

On the Aesthetics of Humor in Contemporary Egyptian Fiction

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Abstract

Although literature and humor are two distinct areas, they complete each other. Indeed, this paper aims to examine the use of humor as a tool of resistance and subversion in contemporary Middle Eastern fiction in Egyptian novelist Hamdi Abu Golayyel's *al-Fā'il* (2008) and *Luṣūṣ mutaḳā'idūn* (2002). In particular, this paper strives to re-evaluate the main elements of humor such as satire, puns and quibbles. It highlights their use on thematic, stylistic and meta-narrative levels to better accentuate the experience of the characters and the re-emergence of all that has been repressed. Having adopted a structuralist approach to elucidate the intersection of humorous and subversive characteristics in the personality of abject characters, the textual analysis looks at the narratives' strategies and the constructions of the protagonists. This study also examines how humor interacts with the stories' main narrative threads and how it is generated by the textual structure, the characters and the deliberate use of Bedouin accent. More importantly, this study identifies the psychological and social functions of Egyptian humor asserting the need for adopting cross-cultural poetics when dealing with humor.

Keywords: Contemporary Egyptian fiction, humor, laughter, puns, satire

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Introduction

The distinction between humor and literature is central to the development of humor studies. While humor studies have always been integrated into other disciplines including philosophy, psychology, anthropology, folklore and the history of religions, humor has always added an interesting dimension to literary studies. Existing notions in literature like black comedy, and the use of puns and quibbles among others must be re-questioned.

The use of language in humorous novels requires certain skills and gifts. Indeed, literary language must mirror humor in all its manifestations. To strike a balance between humorous and literary language is an achievement. Indeed, novelists must be endowed with particular gifts to entertain and teach readers simultaneously. Humorous novels lead to catharsis and softly purify souls.

Research Subject and Importance

The importance of this paper stems from the fact that it draws on both humor studies and literary studies to better bring out the sense of humor in Hamdi Abu Golayyel's two selected novels entitled *al-Fā'il* and *Lusūṣ mutaḳā'idūn*. Both novels mark a twist in the Egyptian novel itself mainly because of their use of humor. Critics explain that the positive recognition of both novels is thanks to their innovative compositional methods. Indeed, humor-generating strategies are intermixed with the narrative structure, the construction of characters and linguistic variation. This would also foreground the importance of humor in developing literary discourses and facilitating cross-literary humorous exchanges with the aim of reaching a thorough understanding of literary humor, the poetics of puns, quibbles and double entendres, and the multifaceted ways in which the fields of humor and literature interact.

Research Problem

It is worthy of note that the history of the evolution of comic forms is variegated and complex. It is also telling of the various characteristics of humor and its different manifestations like the form of stand-up. It foregrounds the conventions by which modern humor is established and is the result of the adoptions and adaptation of traditions traced back to Classical, Renaissance and even early Twentieth century times. This suggests that the field of humor studies must develop its own standards and norms. Accordingly, this paper proposes a novel approach that highlights the derisive and emphatic dimensions of humor. Farber brings out these dimensions when he maintains that a humorous situation leads to an "immediate ascendance-something that we want to think, believe, feel, express, something that is nearer to the heart's desire" (2007, p. 69).

Corpus

The textual analysis of Hamdi Abu Golayyel's *al-Fā'il* and *Lusūṣ mutaḳā'idūn* is twofold: first, the contribution of humor to literature will be highlighted assuming that humor is a key feature of the two texts at the thematic and stylistic levels. The approach is not limited to ironic asides and laughable episodes, but includes the construction of the fictional world upon a playful logic (Dozio, 2021, p.4). Second, this paper adopts a structuralist approach to explore the humor-generating strategies in the selected novels. According to Dozio, "the study of literary humor combines a local and a cross-cultural dimension since wordplay and cultural references are highly local" (p.5). To cut a niche for itself, this study shows that the established theories of superiority

and incongruity may not be the right angles to assess the specificity of humor studies. Instead, this paper focuses on the importance of humor as a motif in the novels and investigates which characters, themes and linguistic choices poeticize and reinforce the sense of humor.

To address these issues, the paper will first survey humor in literary studies. This is conducted with analytical tools of humor studies to gain insight into the mechanisms of the different types of humor deployed in Abu Golayyel's novels. Special attention will be paid to the mechanisms of empathic and derisive humor including funny characters and comic performances. After providing a summary of the plots, this paper will examine the representation of the main characters through the selection of humorous episodes. The targets of satirical criticism will also be identified.

Objectives

The main objectives of this paper are the followings:

- To appraise the intersection between humor and literature
- To examine the use of humor as a tool of resistance and subversion in Egyptian fiction
- To re-evaluate the main elements of humor like satire and puns

Research Methodology

The present study conducts a corpus-based analysis. Appropriate passages will be extracted and studied to determine how humor and literature coalesce in a perfect manner. The affective dimension of humor must be foregrounded and an account of all those instances of incongruity where humor is used as a tool to transgress fear and other unpleasant feelings must be highlighted.

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Literature Review

Although humor is related to wit, satire, sarcasm and puns, it does not have its own standards and norms as an independent discipline. Two main theories of humor studies can be identified. The first theory is the superiority theory. Farber (2007) has asserted that this theory was used since the times of Plato and Aristotle, and that it provides a revealing but narrow view in relation to the application of humor in literature (2007, p.72). The second theory is the incongruity theory. Although it is promising, it still needs further research (Carroll, as cited in Farber, 2007, p.67). Indeed, Farber asserts that this theory neither explores in depth the affective dimension of humor nor explains the differences in the way individual perceivers respond (p.68). He maintained that:

the major weakness of incongruity theory has been a failure to account adequately for all of those instances of incongruity that are not funny: for example, brainteasers, logic problems, and puzzles (...) What we need is a humor theory where stipulations don't have to be added on because they follow logically from the theory itself. (p.68)

It seems that these theoretical frameworks fail to provide a clear understanding of the way humor works in fiction.

This study focuses on two types of literary humor: derisive and empathic humor. It also foregrounds the inextricable relation between humor and the unconscious, the sexual and the non-sense. In this respect, Martin has asserted that: "humor is essentially an emotional response of mirth invoked in a social context that is elicited by the perception of playful incongruity and is expressed through smiling and laughter" (2007, p.10). By experiencing humor, individuals are

bound together. The release of tension through laughter and smile is redeeming. In this vein, Freud (2003) corroborates that pleasure results from the liberation of nonsense despite constraint and restriction.

More strikingly, literary humor is developed in long texts whose complexity is increased by their aesthetic qualities. Indeed, Nilsen and Nilsen (2008) have pointed out:

among the reasons that comic novels and essays can more easily qualify as ‘literature’ than can stand-up comedy is that the authors have space to include smart allusions and to tie them together. Because of lack of space, jokes and cartoons are necessarily filled with stereotypes, while more sophisticated literary pieces are lexically packed, meaning that several strands of humor are being developed simultaneously. In addition to using such surface structure techniques as puns and word play, authors of fuller pieces make use of such deep structure tropes as metaphors, similes, irony, and synecdoche. They have space to develop truly humorous characters and to establish and break patterns. (p.245)

Thus, it can be said that a humorous novel is a fictional work in which a humorous effect is appropriate.

More importantly, critics distinguish between the categories of jocular literature and satirical literature. In fact, the study of literature and humor looks into the textual structure and the creative use of language. According to Nilsen and Nilsen (2008):

this means that literary humor scholars have much in common with critics of literature in general because of the extensive overlap between what humor scholars describe as the most common features of humor and the characteristics that literary critics look for in narratives including ambiguity, exaggeration, hostility, irony, superiority, surprise, shock, word play, incongruity and incongruity resolution. (p.246)

Subsequently, humor is the angle through which stylistic and thematic features of narratives are explored.

Furthermore, humor can aestheticize the literary text and place it across multiple humor traditions. As El-Ariss has asserted: “the strategic use of humor and jest in texts from the Arab and Islamic world was a key to unsettle stereotypes, engage a difficult political context and communicate aesthetic values without reducing texts to mere representations of a culture or a political situation” (p. 130). The formal innovations of Arab authors of the previous decades have become more visible with Hamdi Abu Golayyel. His fiction of the 1990s offers some interesting material for the study of humor and related phenomena. The two selected novels within the scope of this paper maintain a constant and recurring effect of laughter caused by the characters, their physical descriptions and their accents.

Abu Golayyel is often associated with humor because of his vivid language and depiction of eccentric characters living on the margins. In this regard, Asfur has suggested that “writing from and about the margins reflects a carnivalesque joy subverting both the social hierarchies and literary compositional principles” (pp.309-318). Furthermore, “the thematic focus on the margins and urban world has restricted the selection to a sub-group of novels that portray these communities with humor” (Dozio, 2021, p. 52). The two selected novels are representative of a trend of humorous writing featuring the adventures of eccentric characters in marginal communities. The analysis aims at understanding how these novels fit into and contribute to contemporary Egyptian fiction through humor and illustrating the humor-generating strategies that

determine their main thematic and stylistic features. A protégé of the late satirical master Muhammad Moestagab, Abu Golayyel is keen at sarcasm and satire. He is also talented in representing the startling and the ridiculous in a melodramatic way.

Laughing Together: or Social Dimension of Laughter

In *al-Fā'il* and *Luṣūṣ mutaḳā'idūn*, humor shifts from pure entertainment into social criticism and provides relief for characters in distress. In other words, humor in these novels is seen as an alternative form of social attachment. In addition, it is semi-legal as it is controlled by the authorities through censorship. Humor thus brings the members of the Egyptian community together and gives them some relief from everyday life and social restrictions. In addition, it becomes a form of resistance and challenges order and hierarchy. More importantly, humorous episodes in *Luṣūṣ* and *al-Fā'il* are used to highlight the representation of the marginalized urban space and Bedouin identity. Linguistic variation and black comedy mark the style of both novels. In his comparison of the two novels, Badawī insists on the aggressive dimension of the ludicrous in *Luṣūṣ*. Indeed, if in this novel, puns enhance the satirical effect, in *al-Fā'il*, they are built on a playful and comic logic.

Al-Fā'il consists of thirty-two short chapters that are characterized by fragmentation and non-linear construction of the narrative. The novel recounts the story of a young Bedouin, Ḥamdī, who migrates from Fayyūm to Cairo where he joins a group of construction workers. The protagonist recalls various episodes of his resettlement and the life of his family, who abandoned nomadic life and became settled. He also dwells through memories of his childhood and college years, recounts his co-workers' adventures and confesses his lack of success with women. The title of novel was translated into English as *A Dog with no Tail* (2009) which refers to an episode where the narrator and a female student exchange insults in Bedouin dialect. Striving to impress her, he says: "You look like a duck coming back from market." (pp. 103-112). However, she quickly replies imitating his accent: "And you-'re a dog with no tail" (p.112).

As for the novel *Luṣūṣ mutaḳā'idūn*, it tells the stories of the residents of an apartment building in Manshiyyat Naṣir. The building's owner lives there with his wife, four children and their respective wives, and some tenants. The landlord's choice of tenants depends on their social class. They must belong to the upper class. Yet, the majority of the tenants are migrants. This marginalized community struggles over authority, petty crimes and a sort of internal justice. For instance, the father blackmails the tenants and runs a prostitution network with Jamal, a drug dealer and his brother Amir is the leader of a group of marijuana-smokers.

In both novels, social interactions reflect the collective dimension of humor. Indeed, humor creates a sense of group affiliation since it activates a common cultural and comic background. Furthermore, psychological relief is guaranteed thanks to humor. For instance, in *Luṣūṣ mutaḳā'idūn*, the community of flatmates' incessant laughter irritates the landlord. More strikingly, in *al-Fā'il*, arrested students, whether they are adherent members in the movement of Muslim Brotherhood or not, resort to laughter when transferred from the college to the Directorate of State Security on a Central Security truck, to support each other and to come to terms with the fear of torture and prison:

The central security truck was as packed as a public bus. Fifty students hale and hearty, a disabled student, and a student who turned out to be the son of a police officer and got out before we started to move. As I got in, I saw a student I recognized. We'd never had much

to do with each other but the moment we saw each other we shrieked and embraced in an ecstasy of relief. Staggering about, we both spoke simultaneously, “Did you see? Did you see what happened?” Then, [we] burst into an uncontrollable torrent of giggles. I tried to pull myself together, reminding myself of the slaps and kicks to come, but it was no good. We were past caring, every one of us, and then it was all playful punches and slaps on shoulders, buttocks, and the backs of our necks. Even the soldiers were laughing. They took us from the college to the Beni Suef Directorate of State Security, and the entire journey was spent doubled up with laughter. If you saw us in this security truck, you’d think we were on a school trip or a wedding. (pp.77-82)

An uncontrollable stream of laughter spreads from the students to the soldiers. In this carnivalesque scene, protesters and soldiers find themselves bound together as they laugh together in the midst of chaos. It is nonsense humor. Yet, it brings the students and the soldiers together: their vertical relationship cannot stand.

In this context, Farber maintains that a recent MRI study has found out that humor engages a subcortical reward system in the brain including an area that has also been implicated in turning anguish and distress into an uncontrollable happiness. Henceforth, humor has the power of masking fear and turning it into a positive force. It is a kind of empathic humor. “With empathic humor,” Farber asserts “we experience the relief of discovering that our individual failings are shared and therefore less shameful” (p.77). In his opinion, empathic humor reassures the characters that even at the level of their failings, they are not alone: the failings are not only shared, but also redeemed.

Humor confers on individual experience collective dimensions. In *al-Fā‘il* and *Luṣūṣ*, humor is a means of survival, allowing the characters to endure the hardships of life and work. The effectiveness of humor in these novels is most revealed when the wordplay and puns are based on a common dialect or jargon. This creates a sense of group affiliation as it activates a common cultural and comic background. As the stories unfold, the multiple functions of humor and humor-generating mechanisms are revealed and exemplified through some recurrent images. The main humor generating techniques are wordplay, puns, similes, picturesque details, the description of the characters’ way of laughing and a rich linguistic amalgam mixing the register of insults, the vernacular and the jargon of prostitution.

Humorous Characters

The apartment building of *Luṣūṣ* is in the city’s outskirts. The shared room in *al-Fā‘il* is located in an almost central area. Besides, characters function as doubles of narrators. In *al-Fā‘il*, the name Ḥamdī is equivocal. The anecdotes related to the name Ḥamdī constitute a self-mocking strategy. On the one hand, the author’s real name is Ḥamdī. The narrator, on the other hand, has been anonymous and will reveal that his name is Ḥamdī in the next chapter. In addition, there are three other Ḥamdī: Ḥamdī Shadid, Ḥamdī muṭarrāf and Ḥamdī al-‘abīṭ, who are described in the following passage:

The first thing that drew me to him was his name. A strange name; obscure and unintelligible. I once expressed how I felt about it in a short story. It wasn’t Hamad or Haamed or Hamid, but Hamdi. You didn’t know whether it referred to you or the person you were talking to. Most of the Ḥamdī I’ve known have either been crackpots or idiots of some kind. Hamdi our neighbor in the village was a freak. He had a huge [sexual organ]. They said he could rest its

tip on the ground when he pissed. Now, it's a matter of common knowledge that the well-endowed are prone to mental instability. It's not so clear, however, if this claim is motivated by spite or revenge or possibly a desire to affirm that a shortness of appendage (a problem that has haunted men down the ages) is in fact a natural state, or whether the long-dongs really are insane or at least soft in the head. (p.30)

It is worthy to note that such humorous descriptions trigger laughter spontaneously. The readers identify themselves with the characters.

The other Ḥamdī I knew from primary and secondary school was definitely crazy. He was called Ḥamdī the Fool and used to admit it himself. This one time he stopped me on the street, put his hand on my shoulder and, with spittle flecking my face, declared, “Ḥamdī the Fool says to you, ‘Your mother’s cunt.’” He terrified me. This was in the fifties. He would dribble in his beard and ride around on a stalk of wheat or a sunflower like it was a car, honking his horn, swerving, and hitting the brakes to save people and passing sheep. (p.30)

To reinforce the comic potential of the urban character, the narrator uses the figures of the mad and the fool. In Dozio's opinion, “Hung Ḥamdī is indirectly associated with madness through gossip; whereas Ḥamdī the Fool is officially labelled as the village fool, a status that he seems to internalize when he adopts this nickname to talk about himself” (2021, p.244).

In *Luṣūṣ*, the relationship between the doctor, the narrator and Abu Antar, the owner of the building is cast in a funny context. They are brought together in a scene made ludicrous by the insistence on the lower parts of the body, which are usually evoked to induce humorous notes. Indeed, sexual humor is prominent in these scenes. For Farber, the most obvious form of sexual humor might appear to be “those obscene jokes that Freud sees as the equivalent in higher social strata of the ‘bawdry’ of the common people, the lewd talk that he says is like an act of unclothing the person of different sex at whom it is directed” (2007, p81). In Freudian terminology, an obscene joke is improper and is recognized as a kind of harassment. Yet, sexual humor is not entirely sexual. Rather, it is derisive or empathic.

In the third sequence in *Luṣūṣ*, the Doctor and the narrator see Abu Antar carrying a heavy sack upstairs and rush to help him, but something unexpected happens:

Suddenly, his trousers fell off. They were white and baggy [...] He'd bought them back in the days of scrimp and save. One of us must have trodden on them or may be the elastic gave away. One moment they were round his buttocks and the next they were trailing between his feet. His bottom, perhaps from shame, was tightly clenched and looked like a mouth that had lost its teeth. I would never have guessed he had such a delightful bottom. Not skin on bone, but skin stretched across two hard muscles [...] The gloomy Abu Antar straightened up and remained naked, and his genitals resembled a monkey crouching in the jungle. (pp.109-117)

Comparing Abu Antar's genitals to a monkey crouching in the jungle is funny. The embarrassing situation accentuates the sense of humor. The disparaging attitude towards the figure of the landlord, who epitomizes patriarchy and power is praiseworthy. When the landlord is belittled, the readers laugh at the reversal in his representation from a mighty patriarchal figure into a humiliated person.

Other instances of self-mockery functioning as a humorous strategy involves the episode where Hamdi in *al-Fā'il* will be interviewed by an examiner for the position of cultural attaché. Surprisingly, the examiner quotes a popular song and asks him about the composer's name. The protagonist's reaction is awkward. He bursts out laughing:

He [the examiner] snapped,
 “Whose words are those?”

I burst out laughing. I heard this song many times and I even sang it to myself on occasion – but I did not expect to hear it from the mouth of such an exalted person. The way he drew out the song in a brutal warble then suddenly whirled around to surprise, or rather assault, me with his question was something I was unable to let pass in silence. I tried to apologize and I almost kissed his hands. I told him that I was from the countryside and just remembered something funny. but he insisted on canceling the meeting. Thus, my interview as well as the interview of my friend and other applicants ended.

If not for this stupid cackling, I would’ve become a prominent cultural figure. I was the best candidate because I brought the file of my published work. But, let’s not regret. It had nothing to do with laughter. (pp.4/10-11)

The protagonist realizes that it is almost impossible for him, as an intellectual to achieve recognition. His detachment warms the readers’ hearts because he voices the dilemmas of many young writers, talented but still unknown because of their hybrid identity. Like Hamdi, young authors are being squeezed out by those in power. Their Bedouin origin stands as an obstacle to their career.

Identity and Bedouin Heritage

Short funny anecdotes interspersed in the narratives elicit reflection on the economic and social reasons for the migration of families from the countryside to the city. They reveal the gap between the Bedouin’s desire to adapt to a new way of life and the desire to remain true to customs and traditions. The confrontation between the villagers and the townspeople is humorously revealed in the novel. In *al-Fā’il*, the narrator’s father is represented as an ignorant Bedouin lost in the city. For example, when he and his wife see electricity in the city hospital, they mistake the electric cable for a snake. The father beats the cable with a stick, as he would do in the village. When a civilized person passes by, he explains the whole situation to him. In turn, the narrator’s mother shares her experience with other villagers: “She told goggled-eyed neighbors about the electric demon that stings like a snake and the black box full of tiny people who accost you and speak to you” (p.131).

The unusual physical appearance of the narrator’s father adds a humorous aspect to the description:

Sabah was clearly taken with his appearance, awestruck by this living dinosaur with his shanna and Bedouin dialect. [...] When he remained motionless, she offered to let him ride with her to the Auberge and take whatever he wanted in return. She would put a word in with the mayor to transfer him to a better job. He declined with maximal disdain and from that day forward was celebrated in Abu Tahoun and the surrounding villages as the man who turned down Sabah when she offered herself to him. (pp.125-26/133-34)

In addition, in *al-Fā’il*, there is an intertextual reference to *al-Sīra al-Hilāliyya*. In chapter five, it is mentioned that the narrator’s family descends from the Hilāl tribe. This is meant to reinforce the positive image of the brave and generous Bedouin.

Religion and Humor

Religion, in its social dimension, reinforces humor in both *al-Fā'il* and *Luṣūṣ*. In *Luṣūṣ*, the religion-related episodes reflect the overall sarcastic tone of the novel mainly the characters Hassan and Abu Jamal. Shaykh Hassan leaves his hometown in Sūhāj due to an affair with his mother-in-law. He meets Abū Jamāl in al-Azhar. They were both waiting for a *fatwā*. Hassan becomes a tenant in Abū Jamāl's house and tries to repent by becoming ardent religious man.

In *Luṣūṣ*, the names and nicknames of religious persons bear an implicit ironic meaning that is sometimes made revealed through wordplay. Another character is Copt Adil from Sūhāj. He is called Koftes (*kūftis* or *kūftas*). This nickname sounds like an insult to him because it reminds him of a humiliating episode that excluded him from a group of friends when he was a child. Adil befriends first the landlord Abu Jamal, then joins Amir's marijuana smoking gang. His sense of humor entertains them: "Adil loves jokes and banter. He always gets the punch line. And Amer desperately needs a buddy when they're having fun. It was only a matter of days before Adil became one of the gang members" (p. 101).

To better portray Adil's character, the narrator tells the readers details about his childhood. The boys mistreated and ridiculed him. His father, a village's carpenter, failed to repair the mosque's roof. At first, the narrator trusts Adil's point of view. Afterwards, he discredits Adil's reliability as a narrator. In a word, Adil is presented as an outsider both in the village and in the city. This calls into question religious harmony and equality in Egyptian society, challenging the official discourse in which the issue is taken for granted as part of the Egyptian cultural heritage. In *Luṣūṣ*, a sarcastic tone is employed to comment on contemporary religious dynamics.

Likewise, in *al-Fā'il*, a short funny anecdote can generate humor. For instance,

the ruse of the look-alikes evokes the artificial nature of doubles; the repetitiveness of the action makes it mechanical; blindness, usually associated with wise religious figures might be a handicap, but turns into an advantage; finally, the colloquial word "*il-dāhiyya*" ("the sly old fox", literally 'calamity, sly devil'), used to define the *shaykh*, reflects the security forces' frustration. (Dozio, p.262)

Indeed, the scene reflects the struggle between the security forces and the political religious dissent group. This episode is set in the 1980s in Fayyūm City:

I heard the tales – or rather, the divine miracles about Shaykh Omar Abd al-Rahman, who used to preach in the mosque under the noses of State Security agents and then walk the streets surrounded by a crowd of supporters. The State Security was unable to arrest him due to the pressure of people and many blind doubles dressed like the Shaykh. Each time they thought they'd finally arrested the sightless sage and each time their victim would tell them he was a look-alike and that the sly old fox had fled to Asyut or somewhere else. (pp. 126-134)

The playful tone of the episode pokes fun at the government's efforts to control the Muslim Brotherhood. Similarly, humor gives other groups the strength to resist authority and censorship. Dozio's assertion is the best to conclude this section since it appraises satire and humor and their seismic effects in works of literature: "While humor can be one of the weapons of satire to ridicule a person or a behaviour, it also adds amusement to the reading experience, strengthens positive affiliation, and reveals something about the absurdity of life" (p. 289).

Conclusion

Language is the tool by which Abu Golayyel creates a common humorous tone in both narratives. The characters portrayed in *al-Fā'il* primarily use Bedouin dialect and constructional jargon. Similarly, in *Luṣūṣ* the speech of the inhabitants of the *Manshiyya* is generously saturated with slang expressions, obscene words and drugs' jargon. In addition, humorous personages are endowed with strange behavior and distinctive appearance. These descriptions focus mainly on sexual references and vulgar expressions.

Humor brings relief to the numerous characters introduced in both novels. It becomes a way of their interaction and resistance, undermines the existing order and the authority of those in power, and also destroys stereotypes about civilized people, Bedouins and peasants. As critic Dozio puts it, "humor smooths these stereotypes since they are alternatively embodied by the narrator's fluid identity or mocked by him" (2021, p. 263).

The merit of this study lies in examining novels, which are representative of a humorous sub-genre in contemporary Egyptian fiction and a trend within satirical prose. As has been illustrated, humor structures these literary texts and allows the progression of the story. More importantly, the interplay of humor, satirical criticism, and literature have a didactic function.

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