantine region. Although Ruqayyah and her family live outside Levant, they still use Arab Levantine dialect and vocabulary. Another proof about this phenomenon can be seen in the following sentence:

يتبدل جدول طائرات الوصول بجدول آخر لطائرات السفر إلى أبو ظبي، إلى تورنتو، إلى باريس، إلى اللد، إلى عبر لارناكا أو أثينا، إلى نابلس عبر عمان والجسر.... يقبل الأولاد يدي ويمضون بخطى وثيقة، لا يستندون لأرى وجوههم مرة أخرى. الأحفاد: نهى وهدى وأمين الصغير وأنيس وميرا يتبعون أهلهم بخطى مسرعة، يديرون أعناقهم المرة بعد المرة "مع السلامة يا تيتة".

The arrival schedule is changed to another departure schedule flight to Abu Dhabi, to Toronto, to Paris, to Lod via Larnaca or Athens, and to Nablus via Amman and Jisr.... The sons kiss my hand and go slowly. They did not turn around to see their faces again. The grandchildren: Nuha, Huda, little Amin, Anis, and Mira follow their parents at a fast pace, turning their necks time after time "Goodbye grandmother" ('Āsyūr 2010).

Because of the Nakba and Sabra-Satilla massacres, Ruqayyah lives apart from her whole family. She and her daughter, Maryam, decide to live in Abu Dhabi with her oldest son, Shadiq. Her second son, Hassan, and his little family decide to take Canadian nationality and live there. Meanwhile, her youngest son, Abid, lives and works as a Palestinian human rights activist in Paris. They still use the Arab Levantine dialect, like the word *tītah* or *teta*, wherever they live. It indicates that language is a cultural identity for Palestinians. The more they use their language properly, the more their identity persists.

Knowledge System

The knowledge system is linked to ethnic group knowledge. They typically possess traditional knowledge of nature, flora and fauna, natural ingredients, the human body, human behavior, time, and space (Koentjaraningrat 2005). The novel is set in the countryside, specifically in Tantoura. Tantoura is in the neighborhood of Haifa. It is part of the four-season area. According to the following excerpt, the villagers know the seasons without consulting a calendar:

نسمي العشب في بلادنا ((ربيع))، لأن الربيع حين يدور العام ويحل مودعه، يكسو به التلال والوديان. طبقات وصنوف وطوائف من اللون الكثيف أو الخشن أو العميق أو الهش أو الناعم أو الحي الخفيف، وكلها أخضر يجمع بلا قيد عليه ولا يحزنون.... وحدها شجرة اللوز تنسبد ربيع البلد، ملكة بلا منازع. لا أحد يجرو من جيرانها الشجر

We call the grass in our country ((Spring)), because spring is when the years turn and its season arrives when it covers the hills and valleys. The colorful layers of dense, pastel, soft, and vivid, all an unruly and unfettered green, and no one sad.... Only the Almond tree dominates spring in the village, the undisputed queen. No one, from her trees neighbor, dares ('Āsyūr 2010).

Tantoura people predict the arrival of spring by observing natural signs. Tantoura's spring sign is when the grass thrives and covers the land. The almond tree is another natural sign. The almond tree grows more abundantly and produces more fruit. After seeing all of the natural signals, people believe they are in March or April when the weather is mild.

The exiled Palestinians often remember their homeland. As a result, some of them, including Palestinian fiction writers, such as Mahmoud Darwish, rewrite their memories of their homeland. The Palestinian village story, according to Davis (2011), reflects the memories of the local culture and ethnicity. Therefore, in order to demonstrate the traditional knowledge system as their cultural identity, changing season knowledge must be presented in the novel.

Technology System The technology system in ethnography is limited to traditional technology or the way to meet life's needs (Koentjaraningrat 2005). *Ath-Thanthūriyyah* presents two traditional technology systems among Palestinians. They consist of food and clothing.

Food Food is included in the technology system and physical culture. It can be discussed from its ingredients, cooking method, and serving way. Those phenomena are depicted in the novel.

Palestine is one of the most strategic and important locations on the planet. It sits on three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. It is also home to the three major religions as well as some of the earliest habitation, culture, and agricultural activities (Kalla 2019). In addition, Palestine has both highlands and a sea. As a result, this country is abundant in agricultural products. It is depicted in the following novel script:

حملتني تنكة زيت وقناني بلاستيك من قناني المشروبات الغازية الكبيرة، كسبت في داخل كل منها قدر ما تتسع من الزيتون. قالت: الزيت من زيتوناتنا في جنين. كذلك الزيتون. كسبته لك بنفسني وأحكمت إغلاق القناني حتي لا تتغلي في نقله إلى بيروت.

She brought me a tank of olive oil, a bottle of olives, and a plastic containing soft drinks. Wisal stuffed everything in one place. She said: the olive oil comes from our olive garden in Jenin. The olive too. I harvested it myself and I sealed the bottles tightly so that they would not spill when it was taken to Beirut ('Āsyūr 2010).

There are several agricultural commodities such as *za'atar*, olives, figs, and oranges. As for olives, they were the main agricultural product even under Israeli occupation. In *ath-Thanthūriyyah*, olives is emphasized as an important part of Palestinian life. It is not only an agricultural product but also their identity. Palestinian people, specifically those who live in asylum countries, consider olives as a symbol of their homeland. In keeping with Abdelnour et al. (2012), for Palestinians, agriculture is more than an income source. It is tied to people's history, identity, and self-expression. As a result, most Palestinians keep olives at their homes. The novel also illustrates this phenomenon in the following scripts:

ومن مطلع العام إلى نهايته أكلنا من زيت وصال وزيتونها. كان دائما بالبيت وكما هو معتاد مونة من زيت وزيتون.

From the beginning to the end of the year, we ate Wisal's olive oil and olives. Olive oil and olives are always at home as usual ('Āsyūr 2010).

The sentences explain that olives are always present in their homes because they consume and use them frequently in their cuisine. According to Abu Farha, a Palestinian home is traditionally stocked with enough olive oil to last the entire year until the next harvest season, and these staples comprise the majority of Palestinians' daily breakfast (Abufarha 2008). This phenomenon demonstrates the significance of olives in Palestinian cultural identity. Olives are also a popular gift among exiled Palestinians. They can sense the presence of their homeland through olives. According to Maneley (2021), newly harvested olive oil was

received as a special gift by diaspora Palestinians, carrying the scent and memory of the homeland and connecting them to family members who were able to remain on the land. In addition to depicting olives, the novel also describes the Palestinian cooking style. It can be seen in the following sentences:

فاطمة تحب المكدوس: أشتري باذنجان أسود صغيرا أحشوه بالجوز والشطة. أكسبه بالليمون وزيت الزيتون في أنيتين زجاجيتين كبيرتين.

Fatimah likes *al-makdus*. I buy small black eggplant and stuff them with walnuts and pepper, then I put them with lemon juice and olive oil in two large glass jars ('Āsyūr 2010).

Ruqayyah receives good news one day. Wisal, her best friend, and Fatimah, her daughter-in-law, will pay her a visit. She will greet her guests warmly and serve them special meals, as is customary in the Arab world. She prepares everything for that day. The novel clearly illustrates how to make *al-makdus* (pickled eggplant) step by step, from preparing the ingredients to storing them. This detailed depiction is intended to emphasize the fact that Palestinians have their own cooking method as part of their cultural identity.

Clothing Clothes are the most important cultural object for nearly all ethnic groups worldwide. Clothing materials and methods of production are ethnographic objects (Koentjaraningrat 2005). The following script depicts the Palestinian costume in the novel:

هذا التطريز سهرت عليه الليالي. اسمه ((فلاحي)). هذا ثوب فلسطيني فلاحي

This embroidery I stayed up nights on. Its name is ((felahiy)). This is a Palestinian peasant dress ('Āsyūr 2010).

This script depicts Wisal's rage. She was upset with a strange man who claimed she was from Israel. Then, she dressed *fellahiy* to emphasize her roots. The term *fellahiy* is derived from the word *fellahin*. The term "Fellahin" refers to Palestinian villagers. They are crucial in the creation of an embroidered silk and cotton dress (Kim 2000). *Fellahiy*, a traditional Palestinian costume, is introduced in the novel. Furthermore, the costume has a strong connection to Palestinians, as illustrated by the following quote:

أدقق في الصور كلما أظهرت امرأة في ثوب فلاحي مطرز ترفع يدها بعزم لتلقي حجرا على سيارة من سيارات الجيش أو تشتبك مع المجندين لتخلص منهم طفلا أمسكوا به.

I look closely at the picture whenever a woman appeared in an embroidered *Fellahiy* dress, raising her hand with determination to throw a stone at one of the army cars or quarrel with the soldiers in order to release one of the children they had arrested ('Āsyūr 2010).

Protests and arrests are commonplace. The sentences above, on the other hand, emphasize the *fellahiy* dress. It is demonstrated that for Palestinians, traditional clothing is not only a means of covering their bodies but also a symbol of their struggle and the bravery of Palestinian women. Women in Palestine take part in the resistance to the Israeli invasion, particularly during the *Intifada*. It is concluded from the novel's phenomena that clothes are an identity for Palestinians. When people use their identity on a daily basis, they recognize it. According to Othman, Palestinians are increasingly using cultural symbols, such as authentic clothing, to express group unity and belonging (Othman 2015). Furthermore, their clothing serves as a symbol of their pride, as illustrated by the following sentences:

تطلع عمي مرة أخيرة في المرأة ورفع يده إلى عقاله كأنه سيعدل وضعه قليلا فوق رأسه ثم عاد وأنزلها دون أن يلمسها. ضحك عز معلقا على اهتمام أبيه بمظهره:
سيظنون أنك العريس يا أبوا الأمين!
فأجابه أبوه وهو يبتسم:
ولهم حق. لم أر عريسا مثلك يذهب للطلبة هكذا، لا حطة ولا عقال ولا حتى سترة. قميص
وينظلون كأنك من عمال سكة حديد حيفا.
الدنيا حر.
لكنك عريس، تلبس بدلة فيكون لك هيبة.

My uncle look in the mirror one last time and rised his hand to his *'iqal* as if he was going to adjust its position slightly above his head. Then, he lowered it again without touching. Izz laughed and commented on his father's appearance attention:

They will think that you are the groom, Abu Amin!

His father answered him while smiling:

They have a right. I've never seen a groom like you, a boy goes to the school like this. Without *Hattah*, *'iqal*, not even a jacket. A shirt and trousers as if you were Haifa railway worker.

It's hot.

But you are a groom. You wear a suit, then you have prestige ('Āsyūr 2010).

When Ruqayyah's uncle attends his son's marriage proposal, he dresses in traditional Palestinian garb, including a *hattah* and an *'iqal*. *Hattah*, also known as Palestinian *hattah* or *kafiyeh*, is a black and white striped scarf worn around the neck or head. While *'iqal* is two thick black ropes that hold the *hattah* in place. Clothing is more than just a form of protection for Palestinians. When the Palestinian resistance movement gained strength in 1936, it was reflected in their traditional customs, according to Widad and Nasir (2016). In addition, they exemplify that in Jaffa and Jerusalem, the western-style dress was the norm, but Palestinians returned to traditional costumes, specifically *kafiyeh* and *'iqal*. It is implied that their headwear is a nationalist symbol. When they wear their traditional clothing, they feel proud to be Palestinians. As a result, depiction in the novel is significant because it affirms that traditional costume is part of Palestinian identity.

Furthermore, the novel discusses clothing manufacturing. It is evident when Ruqayyah's best friend, Wisal, presents her with some Palestinian traditional attire, as indicated by the following sentences:

حملت لي وصال ثوبا قالت إنها بدأت في تطريزه منذ تلك المكالمة التليفونية التي أجراها عبد من بيروت.... ثلاث قطع من القماش، أولها كبيرة لجسم الثوب من القبة إلى القدمين، طرزت صدره ودائرة الذيل، والقطعتان الأصغر للكمين على طرف كل منهما نفس واحدة التطريز.

Wisal brought me a dress that she said she started embroidering since 'Abid made a phone call from Beirut.... Three pieces of fabric. The first one is a large fabric from chest to toe, she embroiders the chest part and the dress fringe, and the two smaller pieces. On the top of each are the same embroidery ('Āsyūr 2010).

Palestinian women are well-known for their handcrafted embroidery. The majority of Palestinian women continue to wear embroidered dresses. Prior to Nakba in 1948 and Naksa in 1967, most women who embroidered dresses did so for personal needs (Nasser-Khoury and Jones 2013). Palestinian embroidery was originally used to decorate the clothes of the ruling elite. It was also used to depict social classes. However, it spreads to the villages and has an impact on the

economy over time. According to Abushusheh (2022), Palestinian embroidery is now spreading through the training of disadvantaged girls. Later, the girls took their practices back to their villages. This transition provided more freedom for art forms to flourish and become distinct common practices based on each village's culture, understanding of nature, and faith. Hence, embroidery is an important thing in the novel because it becomes a continuous activity that connects villagers with their ancestral heritage, customs, and stories.

Art In the ethnography area, art is defined as an interaction between the art creator, artist, sponsor, audience, and art object (Koentjaraningrat 2005). This phenomenon is explained in *at-Thanthūriyyah* as the following data:

يفترش العرس شاطئ البحر.... تنوره الزعاريد والأهازيج وحلقات الدبكة.

The wedding spread over the seashore and expands. It is enlivened with *zagarid*, *ahazij* song, and *dabkah* circle ('Āsyūr 2010).

The artistic elements can be found in *zagarid*, *ahazij*, and *dabkah*. *Zagarid* is commonly known as ululation, a long wavering, high pitched vocal sound resembling a howl with a trill. Usually, this trilling was performed by Palestinian women. *Ahazij* is a traditional Palestinian folklore lyrical song without any kind of musical instrument. *Dabkah* is a traditional Palestinian dance that combines circle and line dancing with folklore music accompaniment. These three things are common wedding traditions in the Palestinian community to indicate their joy and happiness. Like any other cultural element, a nation can be known for its existence and identity through art. Therefore, this art description is an important part for establishing Palestinian identity.

Religious System The religious system includes more than just people's religious preferences. In other words, it also includes rituals, practices, culture, and customs. It is depicted in the following text:

في زيارة تالية حضر شيخ عين غزال وإخواته في جاحة كبيرة من أقاربهم ورجال قريتهم. استقبلهم أبي وعمي وشقيقاي وكبار البلد. قرأوا الفاتحة.

On the next visit, the Sheikh of Ain Ghazal came with his brothers and with a large group of his most important relatives, and the man of their village. They were welcomed by my father, my uncle, my two brothers, and the elders of our village. They read the *Fatihah* ('Āsyūr 2010).

In the novel, the religious element is highlighted in the marriage proposal tradition. People from Tantoura used to recite *al-Fatihah* together after the bride-to-be accepted the proposal. The recitation of *al-Fatihah* indicates that they practiced their religious rituals as Muslims. In addition, the novel depicts another religious system as follows:

بعدها بأسبوعين أتت سيارات أخري فنقلتنا إلى دير المسكوبية في الخليل. كل يوم جمعة كان أهالي الخليل يذبحون خرافا ويسوونها ويحملونها إلينا مع أرز بكميات تكفي الجميع

Two weeks later, other vehicles came and took us to Deir al-Maskubiya in Hebron. Every Friday, the people of Hebron slaughter lambs, grill them, and bring them to us with rice, bringing enough for everybody ('Āsyūr 2010).

Deir al-Maskubiya is a Russian missionary church. The name *al-Maskubiya* originated from the word *Moscow*. It refers to the Russians who migrated to Palestine in 1868. It is also the only one church in Hebron. This illustration confirms the existence of Palestinian Christians. It indicates that Palestinians have diverse beliefs and traditions.

Social Organization

Social organization consists of kinship systems, community systems, leadership systems, and so on. This organization organizes all aspects of social life through rules, norms, and customs (Koentjaraningrat 2005). The depiction of social organization in *ath-Thanthūriyyah* novel can be seen in the following script:

مضافة البلد في بيت المختار، يجتمع فيها الرجال للحديث والسمر والمناقشة المستجد من الأمور وأحيانا لحل النزاعات.

The village hall is in the house of *al-Mukhtār*, where the men met to talk about, spend the evening, discuss the latest event, and sometimes, solve the dissension ('Āsyūr 2010).

The sentence exposes the phenomenon of social organization, namely *al-Mukhtār*. It is a designation for the village headman. The villagers and *al-Mukhtār* discuss every problem and solve it together. They even discuss Israeli invasion news and try to negotiate, as Pappé (2009) said that on May 15, 1948, the *al-Mukhtār* and a small group of villagers in Tantoura met Jewish intelligence officers, who offered them terms to surrender.

Livelihood System

The livelihood system is the means of a person for meeting their basic needs. Hunting, fishing, breeding, farming, trading, plantations, and crafting are all part of it (Koentjaraningrat 2005). The novel describes some livelihood systems among villagers in Tantoura, as in the following depiction:

أصبح بأعلى صوتي كمن أصابها مس: ((صا..يدة! صا..يدة!)) أدب على الأرض أقفز وأعود أدب وبيدي الأنية النحاسية التي كنت ثبتها بين الصخور مصيدة للسماك، فوق المسكين فيها. أرفع السمكة الفضية من ذنبها، أقول مكايده: ((سمكتي دائما أكبر وأحلى)).

I shout at the top of my voice like someone struck by madness: Hun...ter! Hun...ter! I crawl on the ground and jump and crawl again. In my hand the copper vessel that I had secured between the rock as a trap for fish, in which the poor had been caught. I lift the silverfish by its tail and say teasingly, "My fish is always the biggest and the sweetest" ('Āsyūr 2010).

Tantoura is located on the Mediterranean Sea coast. Without a doubt, the majority of Tantoura residents are fishermen. Even the children of the village can catch a fish as Ruqayyah did in the illustration. She knows how to fish with the basic equipment. The following sentence describes the next source of income:

حطي علف للمواشي يكفيها أسبوعين أو ثلاثة، وماء كثيرا. وانثري حبا للدجاج، كثري. والحصان، لا تنسي الحصان.

Put out the fodder for the livestock that will last two or three weeks, and a lot of water. Scatter seed for the chicken, a lot. And the horse, don't forget the horse ('Āsyūr 2010).

قالت: الزيت من زيتوننا في جنين. كذلك الزيتون. كسبته لك بنفسي وأحكمت إغلاق القناني حتى لا تتغلي في نقله إلى بيروت.

She said: The olive oil from our olives in Jenin. The olives too. I harvested myself for you and I closed the bottles so that you don't get tired of taking it to Beirut ('Āsyūr 2010).

Palestine is also well-known for its rich soil. As a result, the majority of the villagers work as farmers as well. According to the first sentence, the villagers raise chickens, goats, and horses in order to obtain dairy and poultry products such as meat, eggs, and milk. The second sentence indicates that they also grow crops like

olives. Agriculture is an important part of Palestinian people, according to the data. It is intertwined with their history and identity. Palestine is famous for its fertile soil. Therefore, most of the villagers also work as a farmer. The first sentence shows that the villagers raise chickens, goats, and horses, so that they can obtain dairy and poultry products such as meat, egg, and milk. Meanwhile, the second sentence indicates that Palestinian people also plant crops such as olives. From the data, it can be concluded that agriculture is an important part of Palestinian people. It is tied to the history and identity of the nation.

CONCLUSION

The novel *ath-Thanthūriyyah* is a complex masterpiece from Radhwā 'Āsyūr'. It explores the history, conflicts, Palestinian refugees, and even gender relations from the perspective of a female character, Ruqayyah. Through literary anthropology approach, this study shows seven cultural elements that exist among Palestinian people, namely language, knowledge system, technology system, art, religious system, social organization, and livelihood system.

The language element is indicated by the use of terms in Levantine Arabic. The knowledge system can be identified through Tantoura people's ability to recognize the changing season signs. Meanwhile, traditional Palestinian clothing and food demonstrate the technology system. The artistic element can be seen in various Palestinian folklore songs and dances. In addition, the religious system is noticeable in depiction of the Islamic marriage proposal and church life. House of *al-Mukhtār*, the place used for deliberation, highlights the social organization system among villagers. In the end, the existence of fisherman, rancher, and farmer indicates Palestinian livelihood system.

The cultural element in this novel never comes casually. It is an act of resistance. The Israeli's occupation is unconsciously stealing Palestinian culture whereas, in fact, culture is a national identity. Without a culture, a nation is not considered to exist. Literary works, including novel, can be used as a tool to challenge cultural appropriation. However, cultural appropriation remains a contentious issue. It will be an interesting topic, particularly, when it comes to a literary work.

Lastly, the novel *ath-Thanthūriyyah* is not widely read by Arabic literary scholars in Indonesia. As a result, there are still a lot of gaps to investigate for further research.

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ARTICLE CITATION IN *THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE 16*

In-text Citation

Utami (2023, 125)

..... (Utami 2023, 125)

Reference List Entry

Utami, Shinta Fitria. 2023. "Challenging Cultural Appropriation: Palestinian Cultural Identity in Radhwā 'Āsyūr's Novel *ath-Thanthūriyyah*". *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 8 (2): 119-132. <https://doi.org/10.22515/ljbs.v8i2.6287>



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