



## THE SELF-REVELATION OF TAUFIQ AL-HAKIM IN THE NOVEL *HIMĀR AL-HAKĪM*: A CARL THOMPSON PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

Self-image in real life is often shaped through the interaction between personal identity and social pressures that influence how one should act. Self-image in a social context is not something static, but rather a result of dynamic construction. This study aims to analyze revealing the self of Taufiq Al-Hakim as both an author and a character in the novel "*Himār Al-Hakīm*". This research is qualitative in nature, employing a library research method, using literary texts as the object of analysis. The data source used in this study is the Arabic novel "*Himār Al-Hakīm*" by Taufiq Al Hakim (Maktabah Misr, 1990, 147 pages). The data collection technique used is reading and note-taking. The researcher applies the data analysis model from Miles and Huberman, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, using Carl Thompson's travel literature theory as an analytical tool. This research reveals three main narrative forms in the novel "*Himār Al-Hakīm*" by Taufiq Al-Hakim: (1) forms of reporting the world (4 data), (2) forms of revealing the self (4 data), and (3) forms of representing the others (5 data). The novel reflects characteristics of postcolonial travel writing through subjectivity, self-reflection, and a quest for identity. Al-Hakim blends autobiographical elements with an entertaining and reflective style, while also engaging in *othering* by portraying Eastern culture as inferior and Western culture as superior.

### تجريد

تتكون صورة الذات في الحياة الواقعية غالبًا من خلال نتائج التفاعل بين الهوية الشخصية والضغط الاجتماعي التي تؤثر على كيفية تصرف الفرد. إن صورة الذات في السياق الاجتماعي ليست شيئًا ثابتًا، بل هي نتيجة لبناء ديناميكي. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل صورة الذات لطفيق الحكيم ككاتب وشخصية في رواية "حمار الحكيم". هذه الدراسة هي بحث نوعي باستخدام منهجية البحث المكتبي، التي تستخدم النص الأدبي كموضوع للتحليل. تعتبر رواية "حمار الحكيم" التي كتبها توفيق الحكيم (مكتبة مصر، 1990، 147 صفحة) هي مصدر البيانات المستخدمة في البحث. التقنية المستخدمة لجمع البيانات هي تقنية القراءة والتدوين. تطبق الباحثة نموذج تحليل البيانات من مايلز وهوبرمان، الذي يتضمن ثلاث مراحل: تقليص البيانات، عرض البيانات، واستخلاص النتائج باستخدام نظرية أدب الرحلات لكارل طومبسون كأداة تحليل. يكشف هذا البحث عن ثلاثة أشكال سردية رئيسية في رواية "حمار الحكيم" لتوفيق الحكيم: (1) أشكال سرد العالم (4 بيانات)، (2) أشكال كشف الذات (4 بيانات)، و (3) أشكال تمثيل الآخر (5 بيانات). تعكس الرواية سمات أدب الرحلات في فترة ما بعد الاستعمار من خلال الذاتية، والتأمل الذاتي، والسعي

وراء الهوية. يمزج الحكيم بين عناصر السيرة الذاتية وأسلوب شيق وتأملي، مع الانخراط في تجسيد الآخر من خلال تصوير الثقافة الشرقية على أنها أدنى، والثقافة الغربية على أنها متفوقة.

#### الكلمات المفتاحية :

أدب الرحلات  
كارل طومبسون  
حمار الحكيم  
صورة الذات

#### Kata kunci:

Sastra Perjalanan  
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*Himār al-Hakīm*  
Pengungkapan Diri

#### Abstrak

Gambaran diri dalam kehidupan nyata sering kali terbentuk melalui hasil interaksi antara identitas personal dan tekanan sosial yang memengaruhi bagaimana seseorang bertindak. Gambaran diri dalam konteks sosial bukanlah sesuatu yang statis, melainkan hasil konstruksi yang dinamis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gambaran diri Taufiq Al-Hakim sebagai pengarang sekaligus tokoh dalam novel "*Himār Al-Hakīm*". Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan (library research), yang menggunakan teks sastra sebagai objek analisis. Sumber data yang digunakan dalam penelitian adalah novel Arab berjudul "*Himār Al-Hakīm*" karya Taufiq Al Hakim (Maktabah Misr, 1990, 147 hlm). Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah teknik baca dan catat. Peneliti menerapkan model analisis data dari Miles dan Huberman, yang mencakup tiga tahapan: reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan dengan menggunakan teori sastra perjalanan Carl Thompson sebagai pisau analisis. Penelitian ini mengungkap tiga bentuk naratif utama dalam novel "*Himār Al-Hakīm*" karya Taufiq Al-Hakim: (1) bentuk peliputan dunia (4 data), (2) bentuk pengungkapan diri (4 data), dan (3) bentuk representasi orang lain (5 data). Novel ini mencerminkan karakteristik penulisan perjalanan pascakolonial melalui subjektivitas, refleksi diri, dan pencarian identitas. Al-Hakim memadukan unsur-unsur autobiografi dengan gaya yang menghibur dan reflektif, sekaligus terlibat dalam upaya pengasingan dengan menggambarkan budaya Timur sebagai inferior dan budaya Barat sebagai superior.

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## A. Introduction

Self-revelation in real life is often shaped by the results of interactions between personal identity and social pressures that influence how one should act (Zulkarnain, 2019, p. 1). These interactions naturally give rise to different perspectives and profound impressions (Utami & Primadani, 2024, p. 351). These impressions are generally formed based on a strong belief regarding the alignment between certain characteristics or traits (Pranajaya et al., 2023, p. 89). Thus, self-image in a social context is not something static, but rather the result of a dynamic construction.

The results of this dynamic construction are often found in literary works. Literary works themselves are a form of expression of reality into imaginative forms. For writers, new experiences often become a source of inspiration in creating creative works. It is not

uncommon for them to pour their travel experiences into writing while maintaining its imaginative elements. In such works, writers usually convey their perspectives, emotions, and personal experiences. This indicates that literary works serve as a symbolic communication medium between the author and the reader (Utami & Primadani, 2024, p. 349).

According to Thompson, travel literature is not just about documenting a physical journey, but also about exploring the writer's emotional and psychological experiences (Thompson, 2011, p. 97). As travelers recount their journeys, they often engage in a process of self-discovery, expressing their personal reflections on what they encounter along the way. In this section, the author illustrates how a place can shape the traveler, using the characters in the novel as a medium for this influence (Wahyu et al., 2024, p. 85). Thompson's concept of self-image is closely linked to three key elements in travel writing: reporting the world, revealing the self, and representing the other (Thompson, 2011, p. 32).

One work of travel literature that contains self-revelation is the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*" written by Taufiq al-Hakim, a modern Arab writer renowned for laying the foundation of modern Egyptian drama (Fathoni, 2017). The novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*" tells the story of a village youth who sets foot in Cairo for the first time. His name is Beik; he is a writer who enjoys moving from one place to another. He shifts from one hotel to another in Cairo with the aim of finding himself (1990, الحكيم).

In the novel, the main character is depicted as looking like a village person and always brings his donkey wherever he goes. His presence alongside his donkey in Cairo gives a unique meaning to the typology of rural society in Egypt (Nurchalis, 2014). Through the interaction between the main character and his donkey, Al-Hakim conveys social criticism about the conditions of Egyptian society in his time. He raises themes such as wisdom, ignorance, and social dynamics with a style that combines humor and satire (Al-Haq & Ningsih, 2022). In addition, this novel also contains various moral messages that encompass the relationship between humans and themselves, such as honesty, patience, and humility (Saharuddin, 2021).

Several previous studies that align with this research tend to discuss travel literature from various perspectives. First, the depiction of the world in novels, as done by (Alwi, 2023; Insani & Hindun, 2022; Utami & Primadani, 2024; Nuraeni, 2023; Dayyanah et al., 2024). Second, focusing on the self-portrayal of characters in novels (Hidayah et al., 2022;

Fitriani & Khairani, 2025). Third, showcasing travel elements as the main motif of the story (Hidayah et al., 2022). Fourth, the representation of travel literature in collections of short stories, poetry, and novels (Shofi & Tjahjono, 2018; Apriyono, 2020; Kasimbara & Wahyuningsih, 2024). Fifth, the author's ideology (Windayanto, 2022). Meanwhile, from the perspective of the object being studied, namely the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*", there are several tendencies, including: 1) Semiotics of wisdom (Al-Haq & Ningsih, 2022); 2) the translation of transitive clauses from Arabic into Indonesian (Ma'ruf et al., 2021); 3) transformation of the role of characters using a deconstruction approach (Shobron, 2022).

From several previous studies, several similarities and differences can be found with this research. Among the similarities are: 1. Self-image of the characters in the novel (Hidayah et al., 2022; Fitriani & Khairani, 2025); 2. Author's ideology (Windayanto, 2022); 3. The novels studied (Al-Haq & Ningsih, 2022; Ma'ruf et al., 2021; Shobron, 2022). Meanwhile, the differences lie in several aspects, including: 1. The objects studied; 2. The depiction of the world in the novel (Alwi, 2023; Insani & Hindun, 2022; Utami & Primadani, 2024; Nuraeni, 2023; Dayyanah et al., 2024); 3. Showing the elements of journey as the main motif of the story (Hidayah et al., 2022); 4. The representation of travel literature in collections of short stories, poetry, and novels (Shofi & Tjahjono, 2018; Apriyono, 2020; Kasimbara & Wahyuningsih, 2024).

Thus, this research will focus on examining the self-image of the character Taufiq Al-Hakim in the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*". Many have studied the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*" using theories such as translation, deconstruction, and semiotics. However, in terms of theory, there has not been any research that analyzes this novel using Carl Thompson's travel literature theory. Therefore, the position of the current research is to add new findings about Carl Thompson's travel literature that uses the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*" as its object of study, focusing on the analysis of Taufiq Al-Hakim's self-image as both the author and the character in the novel.

## B. Research Methods

This research is a qualitative study using library research methods, which uses literary texts as the object of analysis. Qualitative research was chosen because its procedures will produce descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from people and observable behaviors (Moleong, 2000, p. 5). The researcher examines the self-portrait (revealing the

self) of Taufiq Al-Hakim in the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*" using Carl Thompson's travel literature theory (2011).

The data sources used in this research consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary data source is an Arabic novel titled "*Himār al-Hakīm*" by Taufiq Al Hakim published by Maktabah Misr, 1990, 147 pages. Meanwhile, the secondary data sources that support the research include books on Travel Writing theory, journal articles, web articles, and several online sources, such as YouTube. The data collection technique uses reading and note-taking methods. The reading is conducted twice – first with the aid of translation and a dictionary, and second to summarize and mark relevant data. The note-taking technique is performed to facilitate the selection process of data that aligns with the three main aspects of Carl Thompson's theory.

The researcher applied the data analysis model from Miles and Huberman, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2018, p. 246). In the data reduction stage, relevant data is selected and classified according to the travel literature theory of Carl Thompson. In this case, data validity was tested through source triangulation, repeated readings of the text, and alignment with three aspects of Carl Thompson's theory. Comparisons with previous research were also conducted to maintain objectivity. Furthermore, data selection criteria included relevance to theory, clarity of narrative context, and the data's ability to represent the author's self-image. This process aimed to ensure that the collected data truly aligned with the research focus.

Next is the data presentation, where the reduced data is displayed in the form of tables or narratives, making it easier to analyze and explain. After that, the researcher analyzes the existing data based on Carl Thompson's theory and also refers to several previous studies. Finally, the researcher will draw conclusions from the existing research data. This aims to determine the extent to which Carl Thompson's theory can be effectively used to reveal the aspects of travel literature in the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*".

### C. Result and Discussion

The novel "*Himār Al-Hakīm*" tells the journey of Taufiq Al-Hakim, a famous writer from Egypt. In the story, he meets a director from France who asks him to write dialogue for a film. This request drives Al-Hakim to undertake a long journey that ultimately leads him to a process of self-discovery. In the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*", the narrative is presented

from the first-person perspective of the narrator 'أنا', who is the character Beik – representing the voice of the writer, Taufiq Al-Hakim himself.

Therefore, the depiction of a place in the story feels authentic because it comes from the narrator's firsthand experience. In this chapter, the researcher will present data and analyze it using Carl Thompson's Travel Literature theory, which includes three aspects: reporting the world, revealing the self, and representing the other.

### 1. Reporting the World

In this discussion, the differences in the depiction of the world presented reflect the form of negotiation and subjectivity of Taufiq Al-Hakim as a writer in conveying his personal experiences in a certain place. The use of various language styles in writing can influence the way an object is depicted (Nasution, 2015, p. 24). Through the use of figurative language and comparisons, travel notes can create a vivid impression for readers, as if they are also experiencing the atmosphere of a place that was previously foreign becoming familiar and recognizable. This is evident in the following quote:

دخلت حجرتي فوجدتها تضارع جهنم فالحر يكتم الأنفاس ... والهوام تملأ جو المكان ... وصوت البعوض يدوي في الأذان ... وجاءني خادم من فلاحى هذه القرية قد ألحق مع من ألحقوا بخدمة هؤلاء الفنانين، فوضع دواء في إناء يتصاعد منه بخار طول الليل يطرد البعوض والهوام (الحكيم، 1990: 82).

*(Aku masuk ke kamar yang panas seperti neraka. Udara pengap membuat sesak, dan suara nyamuk berdengung di telinga. Seorang pelayan dari petani desa yang membantu para seniman datang membawakan obat. Ia meletakkannya di dalam belanga, lalu asapnya mengepul sepanjang malam, mengusir nyamuk dan serangga).*

The quote above reflects the author's subjective and interpretive interpretation of the environmental conditions in the village of al-Badrasyin. The description of the air, so hot that it is likened to Hell, and the noisy atmosphere caused by mosquitoes, is not merely a description of the physical conditions, but also a way for the author to express his discomfort and alienation as an outsider. The presence of servants carrying mosquito repellent in pots demonstrates how the local community has developed adaptive strategies

to their harsh environmental conditions, reflecting a form of local wisdom in an agrarian society.

This analysis aligns with Thompson's (2011) statement, which emphasizes that travel writing is neither objective nor neutral, but rather a narrative construct shaped by the author's personal experiences, interpretations, and aesthetic preferences. The emphasis on subjective experience and aesthetic value, as Thompson (2011, p. 63) argues, suggests that the primary goal of travel writing is often not to present facts accurately, but rather to provide readers with an imaginative and emotional experience. In this context, authorial subjectivity is not a weakness, but rather a key element in constructing meaning and narrative appeal in travel literature.

This combination in travel reports is reflected in the following quote:

وتركت سويسرا إلى فرنسا ... وتنقلت في جبال السافوا العليا وغمرت نفسي في راحة مطلقة وذهني في ركود تام. فلم أفتحصيف ولم أقرأ كتاباً ... ولم أحرر خطاباً ... ولم أحمل قلماً ولا ورقاً ... وإنما حملت في يد عصا الجبل ذات الطرف الحديدي ..... وفي الأخرى عصا السمك وعلبة الطعم أطوف بهما على البحيرات الصغيرة أحاول عبثاً اصطياد سمكة من تلك الأسماك التي تمر تحت أنفى وتسخر من طعنى (الحكيم، 1990: 141-142).

*(Aku meninggalkan Swiss menuju Prancis. Di sana, aku berjalan-jalan di Gunung Safo yang tinggi dan menikmati ketenangan. Aku tidak membaca buku, tidak menulis surat, dan tidak membawa pena atau kertas. Hanya tongkat gunung dan alat pancing yang kubawa, bersama kaleng makanan. Aku mengelilingi danau-danau kecil, mencoba memancing ikan yang berenang di dekatku, meski mereka tampak tak tertarik pada umpanku)*

The narration demonstrates how the author constructs a personal narrative through his description of Mount Sappho, which he witnessed during his travels. Using figurative language, the author not only describes the physical dimensions of the mountain – such as its height and beauty – but also conveys the emotional impact it evokes, namely a sense of calm and peace. This narrative explicitly demonstrates Beik's perspective as a traveler, who, through his perspective, invites the reader to experience the landscape he sees and feels.

This description demonstrates the distinctive characteristics of travel narratives, which prioritize the author's subjective and affective experiences. This aligns with the view of Fitriani & Khairani (2025, p. 603), who assert that travel narratives not only convey

intellectual information but also build an emotional connection between the reader and the objects depicted. Thus, travel experiences are not only documentary but also transformative for the reader, successfully creating a vivid and meaningful impression.

The narratives found in the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*" mostly consist of personal accounts from the journey of a traveler. The narratives presented always provide certain information about Beik's journey as a traveler, such as his inner state, what he has experienced, and what he will do next. Here is the quote:

وسافرت في اليوم التالي إلى الإسكندرية ... ثم أبحرت ثم بلغت (لوسرين) حيث حضرت الكونسير الأولى للموسيقى (توسكانيني) وهنا نسيت كل النسيان مصر وشئون مصر ... ولم أذكر سيناريو ... ولا سينما ... ولا مخرجاً ولا حواراً، ونسيت حتى أن أكتب إليه لأخبره برحيلي و مكاني، بل نسيت حتى حماري الفيلسوف ( وأحواله وأطواره ومراته وتعاليمه وما يجري له (الحكيم، 1990: 141)

*(Keesokan harinya aku pergi ke Alexandria dan berlayar ke Losirin untuk menonton konser Tuskanini. Di sana, aku melupakan semuanya – Mesir, pekerjaanku, bahkan keledaiku, Filsuf, beserta semua hal tentangnya).*

وانقلت راجعاً إلى مصر قبل شهر سبتمبر ... فوجدت في انتظاري خطابين مسجلين من محامي الشركة يشيران إلى العقد وأمر تنفيذه، وإلى التبعة التي نتجت عن التأخير ... فأفقت في الحال من وتذكرت كل شيء ... فأخرجت كراسة أحلام الصيف السيناريو من الحقائب ... ووطنت العزم على العمل (الحكيم، 1990: 142).

*(Aku kembali ke Mesir sebelum September dan menemukan dua surat dari pengacara perusahaan. Satunya berisi perjanjian, satunya lagi teguran karena keterlambatan. Saat itu aku tersadar dari mimpi musim panas dan mulai mengingat semuanya. Aku pun mengeluarkan buku skenario dari tas dan berniat untuk kembali bekerja).*

The two data points above demonstrate the inner dynamics of the narrator, who experiences professional pressure to the point of choosing to travel as a form of escape. His decision to travel to Alexandria and then sail to Losirin to attend a Tuskanini concert reflects an attempt to temporarily escape the routine and workload in Egypt, including the



world of film, screenplays, and directing. However, upon his return to Egypt, the narrator is again confronted with professional realities, represented by two letters from his partner company. This moment marks a turning point, inspiring him to resume his work with renewed vigor.

Narrative choices such as the use of the phrase “I found two letters” signal formality and a transition from personal circumstances to professional responsibilities. According to Carl Thompson, this sentence depicts society through simple yet meaningful everyday interactions (Utami & Primadani, 2024, p. 604).

The quotes above demonstrate the author’s subjective understanding of the circumstances he experiences. Thus, the narrative in “*Himār al-Hakīm*” not only records a geographical trajectory but also reflects the author's emotional and existential trajectory. The narrator’s subjectivity is dominant in depicting the changes in inner mood—from boredom to renewed enthusiasm—generated through travel experiences. This also reflects the values of temporary escape as a means of reflection, a tendency often found in the lives of artists and urban professionals. Therefore, the depiction of the world in this novel is closely related to the narrator's subjectivity as the center of narrative and meaning.

## 2. Revealing the Self of Taufik Al-Hakim

The subjectivity of the narrator is clearly evident in the way he describes his journey and reports the world around him. He does not just describe what he sees, but also includes his own views and comments on the situations, conditions, and environment he experiences during the journey. As Thompson expressed, in the most extreme cases, the tendency in this genre has produced travel writings that tell almost entirely about the narrator-traveler rather than the places visited, as encounters with the wider world become merely an excuse or impetus for narrative introspection and self-analysis (Thompson, 2011, p. 98).

In this section, Taufiq Al-Hakim emphasizes his self-portrayal during the journey, even seemingly trying to find his identity through those experiences. This shows that the element of subjectivity is very strong in his writing. He pours his experiences into the novel by highlighting the personal impressions of the places he visits. Often, he dramatizes those experiences so that readers can feel what he went through, as if they are following his journey. This is clearly evident in the following quote.

أنتقل في الفنادق وأطوف بالشوارع، وأقفز إلى عربات الترام وسيارات الأتوبيس، وأختلط بالناس، وأمتزج بالجماهير. فأحسست كأن الدم يعود حاراً إلى عروقي وأن قدمي قد فرحتا بلمس الأرض من جديد، وأن فكري قد عاد إلى انطلاقه ونشاطه مع السير الحر بالأقدام في كل مكان، وملاحظتي الناس في الطرقات قد أخصبت ذهني الذي حبس طويلاً خلف الزجاج (الحكيم، 1990: 118).

(*Aku berpindah-pindah hotel, naik trem dan bus, menyatu dengan keramaian. Rasanya darahku kembali mengalir hangat, kakiku senang menyentuh tanah, pikiranku kembali hidup, dan perhatian orang-orang membuat pikiranku yang lama terkekang jadi segar kembali*).

In the quote above, Taufiq Al-Hakim frequently uses metaphors in his travelogues as a means to enrich the aesthetic dimension of the narrative. This use of poetic language not only enhances the writing but also creates a depth of meaning that allows readers to experience the journey more emotionally. Furthermore, Al-Hakim demonstrates meticulousness in describing the movements and dynamics of his journey, reinforcing the impression that he is not simply conveying events but also inviting readers along a reflective path he personally experienced.

Furthermore, Al-Hakim's narrative is not merely descriptive of the external environment but also presents the relationship between self and other (society). In this sense, he is not merely a passive observer but an active subject interacting with the social reality around him. This sense of subjectivity is further evident through his expression of thoughts and feelings after returning from his journey – especially when he experiences a renewed sense of life and a renewed sense of life. This demonstrates that travel, for him, is not merely a physical activity, but rather a transformative process with emotional and existential impact. This is clearly illustrated in the following quote.

فقد بعثت فأقبلت على مطالعة القصة وأنا أقول لنفسي: (فلأصنع شيئاً على الأقل ثم أتصل بالمخرج ليرى أنني لم أنسه - طول الوقت (الحكيم، 1990: 142).

(*Perjalanan itu memberiku semangat baru. Aku pun berkata pada diri sendiri, "Setidaknya aku harus melakukan sesuatu," lalu berniat menelpon sutradara itu agar ia tahu aku tak pernah melupakannya*).

That quotation illustrates how Taufiq Al-Hakim reflects on his personal travel experiences, showcasing the impressions, thoughts, and feelings he encountered during the process. This narrative serves not only as a record of physical travel but also as an inward record that implies a search for meaning, spirit, and inspiration. In the quote, Al-Hakim links his journey to a special memory that rekindles his motivation to write—especially to fulfill the request of a French director who hopes for him to compose dialogues for a film.

The memories do not stand alone, but rather serve as a trigger for Al-Hakim to embark on a broader journey to various regions in Europe and parts of Asia. This journey is not just an escape from boredom, but also a conscious effort to enrich his experiences and rediscover his creative identity as a writer. The peak of this reflective process is illustrated through his encounter with a foreign woman, who plays a crucial role in the narrative as a symbol of enlightenment and self-discovery. This woman becomes part of Al-Hakim's personal transformation—representing the meeting point between external experiences and the inner changes he undergoes throughout the journey.

Thus, this quote emphasizes that Al-Hakim's travel notes are laden with subjectivity, emotional associations, and reflective value. He does not merely record places and events, but also encapsulates the search for meaning in life through the relationship between memory, space, and self-experience.

فلم أدر بماذا أحيب؟ ... فهممت بكلام غير مسموع ثم انسللت من بين الجميع وانطرحت فوق مقعد طويل  
أتأمل الصحراء الممتدة أمامي كأنها البحر، وأرى ضوء القمر يلعب رمالها المتموجة فيخيل إلى أنها  
الأمواج ... وأغمضت عيني لإخداع نفسي فأتصور أنني مستلق على مقعدى فوق ظهر الباخرة إلى أوروبا  
الجميلة ... وشعرت بصوت شخص إلى جوارى على مقعد طويل خال... فالتفت... فإذا سيدة من المدعوات تريد  
أن تحادثني ...

ولم تضع وقتاً فقالت :

إنك تحب الوحدة.

فقلت دون أن أتحرك وكأني أخاطب نفسي:

إنها كتبت عليّ... (الحكيم، 1990: 128).

(Aku tak tahu harus menjawab apa, jadi hanya bergumam pelan. Sambil memejamkan mata, aku membayangkan sedang naik perahu layar menuju Eropa. Tiba-tiba, aku merasakan seseorang duduk di sampingku – seorang wanita undangan. Ia langsung bertanya, “Kamu suka menyendiri, ya?” Tanpa menoleh, aku menjawab lirih, seperti bicara pada diri sendiri, “Memang sudah takdirku begitu.”)

The quote describes Taufiq Al-Hakim’s reflective side as he imagines being on a boat heading to Europe. In this dream, he meets a woman who inquires about his solitude, and Al-Hakim responds that it is his fate. This scene shows that the journey he undertakes is not just a physical journey, but also an inner journey to understand himself.

This narrative has a strong autobiographical element, as Al-Hakim incorporates personal experiences and feelings into the story. This aligns with Thompson’s view that in many travel writings, journeys are used as a means to reflect on the author’s life as a whole. The journey becomes a way for the writer to find meaning in life and their identity. Thus, Al-Hakim’s travel notes not only recount the places he visits but also depict the process of change and growth he undergoes as an individual. Like Thompson's statement, many travel notes of this kind also present travel as a primary stimulus for a new understanding of the traveler’s life (Thompson, 2011, p. 114).

Aside from that, in the novel “*Himār al-Hakīm*”, it also arises from a journey motivation that leads the author to find himself. After searching everywhere in various places, Beik shares his story with the director to understand life and himself. This is evident in the quote:

وأعجبني قوله، فسكت ... وجعلت أفكر لنفسي وأقول: لو أننا نحن الكتاب نستخدم أبصارنا بل كل حاسة من حواسنا هذا ... الاستخدام، فأني صور وأي حقائق يمكن أن نبرزها للناس ولكن الكتابة في نظر أكثر الكتاب عبارات لغوية جمعت في خزانة الذاكرة ليستخرج منها وقت اللزوم ما يؤدي إلى مجرد الإبانة عن ينبغي أن يكون الكاتب موهوباً حقيقة، ليتطلب من القصد ... الكتابة شيئاً أكثر من ذلك من هذه الناحية أفادتني صحبة ... المخرج ... وشعرت لأول مرة بالرضا عن هذه الصحبة... (الحكيم، 1990: 61).

*(Ucapannya membuatku merenung. Andai para penulis memakai seluruh inderanya, mungkin lebih banyak kebenaran yang bisa diungkap. Tapi sering kali, menulis hanya jadi rutinitas mengulang ingatan. Dari sinilah aku sadar, persahabatanku dengan sutradara itu memberi makna – untuk pertama kalinya, aku benar-benar menghargainya).*

The narration above depicts a significant point in Taufiq Al-Hakim's intellectual journey, when he realized that writing cannot rely solely on memory but must arise from sensitivity and direct observation of reality. He gained this lesson from his interaction with a director, who emphasized the importance of real experience and keen vision in producing meaningful writing. His friendship with the director also became a crucial moment that expanded his perspective as a writer.

This awareness also showed that Al-Hakim, as a narrator, began to understand the importance of seeing the world from others' viewpoints. He became more sensitive to the social perceptions around him, and how this shaped the way he interpreted his own journey. This aligns with the idea that travel narratives often contain tension between social expectations and the writer's personal experiences in the field. In this context, the journey becomes a learning space that brings together personal subjectivity with the broader social reality (Utami & Primadani, 2024, p. 607).

From the quotes above, it can be identified that Taufiq Al-Hakim as a travel writing author applies the characteristics of adventure novel writing. The adventure includes visiting several places to find himself (revealing the self) through various experiences, circumstances of the places, and life lessons with a film director. The realities encountered during Al-Hakim's journey serve as a lesson in his life.

### 3. Representing the Other

The term 'other' in travel writing is used to mark the difference between one culture and another. Both in the context of one's own culture and foreign cultures, the term not only indicates differences, but also often implies the assumption that certain cultures are inferior. Furthermore, the ideological dimension in travel writing often contains rhetorical elements that create a space of hostility and demean the 'other' group or culture. This issue is further related to postcolonial studies, especially Orientalism, Edward Said (Thompson, 2011, pp. 132-134). In travel writing, there is sometimes an element of postcolonial discourse that represents the writer. In the novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*", these discourses – intentionally or not – are written by Taufiq Al-Hakim.

There are three characteristics of postcolonial travel writers. First, the travel writings of postcolonial authors attempt to challenge Western stereotypes and attitudes towards other cultures or places; second, the expansion of perspectives, histories, and intercultural relations that are often overlooked by Western writers; third, some postcolonial travel writers do not oppose Western assumptions and stereotypes (Thompson, 2011, pp. 164–165). Among these three characteristics, Taufiq Al-Hakim possesses the third characteristic, namely as a travel writer who accepts Western assumptions and stereotypes, even acknowledging the inferiority of the East – in this case, Egypt. This can be seen in the following quote.

فلنأخذ ريفكم الفرنسي مثلا ... ما الذي حدث فيه؟ ... لقد كان في عهد النظام الإقطاعي بيد الأشراف ... أولئك الأشراف هم الذين جملوا الريف ... بدأ سيد المقاطعة بتشيد قصره الجميل النظيف وقطنه مع زوجته وأولاده ... واعتبر أهالي المقاطعة رجاله، الذين يعملون لخيره وعزه وسلطانه ويعمل هو لحمايتهم ... على أن المهمة العظمى في رفع مستوى أولئك القرويين كان قوامها: زوجة الشريف ... (الحكيم، 1990: 84).

(Ambil contoh desa kalian di Prancis. Saat sistem swastanisasi dikuasai para tokoh ternama, merekalah yang membenahi desa. Pemimpin wilayah membangun istananya, tinggal di sana bersama keluarga, dan menjadikan warga sebagai pekerjanya. Sebagai gantinya, ia melindungi mereka. Sementara istrinya membina penduduk demi mengangkat derajat mereka).

In the quotation above depicts social changes in a village in France due to the process of swastanization, where the management of the village shifted to the hands of prominent figures. These leaders not only built palaces and lived with their families, but also actively helped the residents – providing jobs, protection, and social attention. The leader's wife also played a role in fostering the community, striving to elevate their status.

This narrative illustrates Taufiq Al-Hakim's positive view of a leadership model that is humanistic and participatory. He emphasizes that social change can arise from personal initiatives that have compassion, rather than solely from the state. This also reflects Al-Hakim's interest in social dynamics outside of Egypt, which is part of the reflection of his journey.

This is actually contrary to the statement made by Taufiq Al-Hakim about the state of the privatization era in Egypt as seen in the following excerpt.

هذا ما حدث في أوروبا ... أما في مصر، فلم يحدث ذلك، فإن الإقطاع في مصر، كان في يد أرستقراطية أجنبية من المغول أو الأتراك العثمانيين، ما كانوا يعتبرون الفلاح رجلهم بالمعنى الأوربي للكلمة، ولكنهم كانوا يعدونه عبدهم بالمعنى الشرقي للكلمة ... بل أقل من عبدهم، فقد كان للكلب والفرس عندهم من الحرمة والكرامة والحقوق ما ليس للفلاح، هذا الفلاح الذي يتكلم لغة غير لغتهم، ونبت في أرض لم تكن أرضهم (الحكيم، 1990: 86-87).

*(Itulah yang terjadi di Eropa. Sementara di Mesir, sistem swastanisasi justru dikuasai kaum aristokrat asing seperti Mongol dan Turki Utsmani. Mereka tidak melihat petani sebagai pembantu, tapi sebagai budak, bahkan lebih rendah dari hewan peliharaan mereka. Petani dianggap asing karena berbeda bahasa dan bukan dari bangsa mereka).*

The quote shows the sharp comparison made by Taufiq Al-Hakim between the system of privatization in France and in Egypt. In Egypt, privatization is in the hands of foreign aristocrats such as the Mongols and the Ottoman Turks, who view farmers as a low class, even lower than dogs and horses. This shows the form of structural oppression and social inequality inherent in the feudal system in the East.

By comparing these two realities, Al-Hakim indirectly acknowledges the superiority of Western culture, especially in terms of leadership and social relations, while criticizing the history and social conditions in his own country. He seems to accept positive assumptions and stereotypes about the West (France), while honestly acknowledging the inferior position of the East (Egypt) in a certain historical context. This reflects a critical awareness as well as an identity anxiety that often emerges in the travel narratives of writers from the East.

The statement aligns with what was said by Thompson (2011, p. 144) that this is a form of combination of stereotypes and/or modes of representation that are very characteristic of colonial discourse, and the ideological work it performs, and its contribution to colonial efforts, is quite apparent. The sentimental agenda shapes the 'other' who seems to need assistance from external forces, and is deserving of that help: thus it encourages and legitimizes the acquisition of colonial territories under the guise of providing proper oversight and guidance to the indigenous people.

لقد كان القروى الفرنسي يعتبر الشريف سيداً، ولكن السيد كان يعتبر القروى مثله فرنسياً ... يحارب معه جنبا

إلى جنب ... أما السيد التركي العثماني فكان يعتبر الفلاح المصري من طينة قذرة... فما كان يسمح له بشرف الجندية ولا الفروسية ولا بشرف المصاحبة في حفل أو اجتماع.. (الحكيم، 1990: 87).

*(Orang desa Prancis menghormati tuannya, tapi sang tuan juga menganggap mereka sesama bangsa dan berjuang bersama. Sementara tuan Turki Utsmani memandang petani Mesir seperti tanah kotor – tak diberi kesempatan masuk tentara, apalagi ikut pesta atau pertemuan).*

The Quote discusses the issue of social hierarchy in France and Egypt through the sharp comparison presented by Taufiq Al-Hakim. In France, although rural communities still respect the lords, the relationship between the upper and lower classes is depicted as more egalitarian—they can even fight together as fellow citizens. In contrast, in Egypt, especially under Ottoman rule, peasants are considered lowly and have no social opportunities, including becoming soldiers or attending social gatherings.

Through this comparison, Al-Hakim explicitly acknowledges the striking differences between the social structures in the country he views as superior (France) and the country he considers inferior (Egypt). As a writer from the East, he candidly highlights the disparities faced by his own nation, demonstrating how the narrative of travel also serves as a space for critique on the socio-political realities experienced by the writer firsthand.

لم يأت عصر في أوروبا تخلت فيه المرأة عن واجباتها باعتبارها سيدة .... لأنها تعلم أن كلمة سيدة لم تطلق جزافاً ... إنما هي وظيفة في المجتمع لها عمل يستغرق وقتاً وجهداً ... ولها مظهر سيادة وقيادة لمن يحتاج إلى المعونة من أتباعها في الريف أو جيرانها في المدن لقد تغيرت الأسماء السياسية . الاجتماعية في أوروبا ولكن المهام والأعمال لم تتغير ... لقد طلى لون السلم الاجتماعي بطلاء آخر ... ولكن هذا السلم قائم دائماً ... لأنه من نواويس الحياة الثابتة.. (الحكيم، 1990: 85-86).

*(Di Eropa, sejak dulu perempuan tak pernah lepas dari tanggung jawab sebagai pemimpin. Mereka sadar, menjadi pemimpin bukan sekadar gelar, tapi tugas nyata dalam masyarakat. Meski istilah politik sosial berubah dan warna tangga sosial berganti, tangga itu tetap berdiri – karena ia bagian dari rahasia kehidupan yang abadi).*



The quote shows the narrator's admiration for the position and role of women in France, which is recognized as a form of cultural superiority of that country. In Al-Hakim's view, French women are not only respected but also treated like leaders – not merely a title, but a real function that requires responsibility, time, and effort. The term 'leader' in this context is understood as a figure who possesses social power and is capable of helping those in need.

This depiction reflects the courage and strength of French women within a more egalitarian societal structure, where gender roles are not rigidly restricted. Al-Hakim's acknowledgment of this illustrates how he compares the position of women in France with the different reality in his own country. Indirectly, this admiration also serves as a form of social criticism of gender inequality and the limitations of women's roles in the East, particularly Egypt.

Furthermore, the acknowledgment of self-inferiority also clearly appears in the following quotes.

لقد وددت حقاً لو أتزوج بمصرية ... ولكن شيئاً واحداً يمنعني: هو أني أشفق عليها من طبيعتي المتعبة. ما أنا إلا (حالة عسيرة) كما يقول الأطباء، قد يستعصى أمرها حتى على الأوروبية المحنكة التي اعتادت أن تفهم زوجها في هذه الحالة، وتدرس خلقه وطباعه في صبر وسكون وتبرئ له نوع الحياة التي تلائمة .... كلا ... إلى على الرغم من خشونتي في القول للمرأة المصرية شديد العطف عليها ... ولست أحب أن أدفعها إلى مثل هذا الامتحان العسير (الحكيم، 1990: 103).

*(Dulu aku ingin menikah dengan wanita Mesir, tapi aku mengurungkan niat itu. Aku merasa kasihan padanya karena kebiasaanku yang merepotkan. Kata dokter, keadaanku bisa menyulitkan siapa pun, bahkan wanita Eropa yang lebih terbiasa memahami dan bersabar menghadapi suaminya. Meski aku sering terdengar keras pada wanita Mesir, sebenarnya aku lembut pada mereka – aku tak ingin membebani mereka dengan ujian seberat ini).*

The quote above features a Beik's doubt about marrying an Egyptian woman because he feels unworthy and fears that his habits will be a burden. He even questions the readiness of European women, though he still considers them to be more patient and capable of understanding their partners compared to Egyptian women. This perspective

reflects an inferior position he feels about himself, while also illustrating an idealization of European women.

Implicitly, Beik's statement reflects cultural stereotypes – where European women are seen as superior in emotional aspects and readiness to build a household. This reflects a common bias in the East-West narrative, placing the West as a symbol of maturity and social sophistication.

From the quotes above, it can be identified that Taufiq Al-Hakim always acknowledges himself and Egypt as inferior, unlike the superior Europeans. This is an identification of 'othering' in travel writing. The concept of representing the other according to Carl Thompson emphasizes the importance of awareness of power, bias, and responsibility in travel writing. A travel writer does not merely describe the places and cultures they visit, but also shapes the readers' perceptions of other cultures. Therefore, there is a need for an understanding of historical and ethical contexts, so that travel writing can create a fairer and more inclusive intercultural understanding.

#### D. Conclusion

The novel "*Himār al-Hakīm*" by Taufiq Al-Hakim presents a narrative of a journey rich in elements of subjectivity, reflection, and the author's personal experiences. His writing style reflects the characteristics of postcolonial travel writing, where travel is used not just to document places, but also to search for and shape one's identity. Al-Hakim conveys his travel story in an expressive manner filled with self-awareness, while also showcasing his struggles as an Eastern writer confronting Western culture.

This finding aligns with the views of Carl Thompson (2011), who states that postcolonial travel writing is a tool for exploring identity through the interaction between the self and the other. In this novel, Al-Hakim depicts Egyptian culture as backward and repressed, while European culture is portrayed as advanced, free, and rational. This indicates a notion of othering, where Al-Hakim positions himself as an Eastern figure who feels inferior to the West. Through this narrative, it is evident that postcolonial identity awareness is formed through the comparison between East and West.

This analysis lies in the way Al-Hakim positions himself ambivalently: he critiques his culture of origin, yet does not fully assimilate into Western values. This tension is a hallmark of postcolonial narrative, enriching the dynamics of travel writing. These findings also indicate that travel works from the Arab world, such as "*Himār al-Hakīm*", can

serve as significant materials in postcolonial studies. Al-Hakim demonstrates that travel writing is not merely descriptive or entertaining, but also a medium for conveying cultural criticism, shaping identity, and subtly yet meaningfully voicing political views.

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