

Representation of Arab Family Values in Short Stories  
*As-Sinjabu Ash-Shoghir* by Kaamil Kailani: A Genetic Structuralism Study

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**ABSTRACT**

This study analyses the representation of Arab family values in Kamil Kaylani's short story *As-Sinjabu As-Shoghir* through Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism. This short story was chosen because it contains ideological tensions between traditional Arab values and the dynamics of modernity in the early 20th century. The analysis was conducted to reveal the dialectical relationship between narrative structure and social structure through the concept of human facts as meaningful action in a social context. The method used was qualitative-descriptive with literary text analysis focusing on intrinsic elements and the configuration of human facts. The results of the study show that this short story represents the Arab patriarchal system as a fundamental fait social, with the father figure occupying the centre of moral and social authority. The main values reproduced include *tā'ah* (obedience) as the highest virtue, collective responsibility, patriarchal authority, female honour as a symbol of family morality, and the construction of knowledge as a threat to women. The text also displays ideological contradictions, particularly between isolation and protection and between women's moral ideals and their limited social space. These contradictions reflect the limited awareness of the modern Arab middle class, which seeks to preserve tradition while negotiating with modern values. Theoretically, this study confirms the role of children's literature as a medium for reproducing social ideology during the historical transition phase of Arab society.

**Keywords:** *Arab Family Values, Genetic Structuralism, Kamil Kaylani*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Modern Arab children's literature experienced rapid development in the early 20th century in line with the sociocultural transformation of the Arab world (Roger, 1995). Among the important figures was Kamil Kailani (1897–1959), who wrote fantasy prose and fairy tales by combining Arab-Islamic traditions and modern narrative forms (Jasim, 2006). One example is the short story *As-Sinjābu Ash-Shaghīr*, which features the character Shafīyyah, a nobleman's daughter who is torn between obedience to her father and curiosity (*fudūl*). The conflict culminates when it is revealed that her father, Ghalib, is a jinn who married a human; Shafīyyah's disobedience frees the evil jinn Safafah, forcing her to face a 15-day moral test to save her father (Kailani, 2012). Behind the fantasy elements, this text conveys the tension between traditional Arab family values and a patriarchal structure that centres the father's authority in morality (Halim, 1993).

This short story raises ambivalent gender issues. Shafīyyah is controlled, isolated, and married off without her consent—a reflection of the practice of preserving female chastity (*hifz al-'ird*) (Abu-Lughod, 1986)—but on the other hand, she is also required to have the moral fortitude to face the test alone. This contradiction signifies the ideological tug-of-war within the educated Arab middle class as it confronts modern ideas of individual autonomy and women's emancipation (Margot, 1995). A similar phenomenon is also noted in contemporary Middle Eastern literary studies, which show the tension between tradition and modernity in the representation of women (Ratna, 2015). The portrayal of curiosity as a negative trait reflects a traditional educational pattern that prioritises *tā'ah* and *adab* over the development of critical thinking (Eickelman, 1985).

As a text read across generations since the 1920s, this short story serves as an agent of socialisation of values—particularly patriarchal authority, gender role division, and the concept of obedience. Examining the construction of these values is important for understanding the mechanisms of ideological reproduction in the formation of Arab children's cultural identity and for reassessing the transmission of values in contemporary education. However, academic studies of this short story are still limited; previous Research has focused more on moral aspects—such as the study conducted by Al-Qaisi (2010)—or Kailani's position in the history of children's literature—such as the study conducted by El-Shamy (2004)—without examining it through the perspective of genetic structuralism.

The novelty of this study lies in: (1) its specific focus on the short story *As-Sinjābu Ash-Shaghīr* through genetic structuralism; (2) the analysis of human facts and homology between narrative structure and social structure; and (3) the revelation of ideological contradictions—between the protection and isolation of women, moral demands and social limitations—which reflect the tensions of the Arab middle class during the transition to modernity (Hourani, 1983).

Goldmann's approach is relevant because it views literature as an articulation of the vision *du monde* of a collective subject at a particular historical moment (Goldmann, 1964; 1969; 1977). Through the concept of *fait humain*, the narrative elements of patriarchy, control over women, and the system of arranged marriages are read as a reflection of the social structures that existed in Arab society during Kailani's time. This genetic structuralism approach has proven effective in revealing the relationship between literary texts and the socio-historical conditions of society. (Faruk, 2012). This study answers the question of how Arab family values are represented through human facts and the homology of narrative-social structures in the short story.

The contributions of this Research include: (1) strengthening the study of genetic structuralism in Arabic literature, particularly children's literature, and the reading of literature as an arena for the reproduction of ideology; (2) practical benefits for educators and parents in understanding the values transmitted by the text; and (3) interdisciplinary innovation that combines literature, Arab family sociology, and gender studies to reveal that children's literature is not merely a medium for smooth values, but a space for ideological contestation with implications for the development of children's critical literacy.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach because it focuses on collecting data rather than statistical figures. This approach is used because it is considered appropriate for exploring the Research object in depth with a genetic structuralism theoretical framework. According to Rohanda (in Hidayat et al., 2025), the term 'approach' has a different meaning from 'method'. An approach functions as a framework of thought or perspective for understanding the object of study, while a method comprises structured stages for collecting, analysing, and presenting data. In the context of literary Research with a sociological approach, maintaining the clarity of the Research epistemological framework requires separating approach from method. (Endraswara, 2013).

The object of this Research is the short story *As-Sinjābu Ash-Shaghīr* (السنباب الصغير), or translated as *The Little Squirrel*. The stages of this Research include: (1) verification of text sources and limited translation, (2) intensive reading and marking of units of meaning, (3) categorisation of data based on the concept of human facts, and (4) analysis of narrative-social structure homology. The analysis was conducted through an interpretive-explanatory process to identify the ideological structure articulated in the text.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Analysis of Intrinsic Elements in the Short Story *As-Sinjabu Ash-Shoghīr* Theme

The short story *As-Sinjabu Ash-Shoghīr* by Kamil Kailani builds a complex narrative through six interrelated intrinsic elements. The central theme of this short story revolves around the dangers of excessive curiosity (*fudūl*) and the importance of obedience to parental authority, which is consistently woven through the protagonist's journey as he faces the destructive consequences of disobeying his father's orders. This major theme is reinforced by minor themes such as collective responsibility in the Arab family structure, redemption through suffering and perseverance, and spiritual maturity through learning from mistakes. The overall theme not only functions as a didactic

moral tool typical of classical Arabic children's literature, but also represents fundamental values in the Arab-Islamic worldview, particularly the concepts of *adab* (ethics), *tā'ah* (obedience), and *ṣabr* (patience).

### Plot

The plot structure of the short story follows a forward plot pattern with five neatly constructed classical stages. The exposition introduces Prince Ghalib's family and the birth of Shafiyah, who is exiled in the palace with a strict prohibition against opening the small house at the end of the garden. The complication begins when Shafiyah breaks the prohibition, freeing Sun'ubah (an evil jinn), causing the house to burn down and her father to turn into a frozen statue. The climax occurs during the second violation when Shafiyah tears the dome curtain in Prince Shafā's palace, resulting in the destruction of the palace and severe injuries to the prince. The falling action shows Shafiyah's transformation as she successfully restrains herself from opening the mysterious box in the third test. The resolution reveals that all the traumatic events were pedagogical illusions designed by Queen Jin Zuhrah to teach the dangers of excessive curiosity, and the protagonist is reunited with her family in a happy marriage.

### Characterization

The characterisation in the short story features richly dimensional characters. Princess Shafiyah, as the protagonist, undergoes the most significant character development, transforming from an obedient child raised in strict isolation to an individual capable of overcoming her weaknesses. Prince Ghalib represents wise yet paradoxical patriarchal authority through his efforts to protect Shafiyah by isolating her, which ultimately creates a source of danger: curiosity. The construction of characters with paradoxical dimensions like this reflects the complexity of social reality that cannot be explained through simple binary oppositions. (Nurgiyantoro, 2018). Sun'ubah emerges as a complex antagonist who transcends the simple stereotype of evil, driven by hatred stemming from experiences of rejection and exclusion. Then, Queen Jinn Zuhrah, as the figure who resolves the conflict, represents cosmic wisdom and justice that design all trials as moral pedagogy.

### Setting

The setting is dominated by Prince Ghalib's palace, which symbolises the paradox of protection and isolation, luxurious yet cut off from the outside world. The small house at the end of the garden is the most powerful symbol, windowless and locked, that creates an aura of mystery and prohibition, objectively representing Shafiyah's curiosity. The setting uses the temporal ambiguity typical of fairy tales to underscore the universality of the moral message, but the structure of the test is precise: it takes place fifteen days before her fifteenth birthday, the age of puberty in Islamic tradition. The sociocultural setting reconstructs feudal aristocracy with its strict hierarchy, a patriarchal value system emphasising obedience, family honour, and arranged marriages, reflecting the practice of *purdah* in traditional Arab society.

### Point of View

The short story uses an omniscient third-person point of view with an external narrator who has full access to the thoughts of all characters and events. The narrator presents himself as an authoritative pedagogical figure who addresses the child reader directly, providing explicit moral judgments that reflect the authority structure in the traditional Arab worldview. Although omniscient, the narrator sometimes withholds information to build suspense and teach epistemological patience, reflecting a paternalistic pedagogy in which children must experience suffering without full understanding until they pass a test to receive an explanation.

### Message

The message of the short story is multi-layered, with the primary message criticising *fudūl* through a rigid cause-and-effect structure. The secondary message emphasises *birr al-wālidayn* (filial piety), showing that a child's disobedience hurts the whole family. The tertiary message teaches that learning through suffering and the value of *ṣabr*: authentic moral transformation occurs only through the experience of consequences. However, there are internal contradictions in the text: it criticises curiosity but relies on exploiting the reader's curiosity, it celebrates obedience, but the

plot moves forward because of disobedience, it promotes the isolation of women as protection, but isolation creates psychological vulnerability. This structural contradiction reveals an unconscious acknowledgement that the old system is no longer entirely adequate for a changing world, making this short story not only a didactic work for children but also an ideological mirror of Arab society during its historical transition.

### Human Facts of Arab Society in Short Stories

Based on Lucien Goldmann's concept of genetic structuralism, the human facts in the short story *As-Sinjabu Ash-Shoghir* can be identified through its narrative structure, which represents the socio-historical reality of traditional Arab society. Goldmann asserts that every human fact is a meaningful structure bound to a specific purpose as its source of meaning (Goldmann, 1964). In the context of Kailani's short story, human facts manifest in two dimensions: individual and social.

#### Individual Human Facts

Individual human facts in this short story are reflected through the behaviour of characters driven by personal instincts and desires. However, unlike Goldmann's concept, which separates individual facts from social meaning, this short story presents a complex dialectic between individual impulses and their social implications.

Table 1. Manifestation of Individual Human Facts in Short Stories

Character	Individual Impulses	Narrative Manifestation	Text Excerpt
Shafiyah	<i>Fudūl</i> (excessive curiosity)	The desire to open the small house, even though her father forbade it.	"تَرَى مَاذَا يَحْتَوِيهِ النَّبِيْتُ الصَّغِيرُ؟ وَمَا بَالُ أَبِي قَدْ حَرَصَ عَلَيَّ مِفْتَاحِهِ؟" (Chapter 1, Scene 9)
	Epistemological ambition	The desire to know the contents of the closed dome.	"وَلَكِنْ أَيُّ نَوْعٍ مِنَ الْأَحْجَارِ الْكَرِيمَةِ يَتَلَا مِنْ جِلَالِ النَّقُوبِ الصَّغِيرَةِ" (Chapter 5, Scene 4)
Sun'ubah	<i>Niqmah</i> (revenge)	Hatred toward the Ghalib family.	"أَنَا أَبْغَضُهُ لِأَنَّهُ أَبُوكَ كَمَا أَبْغَضُكَ لِأَنَّكَ ابْنُهُ" (Chapter 2, Scene 5)
Ghalib	A father's protective instinct	Shafiyah's isolation in the palace.	"وَلَمْ أَتَسَمَّحْ مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً فِي أَنْ أَمْكِنَكَ مِنْ رُؤْيَةِ" (Chapter 3, Scene 8)

Shafiyah's curiosity (*fudūl*) is not merely neutral epistemological curiosity, but is constructed as a vice (moral evil) rooted in disobedience (*'isyān*). The narrative shows how this individual impulse consistently produces destructive consequences:

"وَلَمْ تَكُنِ الْأَمِيرَةُ قَدْ أَدْرَكَتْ مَدَى الْكَارِثَةِ الَّتِي جَلَبَتْهَا عَلَى نَفْسِهَا وَعَلَى أَبِيهَا بِأَنْدِفَاعِهَا فِيمَا لَا يَهْمُهَا"

"The princess did not yet realise the magnitude of the disaster she had caused for herself and her father by rushing into matters that were none of her concern." (Chapter 2, scene 3)

The structure of this Arabic sentence uses the *mudāf-mudāf ilayh* pattern (الْكَارِثَةُ الَّتِي جَلَبَتْهَا), which emphasises the direct causality between individual actions and collective consequences. The choice of the word *جَلَبَ* (*jalaba*, meaning to bring about/cause) instead of the more neutral word indicates a linguistic construction that carries moral judgment.

Interestingly, Ghalib's protective instincts actually created conditions that made Shafiyah vulnerable. Total isolation created an epistemological vacuum that made forbidden knowledge even more tempting. This is a structural paradox that reveals the contradictions in the patriarchal value system: absolute protection produces absolute curiosity.

### Social Humanity Facts

The social facts in this short story represent the traditional Arab social structure, embedded in the relationships among the characters and the value system that governs their behaviour. According to Goldmann (1977), social facts are individual actions that involve collective aspects and have significance in the structure of society. This concept of social facts aligns with the understanding that literature is a mirror of society, not only recording but also shaping collective consciousness. (Damono, 2020).

**Table 1. Structure of Social Human Facts in Short Stories**

Social Dimension	Manifestation in Text	Structural Function	Textual Evidence
Patriarchal System	The absolute authority of the father in determining the life of the child.	Legitimation of total control over women.	"وَقَدْ بَدَّلَ أَبُوهَا جُهْدَهُ فِي تَرْبِيَّتِهَا وَتَأْدِيبِهَا وَتَعْلِيمِهَا بِنَفْسِهِ" (Chapter 1, scene 5)
Collective Responsibility	Individual mistakes affect the entire family.	Self-construction as part of the family unit.	"هِيَائَتِ سَبِيلِ الْخَلَاصِ لِحُصُومِنَا الْأَشِدَاءِ وَأَعْدَائِنَا الْأَلِدَاءِ" (Chapter 2, scene 10)
Arranged Marriage	Supernatural authorities arrange marriage.	Women as objects of exchange.	"تَخَيَّرْتُكَ لِي زَوْجًا، حِينَ تُدْرِكِينَ الْخَامِسَةَ عَشْرَةَ" (Chapter 4, scene 8)
Isolation of Women	<i>Purdah</i> /seclusion as protection of honour.	Control of mobility and social interaction.	So he spared no effort in accustoming her... to stay away from what did not concern her. (Chapter 1, Scene 3)
Authoritarian Pedagogy	Education is the instillation of discipline, not critical development.	Reproduction of structures of obedience.	"إِيَّاكَ وَالْفُضُولَ... وَمَا كُلُّ مَا يُعْرِفُ يُجِبُّ أَنْ يُقَالَ" (Chapter 3, scene 11)

#### a. The Patriarchal System as a Fundamental Social Fact

The patriarchal structure in the short story is not merely a backdrop, but rather an organising principle that governs the entire narrative logic. Ghalib is not only the biological father, but also the

- Moral legislator – determining what can and cannot be known.
- Exclusive protector – monopoly over the child's safety.
- The sole educator – total control over the transmission of knowledge.
- Matchmaker – the authority to determine life partners.

This concentration of power is legitimised through two narrative mechanisms:

- Epistemological superiority

Ghalib possesses knowledge of the future and dangers that Shafiyah cannot access. The following dialogue illustrates this epistemological asymmetry:

"وَسَأُفَسِّرُ لَكَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَ خَمْسَةَ عَشَرَ يَوْمًا، وَأَقْصُ عَلَيْكَ مَا تَسْتَأْنِينِ"

"I will explain everything to you after fifteen days, and tell you whatever you want"  
(Chapter 3, scene 11)

The temporal structure—after fifteen days—creates a hierarchy of knowledge: Ghalib knows when Shafiyah can understand, while Shafiyah does not know when she can know. This is not only about the content of knowledge (what), but control over the time of access (when)—a more fundamental form of power.

2) The Material Consequences of Disobedience

Every violation results in a concrete disaster that proves the truth of the father's authority:

- a) Violation 1 (opening the small house) → Sun'ubah is freed, and the house burns down.
- b) Violation 2 (tearing the dome curtain) → Shafā' palace destroyed, prince injured.

This pattern creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: the father's prohibitions are proven right because violations result in disaster. However, the disaster itself is Zuhrah's pedagogical construction (revealed in Chapter 6), not a natural consequence. In other words, the patriarchal system produces a reality that validates itself.

**b. Collective Responsibility: Non-Individualistic Self-Construction**

Unlike Western liberal individualism, which constructs the subject as autonomous, this short story constructs identity as relational and embedded in family networks. This is reflected in the use of pronouns:

**Table 3. Collective Responsibility**

Context	Pronouns Used	Social Meaning
Ghalib explains the consequences.	"أَعْدَانِنَا... أَصُومِنَا" ( <i>our enemies</i> )	Shafiyah's mistake = a threat to "us" (collectively).
Shafiyah apologises.	"مَا جَلَبْتُهُ... عَلَيْكَ" ( <i>I brought upon you</i> )	Acknowledging individual responsibility towards the collective
Promise of redemption.	"لَنْ تَفْصِمَ بَيْنَكَ «صَفِيَّةٌ»" ( <i>Shafiyah will not separate from you</i> )	Identity is bound to relationships, not an independent substance.

The key phrase "مَا جَلَبْتُهُ مِنْ نَكَبَاتٍ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى أَبِي وَابْنِ عَمِّي جَمِيعًا" (the calamities I brought upon myself, my father, and my nephew) shows a construction of responsibility that radiates outward: personal mistakes spread concentrically, affecting the nuclear family (father) and extended family (prospective husband).

This contrasts sharply with the epistemology of the European Enlightenment, which celebrates curiosity as the engine of progress. In Kailani's short story, curiosity is not a path to enlightenment, but a threat to the social order. Knowledge is not an individual right, but a privilege granted by the legitimate authorities at the appropriate time.

**c. Arranged Marriage: Women in the Exchange Economy**

The marriage system in the short story reproduces the structure of a gift economy in which women are objects of exchange between men (or, in this case, between supernatural entities):

"تَخَيَّرْتِكِ لِي زَوْجًا، حِينَ تُدْرِكِينَ الْخَامِسَةَ عَشْرَةَ مِنْ عُمْرِكَ"

"(Queen Zuhrah) has chosen you for me as a wife, when you reach the age of fifteen" (Chapter 4, scene 8)

The Arabic grammatical structure indicates agency: Zuhrah (subject) chooses (تَخَيَّرَ) Shafiyyah (indirect object) for Shafā' (direct object). Shafiyyah has no *agency* in this sentence—she is *what is determined*, not *who chooses*.

The age of fifteen is not a narrative coincidence, but a cultural signifier: the age of *akil baligh* (religious maturity) for women in the majority of Islamic jurisprudence. However, this maturity is paradoxical: mature enough to marry, but not mature enough to choose one's own partner. This reveals a contradiction in the construction of the female subject: biologically and reproductively mature, but not epistemologically and autonomously mature.

More interestingly, marriage is made a reward for obedience:

"وَلَنْ تَمُضِيَ أَيَّامَ قَلِيلَةٍ حَتَّى يَعُودَ إِلَيْكَ وَالذُّكُ... وَنُفَيْمِ حَفَلَاتِ الْعُرْسِ"

"It won't be long before your father returns... and we will celebrate the wedding" (Chapter 4, scene 8)

Marriage is not an autonomous choice, but rather the culmination of a pedagogical-disciplinary process. Shafiyyah has the right to marry not because she loves Shafā', but because she has successfully overcome *fidul*. This demonstrates the function of marriage in a patriarchal system: not the union of two autonomous individuals, but rather a reward for women who have internalised values of subordination.

#### d. Women's Isolation: The Paradox of Protection-Exile

The purdah system (isolation of women) in Sinjabu Ashshogir's short story creates a structural paradox:

Table 4. The Dialectic of Isolation in Short Stories

Aspect	Manifest Function	Latent Function	Unintended Consequences
Isolation in the palace	Protection from external dangers	Control of mobility and sexuality	Creating an epistemological vacuum that produces curiosity.
Prohibition on seeing other people	Maintaining moral purity	Monopoly of the father's Influence	Inability to develop independent judgment.
Restriction of knowledge	Preventing harmful knowledge	Epistemological infantilization	Vulnerability to manipulation (Sun'ubah).

The narrative shows that isolation, intended as protection, actually creates conditions of vulnerability:

"وَلَمْ تَقَعْ عَيْنَاهَا عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ غَيْرِ أَبِيهَا"

"Her eyes never fell on anyone but her father" (Chapter 1, scene 5)

The phrase لَمْ تَقَعْ عَيْنَاهَا (her eyes did not fall on) uses the metaphor of vision as falling—seeing as something that happens to someone, not by someone. This subtly constructs Shafiyyah as a passive perceiver rather than an active observer. This total isolation produces two consequences:

- 1) Failure to Develop Phronesis (Practical Wisdom)  
Shafiyah never faces situations that require her to make moral decisions in a real social context. When faced with temptation (Sun'ubah), she lacks the experiential wisdom to navigate ambiguous situations. Protective pedagogy creates a morally naive subject.
- 2) The Fetishism of Forbidden Knowledge  
Prohibitions without detailed explanations can create a mystical aura around forbidden objects in stories:

"تَرَى مَاذَا يَحْتَوِيهِ الْبَيْتُ الصَّغِيرُ؟... لَعَلَّهُ سَجِينٌ"

"What is inside the small house?... Perhaps a prisoner" (Chapter 1, scene 9)

Shafiyah fills the epistemological void with fantastic speculation. The absence of information does not lead to indifference, but rather to obsession. This is an implicit criticism of a pedagogical system that relies on absolute prohibitions without rational explanation. This paradox reveals a structural contradiction in the patriarchal system:

- Goal: to create morally pure and obedient women
- Method: epistemological isolation and total control
- Unintended result: subjects who are naive, vulnerable to manipulation, and obsessed with forbidden knowledge

### Homology between Narrative Structure and Social Structure

Goldmann argues that there is homology (structural equivalence) between the narrative form of literary works and the social structures that produce them. In Kailani's short story, this homology can be identified through the following mapping:

**Table 5. Structural Homology in As-Sinjabu Ash-Shoghir**

Narrative Structure	Traditional Arab Social Structure	Ideological Function
Supernatural hierarchy (Zuhrah > Ghalib > Shafiyah).	Social hierarchy (King > male nobles > female nobles).	Naturalisation of the power hierarchy.
Prohibition system with deterministic consequences.	Patriarchal legal system with harsh sanctions.	Legitimation of authority through rigid cause-and-effect relationships.
Spatial isolation of Shafiyah in the palace.	Purdah/hijab practices in Arab society.	Normalisation of control over women's mobility.
Marriage is the <i>telos</i> of the narrative.	Marriage as a woman's <i>raison d'être</i> .	Reproduction of traditional gender roles.
Pedagogy through suffering.	Discipline/manners-based education system.	Internalisation of obedience through trauma.
Knowledge is a privilege granted.	Hierarchical epistemological system (scholars > commoners).	Control of access to knowledge by the elite.

### Specific Homology Analysis

#### Narrative Temporal Structure vs. Social Rites of Passage

The plot moves toward a rigid deadline: Shafiyah's fifteenth birthday. This is homologous to the structure of rites of passage in traditional societies, such as:

- 1) Separation Phase: Shafiyah's isolation in the palace (childhood)
- 2) Liminal Phase: Fifteen-day trial (transition)

3) Aggregation Phase: Marriage and reunification (adulthood)

Failure in the liminal phase (not overcoming *fudūl*) means failure to reach adulthood—remaining subordinate forever. This reflects a social structure in which women achieve full status only through marriage, not through individual achievement.

### Multi-Layered Narrative vs. Social Class Structure

The short story has three layers of reality, including:

- 1) "Authentic" reality: Life before the transgression.
- 2) Illusory reality: The post-transgression disaster (actually a pedagogical construct).
- 3) Revealed reality: The truth that everything is a test.

This structure is homologous with Arab social stratification, namely:

- a) Elite Class (Ghalib, Zuhrah): Access to "true reality," manipulating the reality of the lower classes.
- b) Middle Class (Shafiyah): Experiencing a manipulated reality, unaware they are being tested.
- c) Lower Class (does not appear in the short story): Has no access to the narrative at all.

The absence of the lower class (servants, farmers, etc.) in the short story itself is a significant social fact; the aristocracy is a given, the common people are invisible. This reflects the class consciousness of the Arab bourgeoisie, which only represents its own world.

### The Concept of Narrative "Salvation" vs. the Concept of Social "Honour"

In the plot, "safety" (*najāh*) is defined as:

- 1) Not dying or being injured (physical safety).
- 2) But not violating prohibitions (moral safety).

This is homologous to the concept of *sharaf* (honour) in Arab society, namely that family honour is determined not by material well-being, but by control over female sexuality and behaviour. Shafiyah, who is hungry and thirsty but does not open the box (Chapter 6, §5), is more "honourable" than Shafiyah, who is healthy but disobedient.

### Representation of Arab Family Values in Human Facts

From the above analysis, five fundamental Arab family values can be identified as social facts represented in the short story:

- 1) *Tā'ah* (Obedience) as the Highest Virtue  
Obedience is not merely external behaviour, but a virtue that surpasses other virtues. Shafiyah, who is intelligent and kind-hearted, still "fails" if she is not obedient. The narrative never questions *the content of Ghalib's prohibitions*, only their obedience.
- 2) Collective Responsibility (*Mas'ūliyyah Jamā'iyyah*)  
Individual identity is embedded in the family network. Personal mistakes = collective shame. This differs from Western individualism, where "your mistake is yours alone."
- 3) Patriarchal Authority as Natural Order  
The father's power does not need to be justified as given; it is not achieved. The legitimacy of authority is ascriptive (based on position), not performative (based on competence).
- 4) Women as the Repository of Family Honour  
Family honour is control over women's bodies and behaviour. This creates gender asymmetry: men act, women are kept from acting.
- 5) Knowledge as a Potential Danger for Women  
Unlike enlightenment (*tanwīr*), which celebrates knowledge, this short story constructs knowledge, especially for women, as a potential source of chaos. Obedient ignorance is safer than rebellious knowledge.

### Internal Contradiction: Possible Consciousness and Its Limits

Although the short story reproduces traditional values, there are structural contradictions that reveal the limits of the consciousness of the class that produced it, such as:

- 1) Contradiction 1: Criticism of *Fudūl* vs. Plot Dependence on Curiosity

The text criticises Shafiyah's curiosity, but *the plot* only moves forward because she transgresses. Without transgression, there is no narrative. This reveals the narrative's structural dependence on the very thing it condemns (performative contradiction).

- 2) Contradiction 2: Isolation as Protection vs. Isolation as Vulnerability

The text promotes the isolation of women, yet shows that isolation creates dangerous naivety. Ghalib successfully protects Shafiyah from external dangers, but fails to prepare her for internal temptations. This is an implicit criticism of the system he legitimises.

- 3) Contradiction 3: Women Must Be Strong vs. Women Must Be Protected

Shafiyah is expected to have extraordinary moral strength to resist temptation on her own, but she is not trusted to make decisions about her own life. The text demands moral agency while rejecting social agency (double bind).

These contradictions are not artistic failures but rather symptoms of the historical tensions within the Arab middle class of the 1920s-1940s, which sought to maintain traditional structures while adopting modern ideas about subjectivity. This class was not yet able to imagine radical alternatives (full emancipation of women, non-patriarchal families), but was also no longer fully convinced of the old system.

### CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Kamil Kailani's short story *As-Sinjabu Ash-Shoghīr*, through Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism approach, represents the values of traditional Arab families in a complex manner as an articulation of the worldview of the Arab middle class during the historical transition of the early 20th century, not merely as a didactic work for children. The analysis of human facts and structural homology shows that the patriarchal system functions as a fundamental *fait social* that organizes the entire narrative logic, manifested in the prioritization of *tā'ah* (obedience) as the highest virtue, the construction of individual identity through collective family responsibility, the naturalization of patriarchal authority, control over women's mobility and sexuality as guardians of family honor, and the interpretation of knowledge—especially for women—as a potential danger. The homology between narrative structure and social structure is evident in the supernatural hierarchy that reflects the social hierarchy, a system of prohibitions with deterministic consequences that legitimize patriarchal law, the spatial isolation of female characters that normalizes the practice of *purdah*, marriage as a narrative text that reproduces traditional gender roles, pedagogy through suffering that internalizes obedience, and a temporal structure that moves towards the age of fifteen as an analogy for social rites of passage towards full womanhood through marriage regulated by patriarchal authority. Significantly, this text also reveals ideological contradictions that reflect the limitations of *the* consciousness possible for the educated Arab middle class, seen in the tension between isolation as protection and as vulnerability, between demands for female moral strength and denial of her social agency, and between criticism of *fudūl* and narrative dependence on transgression. Thus, this short story functions as an ideological mirror that not only transmits Arab family values but also—unconsciously—reveals the ambivalence and contestation in the reproduction of traditional ideology amid the challenges of modernity, with important implications for the development of critical literacy regarding the transmission of cultural values through cross-generational children's literature.

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