

The Perspective of the Western Cultural Pattern in the Quintet Cities of Salt (a Critical Cultural Study)



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Abstract

Cultural criticism is one of the most important stages of critical development due to its role in directing thought towards the issues and challenges that humanity has faced at the heart of modern developments, with literature being no exception. The theory of cultural patterns seeks to explore the relationship between the ingrained, underlying patterns in human culture and literature. This is one of the most important branches of literary criticism in Arab culture, a field to which Abdullah Al-Ghadhami has directed attention. Abdul Rahman Munif's Quintet Cities of Salt is one of the most significant Arabic literary works that provides a depiction of the dialectical relationship between the Arab world and the West. This literary work addresses important cultural and social issues that cannot be fully explored except through the lens of cultural criticism. This article attempts to explore the controversial Western cultural patterns in Cities of Salt and how they interact with the Arab cultural patterns. The researchers examine the stance of Arab characters and their patterns regarding the cultural traits of the Other, using a descriptive-analytical approach based on critical cultural analysis and the general framework of Abdullah Al-Ghadhami's theory of cultural patterns. The importance of studying Cities of Salt from this perspective lies in the Arab-Western confrontation that shapes the plot of the novel, presenting a rooted opposition and conflict in reality, and addressing the crises and struggles faced by Arab countries in their interaction with the Other. This study aims to uncover the most influential and controversial Western cultural patterns from the Arab perspective, as well as to illustrate how Arab characters and their cultural patterns react to those of the Other. One part of the findings reveals that the Western technological pattern confronts the implicit mythological Arab pattern, while the Western modern social pattern meets the Bedouin pattern. These are among the most controversial Western cultural patterns, as the technological patterns of the West are interpreted through the lens of Arab mythological patterns, highlighting the significant role of mythological patterns in Arab culture. Furthermore, the Bedouin patterns attempt to interpret the Western modern social patterns. Additionally, the Arab view of the Western Other is not one of exploratory curiosity but rather a reflection of Arab characters' efforts to interpret Western patterns, driven by a desire to protect their own underlying cultural patterns and preserve their integrity in the face of the Other.

Keywords: cultural criticism, cultural patterns, Abdullah Al-Ghadhami, Cities of Salt, Abdul Rahman Munif.

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