Satire In Sonallah Ibrahim's *The Committee*: An Allegory To Ridicule Capitalism

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Abstract

Despite the voluminous amount of research on the genre of satire, little is known about Arabic satirical texts. This paper explores the satirical devices employed in Sonallah Ibrahim's novel, *The Committee* (2001). Through the means of satire, Ibrahim skilfully explores the devastating effects of global capitalism on third world nations, by unravelling the mask that shields the domination and exploitation of Egypt. The discussion seeks to identify the hegemonic and the exploitative nature of the capitalist system on third world countries, specifically the creation of a web of conspiracy that controls the economic and governmental policies of Egypt through multi-national corporations as seen in *The Committee*. The discussion will show that said corporations ultimately transformed Egypt into a mere consumer market. The discussion concludes with the significance of satire as a mode of expression that is employed to bring about awareness among the public of the destructive consequences of capitalism on Arabic society.

Keywords: satire, capitalism, multinational corporations, exploitation, consumerism.

Introduction

Sonallah Ibrahim is considered by many critics as a leading figure in what Paul Starkey (2006b) refers to as the 'Generation of the Sixties' in modern Arabic literature, who abandoned the "mimetic approach of modern social realism [in favour of] an ironical metafictional approach in the writing of narrative" (Draz, 1981, p.137). We would argue that Ibrahim uses humour as a means to create awareness, as admitted by the author himself: "Black humour arises from extending your desire to make fun to a degree where you express a vision of reality you want to change". This paper analyses Ibrahim's construction of satire on capitalism in his novel *The Committee* (2001). In *The Committee* Ibrahim utilises satire to ridicule the multinational corporations and hidden authorities that have very much influenced Egypt, the country in which the novel is set, in particular its political and economic systems. It should be noted, however, that our analysis is based on our reading of Mary St. Germain and Charlene Constable's translation of the novel.

ISSN: 1675-8021

Starkey (2006b, p.142) describes *The Committee* as Ibrahim's most successful novel which "represents one of the most powerful attacks on dictatorship in the modern Arab world". Starkey (2006a, p.149) also points out that:

> The Kafkaesque sequence of events that has meanwhile unfolded in the course of the novel presents a vivid picture of a world in which the individual is entirely at the mercy of the state, demonstrating Sonallah Ibrahim's use of irony and sarcasm at its most graphic.

Similarly, Samia Mehrez (1994, p.48) observes that *The Committee* implicitly satirises the manipulation of knowledge by the authorities. Mehrez adds that the "vulgarity" and "decadence" of the language contained in *The Committee* and Ibrahim's debut novel, *Tilka al-Raeha* (*The Smell of It*, 1966), represent a new literary language and a new way of representing reality that are by necessity in conflict with those of the conservative forces.

However, while we thoroughly admit these points of view, we argue here that *The Committee* is a significant satirical novel on contemporary global capitalism and the open market policy of Egypt, launched in the 1970s during Anwar El Sadat's reign This paper thus highlights Ibrahim's employment of the mode of satire to reveal the illness that swept through Egyptian society during the 1970s and the 1980s, and seriously ridicules the positivisation of globalisation and westernisation on poorer nations.[1] Ibrahim carefully weaves together a tapestry of certain events, which ultimately leads the reader to see for himself the continuing intimidation of global capitalism upon third world countries.

Satire

Leonard Feinberg (1967, p.19) defines satire as "playfully critical distortion of the familiar". Gary Fine and Daniel Martin (1990, p.101) apply this definition, adding that unlike sarcasm, satire "is not necessarily hostile or biting and it always has a moral component". However, Simpson (2003, p.3) argues that hostility is a major component of satire, and without demonstrating such capacity it cannot be considered satire. Simpson's view is further emphasised by M. H. Abrams (1993, p.187) who defines satire as:

> [T]he literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It differs from comic in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire 'derides'; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt that exists outside the work itself.

While the above critics emphasise the nature and objective of satire, J. H. Cohen (cited in Mtumane 2001, p.233) stresses the significance of devices and their targets, defining

[1] I use the term 'positivisation' here to refer to the particularisation of a concept—the translation of an idea on a conceptual level into a *legitimised* everyday action. I use the term in the manner defined by philosopher Herman Dooyewerd (1997) in relation to the application of an existing law.

satire as "[t]he criticism of a person, human nature, events, movements or situations by the use of exaggeration, ridicule, sarcasm and irony in order to ridicule the subject of absurdity". Marie Heese and Robin Lawton (1973, p.104) also stress the devices used in the literary form: satire is "an attack on man's foibles, folly or evil, by means of ridicule and exaggerations or distortions with the intention to improve the existing state of affairs".

Apparently, the central point that seems to satisfy the majority of the critics is that a satirical text is, "a literary work that seeks to criticise and correct the behaviour of human beings and their institutions by means of humour, wit and ridicule" (Barton & Hudson, 2004, p.199). The master of English satire himself, Jonathan Swift, is in agreement with this view:

> There are two ends that men propose in writing satyr, one of them less noble than the other, as regarding nothing further than the private satisfaction and pleasure of the writer…the other is a public spirit, promoting men of Genius and Virtue to mend the world as far as they are able (cited in Haut, 2007, p.29).

Hence, the purpose of satire is almost the same, whether the attack is directed at an individual, institution or culture: to expose folly, posturing, lies and moral or political corruption. However, as the Northern Irish author Robert Mcliam Wilson suggests, "satire is irresponsible in that you can criticise without having to suggest alternatives. To suggest alternatives would be absurd, pompous, and messianic" (cited in D'hoker, 2007).

Based on the definitions discussed above, one can suggest a definition of satire as a verbal or written attack of a subject by the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, and allegory for its folly and vice, with the intention of improving or correcting the existing situation (Mtumane 2001, p.234). It is on the basis of this definition that the use of satire in Ibrahim's *The Committee* will be discussed.

Satiric Allegory

Allegory as an extended metaphor (Feinberg, 1967, p.201; Crisp 2008, p. 291) constitutes an important satiric device employed by Ibrahim in *The Committee* to expose and mock the hegemony of multi-national corporations over Egypt. The discussion of hegemony is based on Antonio Gramsci's definition of the term, where it is equated with domination in general (Crossley, 2005, p.114). In this novel, the committee members referred to in the title stands for the multi-national corporations, with the nameless narrator-protagonist acting on the behalf of his country. Ibrahim manipulates his criticism of these corporations in such a way as to reflect capitalist domination over the third world nations. During the interview sequence, for instance, the nameless narrator protagonist is ordered to dance in the nude: "Do you know how to dance? … I took my necktie and wound it around my waist just above my hipbones, right where it would emphasise body's flexibility (p.13). Without showing any satisfaction with this performance, the committee members then ordered him to take off his clothes: "Then he ordered me to take off my

pants … Meanwhile, their eyes settled on my naked parts" (p.15-16). Hence, we can see the narrator-protagonist as having an allegorical linkage to Egypt, with the 'naked parts' referring to Egypt falling under the policies of the west, and at which the latter willingly direct its attention and motives. In other words, it does not merely cast a male gaze being cast on the 'naked parts', but rather a socioeconomic one.[2]

Further humiliation ensues through the use of humour and exaggeration when the nameless narrator-protagonist is ordered by a member of the committee to bend over to be examined during the interview session: "Then he ordered me to bend over. I felt his hand on my naked buttocks. He ordered me to cough. At that moment I felt a finger inside my body" (p.16). Ibrahim's comic sense lies in the disturbing absurdity of the situation, as the body of his protagonist is subjected to a thorough rectal examination, including his anus. The applicant's body, particularly his buttocks, seems to be at the centre of the committee's focus, instead of his mind. While the scene may evoke laughter, one senses that Ibrahim's intention is far from comic, but rather geared toward exposing the unsettling reality of the national situation. Humour, in other words, is used only as a vehicle to make the butt appear very ridiculous by "evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, and indignation" (Abrams, 1993, p.187); while the interviewee pretends to amuse the committee, he himself has become an object of amusement and contempt. The thorough examination for his body can stand for the humiliation and hegemonic domination exercised by foreign companies over poor nations and individuals.

Exaggeration is also brought into play, through what Abrams (1993, p.187) calls the "diminishing or derogating" of the subject. The unnamed narrator protagonist is turned into a clown, doing the best to please his master. But, while his clownish behaviour may provoke laughter, the situation shows that he is reduced to a puppet that is stripped out of his humanity, turned into an object or an inanimate creature. The authority that the committee exercises over him is clear when he is ordered to take off his cloths and face them in the nude. The dehumanisation of the interviewee starkly displays the superpower over him. Hence, the sharp contrast between the humiliated nameless protagonist and the powerful interviewers is projected in such away as to reflect the power of multi-national corporations over Egypt. However, while Ibrahim's intention is to reveal the domination of western capitalists over Third World countries, he at the same time ridicules the Egyptian leaders who bow down to facilitate the influx of Western companies and products into the country through the country's open door policy, inelegantly implied through the 'bending over' of the nameless narrator-protagonist. Ibrahim's critical skills lie in the yoking together of more than one satirical element to express his indignation: humour and exaggeration are skillfully employed to showcase the humiliation of the narrator-protagonist, as well as "to get the target recognise or admit that a vice exists at all: recognition must precede correction" (Harris, 1990, para. 25).

[2] For more details on the Male Gaze theory, see Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16.3 (1975): 6-18.

A satirist's intention, according to Highet (1962), is to shock his readers by forcing them to see a sight they had previously "missed or shunned". He first creates awareness of the truth, in the readers' minds before moving them to the feelings of protest. Highet further claims that most satirists create those feelings by careful choice of language, employing accurate descriptive words mainly to surprise and disturb the reader: "Brutally direct phrases, taboo expressions, nauseating imagery, callous and crude slang" are essential parts of the vocabulary of almost every satirist (Highet, p.20).

Ibrahim demonstrates this great capacity in his selection of words to conjure such feelings and effects in his reader. During the interview referred to above, for instance, Ibrahim uses taboo words and phrases like "naked buttocks" and "a finger inside my body" (p.16). In the Arab world, the buttocks are designated as a part of the body that nobody should see or touch under any circumstances, except for medical purposes; more significantly, doing so is prohibited in Islam. To let someone see or touch your buttocks is a sin, for which both parties should be punished. Using such words and phrases, Ibrahim simultaneously fulfils a dual purpose: first, he makes the protagonist appear very ridiculous by eliciting amusement and contempt towards him; and secondly, he shocks the reader by unveiling the significant metaphorical truth of the scene. In this instance, Ibrahim seems to call for the protagonist to be punished, rather than merely protested against, as his action of exposing his naked self is considered sinful. He reserves similar contempt for the committee's collective 'finger' that ventures inside the protagonist's body, a metaphor for the policies of foreign multinationals intrusion into Egyptian affairs. Ibrahim satirises and ridicules the free submission of poor nations to the capitalist world, believing in the promise of assistance and development, but only getting domination and exploitation in return. In other words, Ibrahim allegorically mocks the foolishness of poor nations who believe in the promises made by their capitalist 'benefactors'.

Coca-Cola culture and capitalist exploitation: Irony as the driving force behind Ibrahim's satire

Other than by applying satire through allegory, irony is the most potent weapon in Ibrahim's critical arsenal throughout *The Committee*, employed with great effectiveness to reveal the greed and aggressive nature of the multi-national corporations that exploit countries and workers. Irony is delivered through the nameless narrator-protagonist, whose bitter criticism of such corporations is sheathed by fulsome praise.

> I suspect you agree with me, your honors, that the whole world uses these brand-name products. Just as the giant corporations producing them, in turn, use the world, transforming workers into machines, the consumers into numbers, and countries into markets (p.18).

The irony here lies in the greedy outlook of multi-national corporations that reduced nations into mere markets. The narrator-protagonist seems to echo Andre Gunder Frank's assertion that "once a country or a people are converted into the satellite of an external capitalist metropole, the exploitative metropolitan satellite structure quickly comes to

organise and dominate the domestic, economic, political and social life of that people" (cited in Al Szymanski, 1974, p.27).

The ironical stance is further enhanced through the use of the metaphor 'transforming workers into machines'. The metaphorical language vividly but satirically depicts the exploitation of the working class. By comparing workers to machines, the narrator-protagonist suggests that these people are treated like tools but not human beings- utterly misused and exploited. The tone of criticism is strongly emphasised here by the exaggerated analogy, which is in keeping with Paul D'Amato's (2006, p.58) critique of the capitalist aim, which is to transform the worker into "a streamline of automation": "capitalists think that by paying wages they earn the right not only to set a worker to work, but to determine the way in which the work is performed"

Ibrahim employs irony to depict the 'surplus value' which Karl Marx coined to refer to "the excess of the value of the product over the value of the wages which are paid to the workers" (Hughes, Sharrock & Martin, 2003, p.39). It is this 'surplus value' which constitutes the source of profits for capitalists: "[T]he profits extracted by the capitalist from the sale of commodities [is] nothing less than exploitation" (Hughes et al., 2003, p. 39). D'Amato (2006, p. 58) also points out that capitalists constantly fight to lower wages as much as possible and "make workers work longer hours for the same pay" or to make "workers work harder to produce more in less time".

As Feinberg (1967, p.8) notes, the appeal of Ibrahim's satire lies in its "literary merit: brilliance, wit, humor [and] freshness". The issues that Ibrahim highlights continue to be significant, and will likely remain relevant for a long time; but more significantly, Ibrahim varies his satirical method to foreground his subject. Besides his usage of allegorical and ironic satire, Ibrahim also employs the 'anticlimax', which according to Abrams (1993, p.14) denotes a "writer's deliberate drop from the serious and elevated to the trivial and lowly, in order to achieve an intended comic or satiric effect". Ibrahim employs this technique to create humour with a satiric twist: the narrator-protagonist eloquently but purposefully chooses Coca-Cola as a symbol of 20th century civilisation, going for wry comic effect as his observation is based on trivial and vulgar calculations, namely that the bottle is "the right size to fit up anyone's ass":

> We will not find, your honors, among all that I have mentioned, anything that embodies the civilization of this century or its accomplishments, let alone its future, like this svelte little bottle, which is just the right size to fit up anyone's ass (p.18-19).

Significantly, the unnamed narrator protagonist himself appears as a target for Ibrahim's irony. This downturn from seriousness to crude humour in the above scene is intended to further ridicule and humiliate the protagonist; when answering the question posed by the committee, that of the single most defining achievement of the 20th century, he confidently expounds at great length of the history of Coca-Cola. Thus, by singling out a popular drink and relating to it major historical events, the nameless protagonist seems to be very much under the spell of 'Coca-Cola Culture'. His long speech on the significance

of Coca-Cola and other Western brand consumer products ironically makes him the embodiment of a twentieth-century Egyptian man, who can be reduced to no more than a consumerist. Chris Barker (2003, p. 344) notes that:

> The phrase 'Coca-Cola Culture' encapsulates the global reach of this promotional culture and highlights the alleged link between global capitalism, advertising and cultural homogenisation. This is particularly so in the field of consumer culture, where Coca Cola, McDonald's, Nike and Microsoft Windows circulate world-wide.

Hence, using irony as a "mask of the satirical voice" (Highet, 1962, p.55), Ibrahim critically unmasks the exploitation as well as the cultural impact of global capitalism on third world nations. Coca-Cola is used as a glowering symbol of the hypocrisy and the exploitative nature of such companies.

> It may have been Coca-Cola that first shattered the traditional image of the ad, previously a mere description of a product. Thus, it laid the cornerstone of that towering structure, that leading art of the age, namely, advertising. Certainly, it broke the long-standing illusion of a relationship between thirst and heat through the slogan: Thirst knows no season (p.20).

While it is usually depicted as a brand phenomenon, this only goes to show the absurdity and hypocrisy of a media that is somewhat dependant on those companies to affect markets and deceive consumers. Overstatements in *The Committee* such as "the long-standing illusion", "laid the cornerstone" (p.20) serve "to make the unseeing see" (Harris, 1990, para. 25). That is to say, Ibrahim's intention is to unveil the real motives of such capitalist companies, who exploit the media to deceive the public. He also seems to suggest that such media is carefully used by the capitalists, by way of which they disseminate their ideas according to their interests.

Consumerism and Neocolonialism: Back to Allegory

This section elaborates further upon Ibrahim's employment of allegory, and other elements of satire, to depict how capitalism promotes consumerism to ensure its own survival. In this sense, we argue that Ibrahim uses satire to suggest that Egypt, as a consumer society, is turned into a colony of sorts for multinational corporations. Consumerism, as Lois Tyson (1999, p. 56) explains, is a "cornerstone" of the capitalist system: "Consumerism is an ideology that says I'm only as good as I buy". John Scott (2006, p.39) also notes that neo-Marxists hold the view that "collective consumption is the primary process that shapes the city and ensures the survival of capitalism", before adding that Marx himself "regarded the desire to consume as an instance of the 'commodity fetishism' induced by capitalism".

Ibrahim has critically depicted the historical context of what John Scott (2006, p.39) refers to as the "consumer spending booms" of the 1980s. He employs satire to

demonstrate how capitalism has turned individuals and societies into mere consumers by instilling the "ideology of consumer capitalism" (Hawkes, 2003, p.10). Ideology as Luis Althusser puts it "acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects … by that very precise operation … called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday [life] …" (cited in Pillai, 2010, p.4). The function of ideology, in other words, is to dupe the masses into mere followers, thus to freely accept their submission. Ibrahim's grotesque for consumerism is bitterly expressed in the shocking closure of his novel. The nameless narrator-protagonist, for example, finds no other way to express his deep disappointment and frustration at the situation than to consume himself: "Then I lifted my wounded arm to my mouth and began to consume myself" (p.158). By taking the protagonist's consumption to its illogical conclusion, Ibrahim powerfully expresses his condemnation for such strong consumerist values. In other words, Ibrahim uses the narrator-protagonist to allegorically suggest that people of his society are merely consuming themselves. Such an unexpected end is intended to shock the reader, and compels him or her re-evaluate the sociological status quo. The fact that the order of consumption is issued by the committee indicates that our society is doomed by consumerism that is imposed externally. Ironically, the unnamed narrator protagonist is consumed by the hand of the committee, the very people at whose hands he seeks success. Hence, the situation has been exaggerated purposefully to urge the reader to resist the existing social affairs.

Ibrahim's indignation against consumerism can be also understood through his use of verbal irony. This device is primarily utilised to mock the facilities offered by companies which is considered as a means to motivate individuals to consume even more. For Ibrahim, the 'installment plan', is merely a trick to create competition among individuals, and not to help people. The narrator-protagonist ironically condemns such capitalist intention when he comments:

> With the advent of the great age of installment plans, and neighbour competing with neighbour for the newest model car with the largest trunk, capable of holding enough groceries to fill the largest fridge, Coca-Cola marketed the family-sized bottle, the Maxi (p.21).

While he pretends to praise the 'age of installment plans', his real intention is to condemn such false facilities which are aimed at encouraging people to consume. Paradoxically, for Ibrahim the current age is characterised by the freedom to exploit and be exploited. In defining consumerism from a Marxist perspective, Tyson (1999, p.59), notes that the "survival of capitalism [as] a market economy depends on consumerism", specifically the "fashionable look" it creates among societies and individuals. It is in the capitalism's best interests to prey upon any personal insecurities that will motivate people to purchase consumer goods, which are created by comparing oneself with other people. This leads to competition, but "competition is promoted not just among companies who want to sell products but among people who feel they must 'sell' themselves in order to be popular or successful" (Tyson, p.59).

By using Coca-Cola as a symbol, Ibrahim suggests that the modern age is one of what Madison (2005, p.48) referred to as "neo-colonialism".[3] Neocolonialism, according to Robert Young is an "imperial system of economic exploitation, in which the metropolitan centre drains the resources of the periphery while at the same time encouraging it to consume its manufactured products in an unequal, unbalanced system of exchange" (cited in Madison, 2005, p. 48). Hence, Ibrahim ironically reveals the real mission of the capitalist corporations, who have influenced Third World countries, changing "the consumers into numbers and countries into markets" (p.18): these corporations extend their branches to different parts of the world to facilitate their exploitation for countries. As the protagonist himself explains, "In opening world markets, the company relied on establishing independent franchises headed by well-known local capitalists in every country. This practice produced astounding results. Most strikingly, the American bottle came to symbolise indigenous nationalism" (p.22). The phrase "symbolise indigenous nationalism" is specifically used to mock the hypocrisy of the local capitalists like the so-called "doctor" (p.31) who merely changes the packaging of the bottle into a local brand when it is boycotted.

Ibrahim's intention thus is to reveal the strong influence of those companies and the pretension of local capitalists as well. Tyson (1999: p.59) points out that:

> Capitalism's constant need for new markets in which to sell goods and for new sources of raw materials from which to make goods is also responsible for the spread of *imperialism:* the military, economic, and/or cultural domination of nation by another for the financial benefit of the dominating nation.

Ibrahim seems to suggest that the Western capitalism has mutated into imperialism in poorer nations as exploitation becomes more aggressive and severely devastating. He ironically mocks at the deep penetration of Western companies into the country's socioeconomic system, where local capitalists are turned into mere facilitators, who ensure the flow of foreign products into the local market. But, while the author's intention seems to expose the extent to which such companies have become influential over our own society, he is simultaneously unraveling and condemning the hypocrisy of the local capitalists created by those corporations.

In addition to the above devices, comparison can be read as another effective method of criticism (Noritah Omar, 2006, p.111) used by Ibrahim to deliver his satire. By means of comparison, Ibrahim explicitly reveals the destructive effects of global capitalism on poor nations: "If Coca-Cola has been so influential in the greatest and richest country in the world, you can imagine how dominant it is in third world countries, especially in our poor little country" (p.23). Through his use of the word 'domination' Ibrahim is suggesting that Egypt is but a colonial stomping ground for multinational corporations. And, indeed, this is the strong satirical message the author is trying to convey throughout

[3] The term neocolonialism was introduced in 1961 by the president of Ghana to refer to a new era of imperial domination.

The Committee: Ibrahim uses Coca-Cola as a symbol of economic domination, to show how such market influence leads into political influence, specifically in poorer nations such as Egypt. Through illustrating the influence of capitalism around the globe, Ibrahim hints at its severe results on the Third world.

Hyperbole is another useful literary technique used to create "ironic or comic effect" (Abrams, 1993, p.85). Ibrahim also skilfully utilises this technique to stress the influence of foreign capitalists on Egyptian society:

> Actually, we are justified in believing what is said about this slender bottle and how it played a decisive role in the choice of our mood of life, the inclinations of our taste, the presidents and kings of our countries, the wars we participated in, and the treaties we entered into (p.23).

Here, the nameless narrator-protagonist appears to overstate the significance of Coca-Cola in the life of his nation. Nevertheless, this statement of praise strengthens direct but sharp irony directed towards the multinational corporations in Egypt. What Ibrahim is suggesting here is that consumer decisions are not individual decisions as such, but dictates of such a superpower. This is evident as the protagonist admits the "decisive role" of such a company "in the choice of people's mode of life" (p.23).

In short, Ibrahim scorns the consumer culture created by the multinational corporations, which according to him leads to political influence on their part. Via the market route, such corporations have established themselves as the rulers of Egypt. Hence, the primary concern of the novelist is to expose the power and deep penetration of such companies over people and society, as well as the central role they play in the whole policy of Third World countries like Egypt: being under an economic, cultural, and political yoke. Ibrahim summarises the situation through his anti-hero, when the later confesses that he was "entirely under their [the committee's] mercy" (p.24). And like the protagonist, Egypt falls under the grip of such foreign companies which seem to control the country from behind the scenes.

Conclusion

The Committee can be read as a standard Arabic satirical text on the devastating effects of global capitalism on poor nations, but Ibrahim's satire is somewhat more three-dimensional. It centres on global capitalism and local agents, and how both affect the local economy and policy. Using the means of satire, Ibrahim clearly depicts the huge influence, domination and exploitation of the capitalists for individuals and countries. What is important is that Ibrahim has used his "novel as a plat form of expression [to create] national consciousness" of the dangerous consequences of the free market policy (Al-Wadhaf, 2007, p.113). Ibrahim believes, as Al-Wadhaf (p.114) notes in another context "in the power of the word […] in calling for a national awareness about the state of [his] country".

The significance of satire, writes Feinberg, lies in its essence, "the revelation of the contrast between reality and pretence" (p.3). Satirists, he adds, take existing and familiar conditions, and view them from a perspective which makes these conditions seem "foolish, harmful, or affected" so as to right the perceived wrongs, and have the object of satire punished in some way (p.15). In other words, "satire is the physician or the policeman. [It] wounds and destroys individuals and groups in order to benefit society as a whole" (Highet, 1962, p.26). Thus, it may be argued that Ibrahim's satire is intended to correct the Egyptian national situation, or that of the capitalist system as a whole. The elements of satire are carefully woven to create a vivid picture in the reader's mind as well as to strongly shock the reader by revealing a given truth; a kind of shocking, Ibrahim believes, that will evoke the readers to react. This reaction is the ultimate purpose of satire: reformation.

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