

The Strategies in Dealing with Political Conflict in *Syria*: Study of Khalid Khalifah's *La Sakakin Fi Mathabikhi Hadzihil-Madinah*

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ABSTRACT

Novel *La Sakakin fi Mathabikhi hadzihil-Madinah* (LSMHM) is considered to have an intense ideological and political nuance for its narration on conflict. It is worth reading this novel to observe the measures chosen by the characters in dealing with existing conflict and its impacts. Sociological approach to literature is applied to reveal the strategy. The reading reveals that the characters in this novel have various strategies in dealing with conflict and related problems. Contending, yielding, problem solving, withdrawing, and inaction are the possible strategies. However, none of the characters choose yielding or problem solving. The existing preferences seem to be the writer's outlook on that conflict. The conflict itself has been inflicting refuge, social manipulation, excision, and harassment.

Keywords: *conflict, Syria, Khalid Khalifah, ideology, sociology of literature, strategy, politic*

INTRODUCTION

Novel *La Sakakin fi Mathabikhi hadzihil-Madinah* (LSMHM) is the work of a *Syria* writer, Khalid Khalifah. This novel recounts a family without a father who chose to leave his family to live with another woman. The pain of being abandoned by the father was getting worse when the *Syria* conflict bursted out. The conflict was triggered by power struggle which was done by a party through a coup d'état. Aleppo, where the family was living, must be left behind because it turned out to be a battlefield.

That migration was not necessarily giving a peace in the life of this family. They still experienced the pressure of the ruling party in many aspects of life. They could no longer feel comfortable the pleasure. They had to live in conflicts. Each person in that family, as well as other people of the same fate had to have their own

strategy or technique to deal with the conflict. The character of mother, compared to other characters, tended to be reserved. Meanwhile, the character of Susan had many ways to deal with the conflict. Various strategies done by the characters is very interesting to be explored deeper because, as stated by Swingewood, literary work is a sociocultural document which is possibly applied to observe a phenomenon of a society at certain time (Wahyudi, 2013:57).

LSMHM was completed on 2013. It means that this novel was written before *Syria* revolution, which is still continuing until today, and set on 1963 when Baath party brought out a revolution in *Syria*. Eventhough the novel is newly published, it gains a great appreciation from the readers in Arab. In 2013, this novel received Naguib Mahfouz Award. Therefore, it was then nominated to receive the best Arabic novel award in 2014. Five novels,

i.e. *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (Ahmed Saadawi), *A Rare Blue Bird that Flies with Me* (Youssef Fadel), *Tashari* (Inaam Kachachi), *The Journeys of 'Abdi* (Abdelrahim Lahbib), and *The Blue Elephant* (Ahmed Mourad), competed with this novel, but then it was *Frankenstein in Baghdad* which won the award. Furthermore, the title of this novel, *la sakakin fi mathabih hadzihi al-madinah* was the title of the speech of Syria's president, Amin al-Hafez (ruled the country from July 1963 until February 1966). Because of that title, many experts on Arabic novel considered this novel having an intense political and ideological nuance (Shalal:2014, Husain:2014).

As a work, LSMHM is a miniature of the world (Ratna, 2011:35). It means that this novel carries on the function to list the events which have been constructed in creativity and imagination patterns. The novel even implicates a deep motivation, reconstruction of social awareness assumption which is verbally expressed (Ratna, 2011:40). There is no novel which is completely detached from social life (Ratna, 2011:43).

The events, especially the strategy of the characters in LSMHM, then can be considered as a representation of what is actually happening in Syria. Therefore, a deeper reading or analysis toward this work needs to be done to observe the strategy and technique of the characters in dealing with the conflict. Through that reading, the strategy to deal with political conflict and its impact, especially in Syria, will be identified. It is important since conflicts among the countries, ethnic groups, sects, or even tribes frequently occur in Middle East region, included Syria. Besides, appreciation for Syria's literary works mostly come from the poems, especially Nizar Qabbani, so study on the novels is worth a try.

The reading of LSMHM have been carried out several times. However, they were just on the review level and not scientifically analysing it (by certain theory and method). One of those appreciations is from Shalal (www.alquds.co.uk) who remarks this last work of Khalid Khalifah as a narration turning into a prototype a real life. According to Shalal, Khalifah writes this story as a depiction of existing ideology in Syria which is expressed through an intense political nuance. Preferences between right or wrong which are

depicted stiffly seem to be a confirmation that the story is about an authoritarian regime of an ideology. Husain (www.aljazeera.net) addresses *la sakakin fi mathabik hadzihi al-madinah* as historical novel of the modern Aleppo. The shettered condition of the city after Baath revolution is tragically depicted in the conversation between terrified refugees and those who patriotically fight against the ruling regime. Two strongholds in Aleppo city are also depicted here. The only study with the same object is conducted by Munawwar Manshur (2015), using Roland Barthes' approach "Theory of Plural Text".

Several studies related with Syria were conducted by Hamdan (2012), Purnamawati (2012), Munawwar Manshur (2013). Hamdan explored Haidar Haidar's *az-Zaman al-Muwahhisy*. In his study, Hamdan found various forms of dehumanisation in *az-Zaman al-Muwahhisy*, i.e. subordination toward women, economic injustice, freedom of speech restriction, and Israeli occupation. Those actions were generally involving the ruling regime and small parts of the citizens. Eventhough he found some dehumanisations, Hamdan acknowledged that he could not yet relate it with urban life aspects comprehensively in a more real context.

Purnamawati in her study *Kritik Atas Pelanggaran Hak Sipil Oleh Penguasa Dalam Puisi-Puisi Nizar Qabbani* (Critics on Civil Rights Violation by the Ruler in Nizar Qabbani's Poems) succeeds in revealing violations by Syria government expressed in Qabbani's poems. Those violations are in the form of government's incapability in fulfilling their obligation to their people. She also concludes that recent turbulence is the accumulation of undemocratic government. Hence, the reading LSMHM is a right measure because it will reveal more things about Syria.

In his study entitled *Kebudayaan Arab Suriah dalam Perspektif Sastra dan Agama* (Arabic Syrian Culture in the Perspective of Literature and Religion), Munawwar Manshur treats a work as the reflection of a real life. Several Syrian writers' work with revolution theme are employed as the object of his study to identify Syrian culture characters in order to analyse the causes of Syrian conflict from different viewpoint. That study concludes that the conflict is sectarian conflict, but it's major cause is the state's failure in applying a democratic political

system and stopping monopoly on authority which concentrated in certain elite.

THEORY AND METHOD

Literary work basically is not personal activity. Instead, it expresses impersonal issues, overpasses sociological boundaries and historical periods (Ratna, 2011:134). A novel writer obviously would not only express personal issues, but also social issues (Ratna, 2001:104). Even, a literary work which is evoked through social problems would be an everlasting work (Ratna, 2007:157).

Ratna (2007:157) states that literary work has homology and is symmetrical to its social structure. The relation between literary work and its society is not different from the relation between culture and its society (Ratna, 2007:162). Even to the Marxist, a literary work should have social function, serve the people, and be the integral part of communist (Ratna, 2007:163). From the above viewpoints, it can be concluded that a work is a prototype of society where the work is born.

Still according to Ratna (2004:332-333) there are several reasons why literary work or novel has a close relation to society which needs to be analysed in regards with its relation to society. The reasons are a). literary works is written by writer, narrated by narrator, and copied by copier, b). literary work lives in society and absorbs society's aspect and in turn will be functioned by society, c). the medium of literary work is language which is part of the society, d). literary works contain aesthetic, ethic, as well as logic which are all important for society, and e). literary works is the nature of intersubjectivity. Society find themselves in a work.

Since literary work is part of a society, it certainly needs other disciplines to approach it, which in this case are sociology and anthropology. However, it is important to pay attention to domination of literary work in this study, while other disciplines function as subsidiaries. This statement needs to be reaffirmed that what plays the role is literary work with its implications, such as theory of literature, criticism of literature, and history of literature. A misunderstanding in analysis, such as giving priority to the subsidiaries, will make literary work as the second object or complementary (Ratna, 2004:338-339).

According to Junus (1986:1), there are three approaches when it comes to sociology of literature. First, work observed from the social position of the writer. Second, work observed for sociocultural documents. Third, work observed from the acceptance of the society upon that work. Meanwhile, Wellek and Warren in their book *Theory of Literature* (1989) classify sociology of literature into three aspects of study, i.e. sociology of the writer, sociology of literary work, and sociology concerning on readers and social impacts of literary works. The others, Swingewood and Laersonson (1972:13-21) talk about three perspectives in studying literary work, i.e. literary work as sociocultural document, literary work as the social condition reflection of the writer, and the attempt to track how a literary work is actually accepted by certain society at a certain moment. In the case of LSMHM, sociology of literature will be used in reading the novel, particularly the perspective that literary work is the social condition reflection. Reflection concept in sociology of literature considers literature as the imitation (mimesis) of the society.

Swingewood (1972:15) states that literary work produced by a great writer contain fear, hope, and aspirations of the society. Therefore, literary work can be used to measure the behaviour and values formulated and expressed in the society. Literature always reflects social norms and behaviour. The values reflected in literature are the values intended by the writer.

Beside sociology of literature, LSMHM reading also employs theory of social conflict. Dean G Pruitt and Jeffrey Z Rubin in their book *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (1986, translated into *Teori Konflik Sosial*, 2009) state that conflict is the perception about divergence of interest (2009:9-10). According to Pruitt (2009:21), interest is what someone feels about what he really wants. Some other experts interpret it as values or needs. An interest can be universal such as the need of security, identity, happiness, as well as physical human dignity, or specific such as Palestinians' hope to have their own homeland.

Interest will in turn be interpreted into as aspiration. A conflict can occur if aspirations of both parties increase but there is no alternative which can satisfy them. The increase of aspiration

is caused by one of these two things: first, each party feels that they are able to gain the object, or second, both parties believe that they deserve to get the object. Conflict generally occurs when social norms are getting weaker or going through revolution.

When a conflict occurs, there are five strategies which can be opted by conflicted parties.

1. Contending, that is trying to apply solutions which are more satisfying for one party.
2. Yielding, that is letting down one's own aspiration and willing to accept less than one's expectation.
3. Problem solving, which is seeking for alternatives which satisfy both parties.
4. Withdrawing, that is to choose leaving conflict situation, either physically or psychologically.

Inaction, or doing nothing (Pruitt, 2009:4-6).

There are two ways to track down the strategy opted by conflicted party. The first is dual concern model, that is tracking down strategy preferences based on the strength of concern upon accepted result. Second, perceived feasibility perspective, that is giving attribute to the preferences based on the cost and the achievement (perception of occurrence possibility).

Data analysis method employed in this study is adapted to Alan Swingewood's theory, sociology of literature. According to Swingewood and Laurenson, there are two methods employed to analyse literary work using the study of sociology of literature. The first method is sociology of literature. This method is employed to study literary work which begins from outside of literary work. The second method is literary of sociology. This method is employed to analyse literary work which begins from literary text. That literary work then will be related to social life (Swingewood and Laurenson 1972:72).

Besides, Swingewood gives three concepts to perform literary work approach, i.e. literary work as the reflection of the age, literary work perceived from its production process, and literature in history relationship. For the first concept, Swingewood describes the most relevant way to find out the relationship between literary work and social patterns, that is by relating intrinsic data of the text

to reality of life (Wahyudi, 2013:57).

DISCUSSION

Strategy of novel's characters in dealing with conflict

This novel tells us about a conflict experienced by a family who live at Aleppo and refuse to join ruling party, that is Baath party. As the consequence, they were up against party's concern. Universal concern, such as sense of security, happiness, as well as self identity are up against party's authoritarian policy. That conflict of interest occurs because after coup d'état, the norms which were previously solid are now getting weaker and changing. The setting of this novel is between 1963 to 2005 or about forty years, which means one generation.

There are some strategies applied by novel's characters in dealing with conflict. However, firstly we should understand what the meaning of strategy in Pruitt's view is. According to (2009:7), strategies are various purposes, and tools or ways are needed to achieve those purposes.

Character of Mother

Character of mother in this novel is depicted as a mother of four kids, who was abandoned by his husband. Before fully at home as a house wife, she worked as a teacher. It is depicted that she was very proud of western culture. She was born in a middle class society and loved quietness, neatness, and cleanliness.

The strategy she chose to deal with the conflict is withdrawal and inaction. Mother withdrew herself by leaving Aleppo to get security.

However, even though she had moved, she did not feel secured as she expected. Her new city was gradually crowded by many refugees. Mother became uncomfortable, so that she took on another strategy, an inaction.

Character of Susan

Susan was the only daughter in the family. While she was a woman, Susan was the only character who took on many strategies to deal with the conflict against the party. Her first strategy was contending. She spit on her mother who could not accept reality and make a change.

لم تنتظر سوسن سنوات طويلة كي تبصق عليها بقوة وتخرها بأن العار لن يتركها وسيلحق بها إلى الأبد

‘Susan cannot resist not to spit on her mother and tell her that the disgrace will never leave her, so that she will live with it forever.’ (Khalifah, 2013:39).

This contending was not directly related with the party, but this manner brought the mother to realize that she must not be in silence and getting worse because of her fate. In the next stage, however, Susan changed the strategy. She did withdrawing by leaving for UAE with her boyfriend.

There, she had to face a bitter fact; her boyfriend decided to marry his family’s choice. Susan then moved to France. But she missed family so that she was going back to Syria. In this stage, instead of contending, Susan chose inaction strategy.

Character of Rosyid

Rosyid was the character who had a close relation with Susan. Even, when he suddenly disappeared, Susan was so mad at his teacher who gave him perverted lesson. To deal with the conflict, Rosyid took on several strategies. The first one was contending with ingratiation technique. Rosyid who had musical capability spent most of his time to play music with Uncle Nizar, her mother’s brother.

رشيد أصبح في السنوات الأخيرة صامتا، يضع في أذنيه سدادات قطن، يتساءل من أين أتى كل هذا الضجيج، يحمل كمانه ويخرج إلى تمارينه مع خالي نزار الذي استطاع جمع ستة موسيقيين، ألف فرقة تعزف في النوادي الثقافية موسيقي كلاسيكية لمستمعين يعرفهم نزار واحدا واحدا، في الليل تعزف الفرقة نفسها في كباريه الكاسبا ألحان أغنيات صاخبة لمطربين سعيين، يغنون لرجال سكارى لا يراهم رشيد ويشعر بالسرور أنه قادر على فقد حاسة النظر أيضا.

‘Rosyid was getting reserved recently. He

plugged cotton cloth on his ears. He was questioning where the noise came from. He took violin and practiced with his uncle who gathered six musicians and formed a kind of group. They performed in a classical cafe. Uncle Nizar knew every one of the audiences. But, at that night, they performed at al-Kasba cafe. They sang for the drunk people. Rosyid knew no one of them. He was glad that he could get rid of his ability to see too.’ (Khalifah, 2013:39).

This manner is categorized as contending with ingratiation technique. Going together with some people with the same fate could be a way to gather a similar concern, to form a struggle group which in turn could perform a massive contending.

However, Rosyid’s strategy was then changed. Rosyid did not feel a significant impact, so he switched to withdrawing strategy, be a bridegroom in conflict area in Iraq.

أخبرنا بأنه لا داعي لقلقنا إن غاب فجأة، سيكون في بغداد. لم نكتث لكلماته ولم نصدق. رشيد الرقيق بوجهه الأصفر ونحوه الشديد، أنهكت روحه إلى درجة أنه لم يجد وسيلة للخلاص من قلقها سوى الموت في بغداد

He told us that we should not be worried if he suddenly disappeared. He was in Baghdad. We ignored him and did not believe what he said. That thin Rosyid with a pale face and slimness body, with soul that felt very tired. He felt that the only way to free himself from his depression was the death in Baghdad. (Khalifah, 2013:206).

Unfortunately, before he completed his mission, Rosyid was arrested by opponent’s military. Rosyid was sent to jail, where he rethought what he had done. So, when he was released from the jail, Rosyid chose to go back to Syria. It means that he returned to conflict area. At last, Rosyid chose withdrawing strategy, by killing himself.

فتحت باب غرفتنا وأصابني دوار، جثة رشيد متدلّية من السقف كلمبة كهرباء ملوثة بخراب الذباب، رآه نزار من فتحة الباب وتعالى صوت نشيجه. كان يعرف بأنه

سيموت، وانتظر الفجر كي يتأكد بأن رفيق عمره قد ربط
الأنشودة بشكل جيد، كي لا يترك مجالاً للشك بأن الموت
بسيط كدلق كأس ماء على أرض جافة

'I opened my room door and was surprised to see Rosyid hung on the roof just like an electricity pole Nizar saw Rosyid's body through the door knop and from the voice..... Nizar knew that Rosyid would die soon. But, Nizar had to wait until dawn to convince himself that his nephew had decided the right thing, to get rid of skepticism that death was as simple as pouring water onto dry soil.'

Character of I

Character of I is the narrator of the story. However, there were not too many strategies done by the I. Even, it seemed that the I did not have initiatives in dealing with the conflict. The only strategy he did was inaction. That conclusion is drawn because the I mostly only followed the decision of the other characters. Just like mother, Rosyid, and Susan, the I only stayed in the refuge. But, unlike Susan and Rosyid who were then withdrew himself by leaving the city, the I devotedly accompanied his mother until she died.

Character of Jan

Jan had left Aleppo city for a long time to get marry and live at Geneva, Switzerland. However, he did not have the heart to leave his mother living alone in Aleppo. Jan was then going back to and stay in Aleppo, left his child in Geneva. At first, Jan did not find any conflict with the ruling party. He felt everything was fine. However, he was slowly getting bored and tired of their policy. The strategy done by Jan was contending. He refused to sing the party's theme song in a school event. He event insulted the leader of the party. He insulted the teachers too, and even spat in the room teacher hastily.

لأول مرة رفض ترديد نشيد الحزب في الاجتماع الصباحي.
وقف صامتا يراقبه زملاؤه المبهوتون بتحوّله، ينظر إلى
العلم الوطني بثبات، يستعيد ذكرياته الرائعة في مدرسة

المأمون حين كان يرتفع العلم في سماء المدرسة يحييه
الطلاب بحماس مرددين النشيد الوطني، لم تتأخر التقارير
التي وصفت جان بالعميل الخائن، وأضافت أنه شتم
الحزب القائد والرئيس المفدى ووصف وقوف المعلمين
ورقصهم الدبكة في ساحات المدينة بالهمجية، لم يمهله
ليودع طالباته، حمل حقييته وخرج من المدرسة بعد
تبليغه قرار فصله من سلك التعليم بدقائق، بصق على
غرفة المدرسين غير آبه بما سيحدث.

'For the first time he (Mr Jan) refused to sing the party's theme song at morning ceremony. He kept silence. His friends, who were wondering of what he did, tried to get closer. He unmoved, stared at the flag. A beautiful memory of al Ma'min school bursted out. When the flag was waving in the sky, the students enthusiastically sang the song. Not long after that, there was a decision letter declaring that he was a perverted employee. The letter also declared that he had insulted the party and the leader. He also condemned the teachers who kept silence as savage. He did not wait to say goodbye to his students. After giving some lessons, he took his bag and left the school. He even spat in the teacher room hastily. (Khalifah, 2013:54).

Because of his reckless action, police summoned Jan. He was being questioned of what he did those days. He was threatened with jail, but his uncle bribed the police so he could be freed.

Perceived from feasibility perspective, Jan knew what would happen with him. He knew that by doing his action, he would be expelled from the school and possibly arrested. However, Jan had thought over it deeply, so he was satisfied with the action and ready for the consequences.

After contending, Jan chose another strategy, that was *inaction*. He just stayed at home, lessened his outdoor activity.

The Character of Emilia

Emilia was Jan's sister. She previously lived at Aleppo city, accompanying his mother. But, because

she could not stand with the conflict anymore, Emilia chose to withdraw herself, leaving Aleppo city, and even Syria, to live and stay in Canada.

لم تعد تحتمل إيميلي وجودها وحيدة مع أمها كل هذه السنوات، كتبت لأخيها جورج في أميركا وجان في سويسرا بأنها أصبحت في السادسة و الثلاثين من عمرها، تريد الزواج من بولس حلاق والهجرة إلى كندا. في نهاية الرسالة كتبت بأنها ستترك أمها تموت جوعا وعطشا إذا لم يردوا

على رسائلها

‘Emilia didn’t live with her mother anymore. She wrote a letter to his brother, George in United State and Jan in Switzerland, that she had been thirty six years old. She wanted to marry a cop and live in Canada. In the end of her letter, Emilia wrote that she would let her mother die because of starving if her brothers did not reply that letter. (Khalifah, 2013:43)

Character of Isa Abdul Masih

Isa was Jan’s father. He has a good relationship with the previous leaders of Syria, before Baath party ruled the country. That was why, when Baath party ruled the country, Isa Abdul Masih chose withdrawing strategy by leaving and Syria for Canada.

لسنوات طويلة يتناول غداءه مع ماري وابنته إيميلي التي تنتظر خطيبها بولس حلاق ليصطحبها في مشوار إلى أحد المقاهي. وبعد هجرته إلى كندا خيرها بين اللحاق به أو الانفصال، كتب لها رسالة طويلة أخبرها في نهايتها أن المدين تموت كما البشر، لم يحتمل رائحة الغيتو المفروض عليه العيش فيه كخيار وحيد لا أمل بفك الحصار عنه، أضاف أنه لن يكون أحمرق ليأتي بولد إلى شوارع هذه المدينة القذرة، التي تحولت إلى مكان القتل.

‘For several years, Isa Abdul Malik had lunch with his wife, Mary. His daughter, Emilia, waited for her fiancee to accompany

her, talk intimately in a cafe. After his departure to Canada, he gave Emilia two options: live with him in Canada or stay in Syria. He said in his long letter, that Syria’s cities have died, just like the people. There was no scent of life anymore. There was only one choice, but without expectation to change it. He added that he was not too fool to come with a little kid, to a dirty city road which had been turned into a battle field. (Khalifah, 2013:46)

Political Condition in Syria

Since gaining its independence from France, Syria underwent several coup d’etat. The first one was in 1963, which was done by Baath party upon the ruling government at that time. Next, in 1970, Hafez al-Assad took advantage of internal conflict of Baath party to take over the state power (www.nationsonline.org). The reign of Hafez al-Assad lasted from 1971 to 2000 and was continued by his son, Bassar al-Assad.

When the first coup d’etat occurred in Aleppo, the setting of the novel was Aleppo and Damascus. Both cities were the battlefield of Baath party’s supporter and their opponent. This was equitable because Syria’s leaders after independence came from these cities (Galvani, 1974:5, and Faksh, 1984:133). Aleppo and Damascus cities shattered because of the war between both parties, and it was similar to what was depicted by Khalifah (2013:158), that the cities were gripping and odd, just like their people.

يعيد رسم سكان مدينة واحدة يتقاسمون هواء مدينة واحدة خائفين بعضهم من بعض، المسيحيون خائفون من المسلمين، الأقليات الطائفية خائفة من الأكثرين، والأكثرين خائفة من بطش الأقلية، قوميات وأديان وطوائف خائفون من الرئيس وضباط مخابراته، والرئيس خائف من أعوانه وحراسه، وأعوانه يبحثون عن طرق مبتكرة للوشاية بعضهم ببعض وتقديم ولائهم اللامتناهي.

‘Again, Jean depicted the occupation of the city. The people was afraid of each other.

The cristians were afraid the moslems, the small groups afraid of the bigger one. The big group worried about elite's attack. The leaders, religionists, and some other groups were afraid of the leader and his aides. Meanwhile, the leader himself was afraid of his own group. That group would always look for the new ways to agitate among them and preserve their reign.

The first opposition of Baath party was Ikhwanul Muslimin. As said by Porat (2010:2), Ikhwanul Muslimin considered Syria's regime as the enemy of Islam because they were tyrant, corrupt, and heresy. Ikhwanul Muslimin as the opponent of ruling regime carried out several gun resistances. Even, between 1960s to 1970s, Ikhwanul Muslimin's leaders preferred a crossfire than negotiation (Porat, 2010:2). It means that during the first decade of Baath party's reign, contending or resistance was the choice of their opponents.

Interestingly, the issue of religion was so dominant in Ikhwanul Muslimin's struggle upon ruling regime. As said by Talhamy (2009:565-566) there were some of Baath party's leader said that religion should be at museum. So, it was not an odd thing if the regime's law erased the statement that Islam was the official religion of the country. And it was happening several times. The unique thing was, as the respons for the opposition in regards with this religious issue, there were Quran publication with the picture of Syria's president, Hafez al-Assad. That Quran was known as Asad al-Quran (Talhamy, 2009:566). And this seemed like inspiring Khalifah's statement (2013:197) about Quran:

القرآن ليس كتاب المسلمين فقط بل كتاب البشرية، بين صفحاته وإعجاز آياته كل الحلول لمشاكلنا الروحية.

'Quran is not only for the Moslem, but it is the scripture for all human being. In its sheets, and in its magical verses, there are solutions for our spiritual problems.'

Conflict in Syria leads many people to immigrate. According to the data presented by Fargues (2012:2), since 1950s, many Syrian rich people have been immigrating to neighboring

country, Lebanon. Besides, many Syrian immigrants have been seeking asylum to north American and European countries (Fargues, 2012:4). No wonder if Khalifah (2013:24, 41, 43, 46) told about the characters (Nariman, Hasan, Emilia, and Isa Abdul Malik) who sought asylum to Canada. Canada as the choice is absolutely not accidental, because the official languages of Canada are French and English (www.portal.mahkamahkonstitusi.go.id). Meanwhile, Syria was the colony of France. Khalifah (2013:43) depicted French's position among the Syrian.

في صفِّ الحادي عشر عشقت مدرس اللغة الفرنسية جان عبد المسيح، كتبت له رسائل رقيقة، أخبرته عن وحشتها بعيداً عنه، من أجله أحببت اللغة الفرنسية ودخلت كلية الآداب

'When she was at the eleventh grade, Susan missed the French teacher, Jan Abdul Masih. She wrote short letters and told about her anxiety because he away from her. Mr Jan was the reason she chose literature faculty.'

From that quote, it can be said that French was not foreign language in Syrians' life.

Not only the Syrians who had to immigrate as the consequences of the conflict, the Kurdish had to bear similar consequences. As stated by Fargues (2012:2), many Kurdish's citizenships were rejected by the ruling regime.

There are several attitudes in regards with Syria's relationship with other countries. For example, Syria's relation with Egypt and Iraq. These three countries had a very close relationship. Even, they once intended to establish one nation, Greater Syria. However, the relationship between Syria and Saudi Arabian was far from harmonic. In 2004, Syria received sanctions from United States because of accusation in supporting terrorism in Iraq. It seems that the accusation was true as stated by Khalifah (2013:205-206).

Social reflection of LSMHM

The conflict experienced by the characters of LSMHM are representation of what is happening in Syria in a real world. Some reflections of the novel are below:

a. Refuge

Because of the conflict, some characters of the novel had to move from Batau, even from the country. The father who left his wife and children in Syria can be considered as irresponsible. He chose to leave his responsibility and go with another woman (Khalifah, 2013:45). However, father's choice was also driven by conflict environment factor. There was no hope to think about improvement, but the focus was to defeat the real enemy, that was their brothers from their own country.

b. Social deviation

In addition to refuge, conflict leads to social deviation. As what happened to Uncle Nizar and Habbah who turned into gay men, Rasyid lost his guidance of life so that decided to be a "bridegroom", and Susan chose to work as a prostitute in UAE. Those deviations occurred because social control did not function as it should be because of the conflict.

c. Exclusion and Harrasment

The conflict also leads to exclusion. The character of mother was excluded by her friends. As a math teacher, she was actually respected. But since she refused to participate in the party, she was excluded by her friends. Meanwhile, Habbah who was also refused to join ruling party was abused by party's sympathizers. She was undressed, even though by the women.

CONCLUSION

All incidents happened to the family of LSMHM seem to be the expression of the writer upon the consequences he gets as a Syrian. There are several strategies performed by the characters in dealing with conflict, i.e. contending, withdrawing, and inaction. Two other strategies, i.e. *problem solving* and *yielding*, are not chosen by all characters. The contending done by Susan, Mr Jan, and Rosyid seems to be the expression of the writer upon what was done by Ikhwanul Muslimin. Opposition in the form of withdrawing is done by the mother, Emilia, and Isa Abdul Masih. Those three characters are leaving Aleppo city to live in another city, or even another country. In fact, Syrian people, also choose withdrawing strategy by migrating to other countries. Meanwhile, inaction strategy is chosen by the character of I. This is a

depiction of what the majority of Syrian people do in dealing with the conflict between the reign and the opposition. This conflict leads to refuge, social deviation, sexual harassment, and also exclusion.

The significance which can be concluded by reading the conflict occurred in LSMHM is that a ruler should prioritize the peaceful and sympathetic measures to perform their program and leadership. No matter how strong the agitation is, shutting off the chances for the people to express themselves would only be a time bomb that can explode anytime. As the result, the previously planned order and advancement become collapsed and failed. The religion should always be a consideration in making decisions, particularly when the society was the religious one. Religion seems to be a potent issue to be agitated.

Conflict possibly occur anywhere. However, the best way to deal with it is through discussion. Trying to sit together in a same position, no party should consider themselves higher than the other party.

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