

**Literature as Resistance: Challenging Dominant Narratives in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* and Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code*.**

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**Abstract:** This research takes a close look at the sophisticated overlapping of intertextuality and double consciousness in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* and Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code*, employing a New Historicist framework to show how these literary works interact with historical narratives and cultural contexts to explore themes of identity and heritage. It begins with Kristeva's definition of 'intertextuality' and Du Bois' concept of 'double consciousness' which may serve as a critical framework for justifying the internal conflict experienced by marginalized individuals in a multiple-identity background. Through a comparative descriptive analysis, both Morrison and Elamry are argued to utilize intertextuality to address broader socio-political issues; but whereas Morrison examines historical traumas affecting African Americans, Elamry deals with contemporary racial dynamics facing individuals of a mixed-heritage community. By situating these narratives within their respective historical contexts, this research provides insights into how literature can challenge dominant narratives and foster critical dialogue about race and identity. Ultimately, this research contributes to literary analysis and cultural studies by elucidating the multifaceted nature of intertextuality and double consciousness, underscoring literature's power to illuminate the complexities of human experience across diverse cultural landscapes while advocating for a deeper understanding of the ongoing struggles against oppression in various forms. This exploration not only deepens our understanding of these literary works but also contributes to the broader discourse on African-American literature, intertextuality, and the complexities of identity and history. By engaging with these theories and concepts, this research aims to unravel the layers of meaning in *Song of Solomon* and *Bilal's Code*, shedding light on their intertextual references and their exploration of the concept of double consciousness. Through this comprehensive analysis, the research highlights how both Morrison and Elamry utilize their narratives as powerful tools for resistance against dominant societal norms, overall emphasizing literature's role as a catalyst for social change and a means to foster empathy and understanding across diverse communities.

**Keywords:** Literature and Resistance – Toni Morrison – *Song of Solomon* - Intertextuality - Double consciousness - New Historicism

**المستخلص:**

يتناول هذا البحث التفاعل المعقد بين التناسل وازدواجية الوعي في روايتي "أنشودة سليمان" و"شفرة بلال" لتوني موريسون و أحمد العمري، و ذلك في إطار نقدي تاريخي جديد لتسليط الضوء على كيفية تعامل هذه الأعمال الأدبية مع السرديات التاريخية والسياقات الثقافية لاستكشاف موضوعات الهوية والتراث. يبدأ البحث بتعريف مفهوم التناسل كما قدمته جوليا كريستيفا. ويستخدم مفهوم ازدواجية الوعي، الذي صاغه دبليو إي بي دو بوا، كإطار نقدي لفهم الصراع الداخلي الذي يواجهه الأفراد المهمشون أثناء تنقلهم بين هويات متعددة تتشكل بفعل توقعات المجتمع. يكشف البحث كيف تجسد الشخصيات في كلتا الروايتين هذا الصراع، كما يسلط البحث الضوء على الخيوط المتشابكة التي تشكل الهوية وسط العنصرية المنهجية والعزلة الثقافية. ومن خلال التحليل المقارن، يوضح البحث كيف يستخدم كل من الكاتبين التناسل لمعالجة قضايا اجتماعية وسياسية أوسع؛ حيث تعكس موريسون الصدمات التاريخية التي أثرت على الأمريكيين الأفارقة، بينما يتناول العمري الديناميكيات العرقية المعاصرة التي يواجهها الأفراد ذوو التراث المختلط. ومن خلال وضع هذه السرديات في سياقاتها التاريخية الخاصة، يقدم هذا البحث رؤى حول كيفية تحدي الأدب للسرديات السائدة وتعزيز الحوار النقدي حول العرق والهوية. يسهم هذا البحث في التحليل الأدبي والدراسات الثقافية من خلال توضيح الطبيعة المتعددة الأوجه للتناسل وازدواجية الوعي، و يبرز قوة الأدب في الكشف عن تعقيدات التجربة الإنسانية عبر المشاهد الثقافية المتنوعة، مع الدعوة إلى فهم أعمق للصراعات المستمرة ضد أشكال القمع المختلفة. لا يعمق هذا الاستكشاف فهمنا لهذه الأعمال الأدبية فحسب، بل يسهم أيضاً في الخطاب الأوسع حول الأدب الأمريكي الأفريقي والتناسل وتعقيدات الهوية والتاريخ. من خلال الانخراط مع هذه النظريات والمفاهيم، يسعى هذا البحث إلى فك الطبقات المعنوية في أغنية سليمان وشفرة بلال، مسلطاً الضوء على إشارتهما التناسلية واستكشافهما لمفهوم ازدواجية الوعي. ومن خلال هذا التحليل الشامل، يبرز البحث كيف يستخدم كل من موريسون والعمري رواياتهما كأدوات قوية لمقاومة المعايير المجتمعية السائدة، مما يؤكد في النهاية على دور الأدب كحافز للتغيير الاجتماعي ووسيلة لتعزيز التعاطف والفهم عبر المجتمعات المتنوعة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** أنشودة سليمان – شفرة بلال – الهوية و التراث – ازدواجية الوعي

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Literature has long served as a powerful medium for challenging and resisting dominant societal narratives, particularly those related to race and identity. The concept of literature as resistance encompasses the ways in which novelists use their narratives to confront and critique the prevailing ideologies and social norms that perpetuate oppression. In this context, both Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* 1977 and Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code* 2016 emerge as significant texts that engage with themes of racial identity, cultural heritage, and systemic oppression. By examining these novels, researchers can gain insight into how literature not only reflects societal issues but also acts as a catalyst for social change.

The significance of this research lies in its exploration of the role that Morrison and Elamry play in articulating the complexities of identity formation within their respective cultural contexts. Morrison's work is rooted in the African-American experience, reflecting on historical traumas and the ongoing impact of racism. In contrast, Elamry's narrative addresses contemporary issues faced by individuals navigating multiple identities in a post-colonial world. By analyzing these two texts, this research aims to illuminate how literature can serve as a form of resistance against dominant narratives that seek to marginalize or erase the voices of oppressed communities.

The primary objectives of this research are threefold: first, to show how both authors utilize their narratives to confront societal expectations surrounding race and identity; second, to examine the intertextual references within each novel that enhance their critiques of dominant narratives; and third, to explore the implications of double consciousness as articulated by W.E.B. Du Bois in relation to the characters' experiences. By focusing on these objectives, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Morrison and Elamry employ their literary works as tools for resistance, challenging readers to reconsider preconceived notions about race and identity.

The first literary text is Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, published in 1977, which emerges from a historical backdrop marked by the civil rights movement and the ongoing struggle for African-American identity and equality in the United States. The novel reflects the complexities of

African-American life during a time when systemic racism was deeply entrenched in American society. Despite the legislative advancements achieved through the civil rights movement, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, African-Americans continued to face significant social, economic, and political challenges. Morrison's narrative captures this duality—while it celebrates cultural heritage and resilience, it also highlights the pervasive effects of racism on individual identity and community cohesion. The protagonist, Milkman Dead, embarks on a journey of self-discovery that is intricately linked to his family's history, illustrating how personal identity is shaped by collective experiences of oppression and survival.

In contrast, Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code*, published in 2016, is situated within a contemporary context that grapples with issues of racial identity and cultural alienation in a post-colonial world. This novel addresses the experiences of Arab Americans, particularly those navigating mixed heritage in a society often characterized by xenophobia and racial profiling. The historical backdrop includes the aftermath of events such as 9/11, which significantly altered perceptions of Arab and Muslim communities in America. Elamry's narrative reflects these tensions, exploring themes of belonging and identity amidst societal expectations that often marginalize individuals based on their racial or ethnic backgrounds. Through the lens of his characters' experiences, Elamry critiques contemporary societal norms that perpetuate discrimination while also celebrating cultural diversity and resilience.

Both novels engage with systemic racism but do so from different cultural perspectives. Morrison's work delves into the historical traumas faced by African-Americans, emphasizing how these experiences inform contemporary identities. Elamry's narrative, on the other hand, reflects modern struggles against prejudice and stereotypes faced by Arab Americans. By situating these texts within their respective historical contexts, we can better understand how each author utilizes their narratives to challenge dominant societal narratives about race and identity.

The interplay between history and literature is crucial for understanding of how both Morrison and Elamry address issues of oppression and resistance. Their works serve as platforms for marginalized voices to articulate their experiences, ultimately contributing to broader conversations about race, identity, and social justice. Through their narratives, both authors illuminate the complexities of cultural identity

shaped by historical legacies while simultaneously resisting dominant narratives that seek to define or limit those identities.

Furthermore, the analysis of *Song of Solomon* and *Bilal's Code* is enriched by two significant theoretical frameworks: intertextuality and double consciousness. Intertextuality, a concept introduced by Julia Kristeva, refers to the interconnectedness of literary texts and the ways in which they reference and influence one another. This theory posits that no text exists in isolation; rather, each work is a mosaic of references to other texts, cultural artifacts, and historical narratives. In *Song of Solomon*, Morrison employs intertextual references, particularly biblical allusions, to deepen the exploration of identity and heritage within the African-American experience. These references create a dialogue between her characters' struggles and the larger historical narratives that shape their identities. Similarly, Elamry's *Bilal's Code* engages with intertextuality through its references to Islamic history and contemporary issues faced by Arab Americans, illustrating how these connections inform the characters' experiences and challenges.

The significance of intertextuality in analyzing these texts lies in its ability to reveal how authors engage with existing narratives to critique societal norms and expectations. By weaving intertextual references into their narratives, both Morrison and Elamry challenge dominant cultural narratives that seek to marginalize their characters' identities. This approach allows readers to recognize the layers of meaning embedded within the texts, highlighting the authors' intent to resist oppression through literature. Furthermore, intertextuality serves as a tool for empowerment, enabling marginalized voices to assert their identities against prevailing societal norms.

In addition to intertextuality, the concept of double consciousness, as articulated by W.E.B. Du Bois, provides a critical lens for understanding the internal conflicts faced by characters in both novels. Double consciousness refers to the psychological struggle experienced by marginalized individuals who navigate multiple identities shaped by societal expectations and racial oppression.

As known, literature has always played a pivotal role in challenging dominant societal narratives, particularly those surrounding race and identity. The works of Toni Morrison and Ahmed Elamry serve as powerful examples of how authors can utilize their narratives to confront and critique the prevailing ideologies that perpetuate oppression. By examining the themes of community within both *Song of Solomon* and *Bilal's Code*, we can gain deeper insights into how



collective identity influences individual experiences and serves as a source of resistance against societal norms.

In *Song of Solomon*, the importance of community is woven into the fabric of Milkman Dead's journey. His quest for self-discovery is not solely an individual endeavor; it is deeply interconnected with his family history and the broader African-American community. Morrison shows how Milkman's understanding of his identity evolves through his interactions with family members, particularly his aunt Pilate, who embodies resilience and strength. Pilate's unconventional lifestyle and rejection of societal beauty standards challenge Milkman to embrace his own heritage and question the expectations placed upon him. This emphasis on familial ties and community support highlights the idea that identity is not formed in isolation but is shaped by the collective experiences of those around us. In this way, Morrison underscores the significance of community as a source of empowerment in resisting societal pressures.

Similarly, Elamry's *Bilal's Code* explores the role of community in navigating mixed heritage within a contemporary context. The protagonist's experiences reflect the complexities faced by individuals who straddle multiple cultural identities, particularly in a society often characterized by xenophobia and racial profiling. Throughout the narrative, connections with friends and family provide crucial support as he grapples with societal expectations that seek to define him based on superficial characteristics. Elamry emphasizes that solidarity among marginalized groups is essential for fostering resilience against discrimination. By portraying characters who find strength in their communities, Elamry illustrates how collective identity can serve as a powerful form of resistance against oppressive societal norms.

The narrative techniques employed by both authors further enrich their exploration of community and resistance. Morrison's use of magical realism allows her to infuse elements of African-American folklore into her storytelling, creating a rich tapestry that reflects the cultural heritage of her characters. This technique not only enhances the narrative but also reinforces the idea that history and culture are integral to understanding identity. Elamry, on the other hand, employs a more straightforward narrative style that grounds his characters' experiences in contemporary realities. By doing so, he effectively highlights the ongoing struggles faced by Arab Americans while maintaining a focus on the importance of cultural diversity within marginalized communities.

In addition to examining community dynamics, it is essential to consider how historical context suggests each author's approach to addressing issues of race and identity. Morrison's *Song of Solomon* emerges from a backdrop marked by the civil rights movement, reflecting the historical traumas faced by African-Americans while celebrating their cultural heritage. The novel captures the duality of progress and ongoing challenges, illustrating how systemic racism continues to shape individual identities even amidst legislative advancements. Conversely, Elamry's *Bilal's Code* addresses contemporary issues stemming from events such as 9/11, which have significantly altered perceptions of Arab and Muslim communities in America. By situating their narratives within distinct historical frameworks, both authors highlight how literature can serve as a means of resistance against dominant narratives that seek to marginalize their characters' voices.

Exploring reader reception and interpretation can provide valuable insights into how these works resonate with diverse audiences. Understanding how different readers engage with Morrison's portrayal of African-American identity or Elamry's exploration of Arab American experiences can illuminate broader societal implications regarding race and belonging. This analysis could involve examining critical reviews or audience reactions to these texts, shedding light on how literature continues to challenge preconceived notions about race and identity in contemporary society.

Another thing to add, integrating comparative analyses with other contemporary works addressing similar themes could position Morrison and Elamry within a larger literary conversation about resistance narratives. Authors such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie or Junot Díaz also grapple with issues of identity and belonging in their works, offering unique perspectives on the struggles faced by marginalized communities. By drawing parallels between these authors' approaches to resistance, researchers can further enrich discussions about literature's role in advocating for social justice.

Both literary works exemplify how literature serves as a powerful tool for challenging dominant narratives surrounding race and identity. Through their nuanced portrayals of community dynamics, historical contexts, narrative techniques, and reader engagement, these authors illuminate the complexities inherent in cultural identity formation while advocating for empathy and understanding across diverse communities. As we continue to explore these themes within literary studies, it becomes increasingly clear that literature not only reflects societal issues but also acts as a

catalyst for social change—encouraging readers to confront oppressive structures while embracing the richness of diverse identities.

Elamry's characters also navigate double consciousness as they confront their mixed heritage in a contemporary setting marked by prejudice and discrimination. The interplay between their cultural identities illustrates the ongoing relevance of Du Bois's concept in understanding how individuals grapple with societal perceptions while striving for self-acceptance. By employing double consciousness as a framework for analysis, this research highlights the psychological toll of living in a society that imposes conflicting identities upon marginalized individuals. Together, intertextuality and double consciousness serve as powerful tools for analyzing how Morrison and Elamry utilize their narratives to resist dominant societal narratives about race and identity. These theories illuminate the complexities of cultural identity formation within contexts of oppression, revealing how literature can challenge prevailing ideologies and foster critical dialogue about social justice. Through this exploration, we gain a deeper understanding of how both authors engage with their respective histories and cultural legacies to assert their characters' identities against systemic forces that seek to define or limit them.

Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*'s narrative explores themes of identity, heritage, and the quest for self-discovery through the lens of characters who grapple with their cultural history in a society that often marginalizes them. By weaving together personal and collective histories, Morrison creates a tapestry that highlights the resilience and strength of African-American communities while simultaneously critiquing the societal norms that seek to suppress them.

Similarly, Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code* is navigating multiple identities in a society marked by xenophobia and racial profiling. Through his characters' experiences, Elamry challenges dominant narratives that often portray Arab individuals in a monolithic and negative light. By presenting nuanced perspectives on identity and belonging, he underscores the importance of recognizing diversity within marginalized communities. This approach not only empowers his characters but also invites readers to reconsider their preconceived notions about race and identity.

In Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, the character Milkman Dead serves as a central figure through which the novel explores the confrontation with societal expectations related to race and identity. Throughout the narrative, Milkman's journey of self-discovery is marked by his struggle against the societal norms that dictate how he should perceive himself as



an African-American man. One significant passage occurs when Milkman learns about his family's history, prompting him to question his identity and the expectations placed upon him by both his family and society. This moment reflects a pivotal confrontation with the legacy of his ancestors, as he begins to understand that his identity is not solely defined by societal perceptions but is deeply rooted in his heritage.

Another crucial moment in the novel is Milkman's relationship with Hagar, which exemplifies the complexities of love and societal expectations. Hagar's obsessive love for Milkman highlights the pressures faced by individuals within their communities. As Hagar becomes increasingly consumed by her feelings for Milkman, her struggle against societal norms regarding love and gender roles becomes evident. Milkman's eventual rejection of Hagar not only signifies his personal conflict but also underscores the societal expectations surrounding masculinity and relationships within African-American culture. This dynamic illustrates how characters navigate their identities while confronting the constraints imposed by societal norms.

Additionally, Morrison employs intertextual references to enhance the characters' confrontations with societal expectations. For instance, biblical allusions throughout *Song of Solomon* serve as a framework for understanding Milkman's journey. The story of flight and liberation resonates with Milkman's quest for identity, as he seeks to transcend the limitations imposed upon him by society. By referencing biblical narratives, Morrison invites readers to consider the broader implications of freedom and self-discovery within the African-American experience.

The character of Pilate Dead also embodies resistance against societal expectations. Pilate's rejection of conventional beauty standards and her embrace of her unique identity challenge societal norms regarding femininity and race. Her strength and independence serve as a counter-narrative to traditional gender roles, illustrating how individuals can assert their identities in defiance of societal pressures. Pilate's character encourages Milkman to embrace his heritage and confront the expectations that seek to define him.

In contrast, Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code* presents characters who similarly confront societal expectations related to race and identity within a contemporary context. The protagonist navigates his mixed heritage as the son of an African-American mother and an Arab father, facing challenges that arise from both cultural backgrounds. Specific passages highlight his internal conflict as he grapples with stereotypes and societal perceptions that seek to pigeonhole him into a singular identity.

For example, moments where the protagonist faces discrimination or prejudice based on his appearance reveal the complexities of navigating multiple identities in a society that often demands conformity. His experiences reflect a broader commentary on how individuals from marginalized backgrounds confront societal norms that attempt to define them based on race or ethnicity.

It can be said that both novels illustrate how characters confront societal expectations related to race and identity through their journeys of self-discovery. Milkman Dead's struggle against familial and societal pressures highlights the complexities of African American identity, while Bilal navigates contemporary challenges faced by individuals with mixed heritage. Through these narratives, Morrison and Elamry emphasize literature's role as a platform for resistance against oppressive societal norms, inviting readers to engage critically with issues of race, identity, and cultural heritage.

The intertextual references in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, particularly biblical allusions, play a crucial role in framing the characters' struggles and enhancing their resistance against oppression. Morrison intricately weaves these references into the narrative, using them to illuminate the complexities of African-American identity and the historical traumas that shape her characters' lives. By invoking biblical stories and themes, Morrison not only enriches the narrative but also creates a dialogue between her characters' experiences and the broader cultural and spiritual heritage of African Americans.

One prominent example of biblical allusion in *Song of Solomon* is the character of Milkman Dead, whose journey mirrors that of biblical figures seeking identity and liberation. The name "Milkman" itself can be seen as a reference to the biblical figure of Moses, who led his people to freedom. Milkman's quest for self-discovery parallels Moses's journey, as both characters grapple with their heritage and seek to understand their place in the world. This connection is further emphasized when Milkman learns about his family's history, prompting him to confront the legacy of his ancestors and the societal expectations that have shaped his identity. Through this allusion, Morrison highlights the importance of understanding one's roots as a means of resistance against oppressive societal norms.

Another significant biblical reference occurs in the motif of flight, which symbolizes liberation and transcendence. Throughout the novel, characters are often associated with flight, reflecting their desires to escape from societal constraints and oppressive circumstances. For

instance, the story of Solomon, Milkman's ancestor who flies back to Africa, serves as a powerful metaphor for freedom and self-actualization. This motif resonates deeply within the African-American experience, where flight represents not only physical escape from oppression but also spiritual liberation. By incorporating these biblical themes, Morrison emphasizes that resistance against oppression is not merely an individual struggle but a collective journey rooted in cultural heritage.

Moreover, Morrison employs other literary references to deepen her characters' struggles against societal expectations. The novel is rich with allusions to African-American folklore and oral traditions, which serve as a source of strength and resilience for her characters. For example, Pilate Dead, Milkman's aunt, embodies the spirit of ancestral wisdom and cultural continuity. Her character is steeped in folklore, representing a connection to the past that empowers Milkman on his journey. Through Pilate's guidance and teachings, Morrison illustrates how cultural narratives can serve as tools for resistance against societal norms that seek to erase or diminish African-American identities.

Additionally, Morrison's use of intertextuality extends beyond biblical references to include connections to other literary works that explore themes of identity and oppression. By engaging with these texts, Morrison creates a rich tapestry of meaning that invites readers to consider the historical and cultural contexts that shape her characters' experiences. This intertextual dialogue enhances the narrative's depth while reinforcing the idea that literature can serve as a powerful form of resistance against dominant narratives.

Morrison's narrative style employs various literary techniques—symbolism, imagery, and dialogue—that serve as powerful tools for resistance against oppression. Symbolism permeates *Song of Solomon*, with significant motifs such as flight representing freedom and self-actualization. The repeated references to flight throughout the novel symbolize not only physical escape from oppression but also spiritual liberation. For example, Solomon's ability to fly back to Africa serves as an allegory for reclaiming one's identity and heritage. This motif resonates with the African-American experience, where flight becomes a metaphor for transcending societal constraints.

Imagery plays a crucial role in enhancing the emotional depth of Morrison's narrative. Vivid descriptions of landscapes, characters, and cultural practices create a rich tapestry that immerses readers in the characters' experiences. The imagery associated with Milkman's journey—such as the natural beauty of the land he traverses—reflects his internal transformation and connection to his heritage. Morrison's use of

sensory details allows readers to engage with the characters' struggles on a visceral level, fostering empathy and understanding.

Dialogue is another essential element in Morrison's narrative technique, serving as a means for characters to articulate their experiences and confront societal expectations. Through conversations between characters, Morrison reveals their inner conflicts and desires while highlighting the complexities of their identities. The dialogue often reflects cultural vernacular and oral traditions, reinforcing the significance of community and shared experiences in shaping identity. By giving voice to her characters' struggles, Morrison empowers them to resist oppressive narratives that seek to silence marginalized voices.

Turning to Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code*, Bilal navigates his mixed heritage and confront contemporary societal expectations regarding race in a world that often imposes rigid and simplistic identities. The protagonist, who is of mixed African American and Arab descent, embodies the complexities of living between two cultures. His experiences reflect the challenges faced by individuals who do not fit neatly into societal categories, as they grapple with perceptions shaped by both their racial backgrounds and societal stereotypes.

One significant aspect of the Bilal's journey is his struggle with identity in the white people's society, where Arab Americans often face heightened scrutiny and prejudice. The narrative illustrates how he confronts societal expectations that seek to pigeonhole him based on his appearance and heritage. For example, moments when he experiences discrimination or is subjected to racial profiling highlight the internal conflict he faces as he navigates his dual identity. This struggle is compounded by the pressure to conform to societal norms that demand a singular racial identity, leading to feelings of alienation and confusion.

Elamry portrays Bilal's relationships with family and friends as crucial to his understanding of identity. His interactions with his African-American mother and then the Arab author reveal the complexities of cultural expectations within his household. The narrative explores how mixed-race individuals often find themselves caught between conflicting cultural expectations, leading to a nuanced understanding of their identities.

Moreover, the protagonist's journey emphasizes the importance of community in navigating racial dynamics. He seeks solace in getting to know the story of Bilal Ibn Rabah who had gone through a journey full of racial discrimination and was tortured for so long but he managed to preserve his identity, highlighting how solidarity among marginalized groups can empower individuals to resist societal pressures. These

connections allow him to embrace his mixed heritage rather than view it as a burden, illustrating how community support can foster resilience against external discrimination.

Elamry also employs moments of introspection in the narrative, where the protagonist reflects on his cultural heritage through the prophetic biography and the impact of societal expectations on his self-perception. Through these reflections, readers gain insight into his internal struggles as he reconciles his dual identity in a society that often demands conformity. This exploration underscores the psychological toll of navigating mixed heritage in a racially stratified world.

Moreover, Ahmed Elamry utilizes Islamic history and cultural references as forms of resistance against dominant societal narratives that often marginalize Arab and Muslim identities. By incorporating Islamic historical references, Elamry not only enriches the narrative but also asserts the significance of cultural identity in the face of prejudice.

A very prominent example is the character of Bilal, who draws inspiration from Bilal ibn Rabah, a significant figure in Islamic history known for his role as the first muezzin (the person who calls Muslims to prayer) and his status as a former slave who embraced Islam. This reference serves multiple purposes: it connects the protagonist's struggles with themes of resilience and faith while also highlighting the historical context of oppression faced by both African Americans and Muslims. By invoking Bilal's legacy, Elamry emphasizes that resistance against oppression is not a new phenomenon but rather a continuation of historical struggles for dignity and justice.

Elamry also weaves cultural references throughout the narrative that reflect the protagonist's internal conflict regarding his mixed heritage. The protagonist grapples with societal expectations that seek to define him based on his racial identity, often feeling caught between two worlds. Through references to Islamic teachings and cultural practices, he finds a sense of belonging that transcends societal labels. This exploration of identity illustrates how cultural heritage can serve as a source of strength and empowerment in resisting dominant narratives that attempt to erase or simplify complex identities.

Additionally, Elamry addresses issues of belonging and identity through his characters' experiences, emphasizing their struggles against societal norms that seek to impose rigid definitions of race and culture. The protagonist's mixed heritage places him in a unique position, allowing him to navigate multiple identities while confronting the challenges associated with each.



Throughout the narrative, the protagonist experiences moments of alienation as he grapples with societal expectations regarding race. For instance, he faces discrimination based on his appearance, which often leads others to make assumptions about his identity. These experiences highlight the psychological toll of living in a society that demands conformity to narrow racial categories. Elamry portrays these struggles with sensitivity, illustrating how they shape the protagonist's self-perception and sense of belonging.

Moreover, Elamry's exploration of belonging extends beyond individual experiences to encompass broader societal dynamics. The narrative critiques societal norms that seek to define individuals based on simplistic racial categories, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of identity that recognizes the complexities inherent in mixed heritage. By challenging these dominant narratives, Elamry invites readers to reconsider their perceptions of race and belonging.

*Bilal's Code* effectively uses Islamic history and cultural references as forms of resistance against dominant societal narratives while addressing themes of belonging and identity through his characters' experiences. The protagonist's journey highlights the complexities of navigating mixed heritage in a world marked by prejudice and discrimination. By emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage and community support, Elamry underscores literature's potential to challenge oppressive societal norms and foster a deeper understanding of identity in contemporary society.

Still, Ahmed Elamry employs a distinctive narrative style that utilizes structure and voice as mechanisms for challenging oppression and addressing the complexities of identity. The novel's narrative techniques are instrumental in conveying the protagonist's experiences as he navigates the challenges of mixed heritage and societal expectations.

Elamry's narrative is characterized by a non-linear structure that intertwines the protagonist's present experiences with flashbacks to his family's history. This technique allows readers to see how the past informs the present, emphasizing the ongoing impact of historical events on contemporary identity. By weaving together personal stories with broader cultural narratives, Elamry highlights the interconnectedness of individual experiences and collective histories. This structural choice serves to challenge dominant narratives that often seek to simplify or erase the complexities of identity, illustrating instead how heritage shapes one's understanding of self in a racially stratified society.

Likewise, the voice in *Bilal's Code* is multifaceted, reflecting the protagonist's internal struggles and external conflicts. Elamry employs a first-person narrative that provides an intimate glimpse into the protagonist's thoughts and feelings, allowing readers to engage deeply with his experiences of discrimination and identity crisis. This personal perspective serves as a counter-narrative to societal expectations, enabling the protagonist to articulate his struggles against oppression. By giving voice to marginalized experiences, Elamry challenges dominant societal narratives that often overlook or misrepresent individuals from mixed backgrounds.

Besides, Elamry's use of dialogue is significant in conveying the cultural nuances and tensions faced by the protagonist. Conversations with family members and friends reveal differing perspectives on identity and belonging, showcasing the complexities of navigating multiple heritages. These interactions illustrate how societal norms influence personal relationships and highlight the protagonist's struggle for acceptance within both his African American and Arab communities. The dialogue serves as a means for characters to confront stereotypes and challenge societal expectations, reinforcing literature's role as a platform for resistance.

Elamry also incorporates cultural references throughout the narrative, drawing on Islamic history and traditions to enrich the protagonist's understanding of his identity. By referencing figures such as Bilal ibn Rabah, who represents resilience and faith in the face of oppression, Elamry connects contemporary struggles with historical legacies. This intertextuality not only deepens the narrative but also serves as a reminder that resistance against oppression is rooted in a rich cultural heritage.

In both Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* and Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code*, shared themes of resistance to dominant narratives about race and identity emerge prominently. Both authors explore the complexities of identity formation in the face of systemic oppression, illustrating how their characters confront societal expectations that seek to define them based on rigid racial categories.

Another central theme in both texts is the struggle for self-discovery and the reclamation of heritage. In *Song of Solomon*, Milkman Dead's journey to uncover his family history symbolizes the broader quest for African-American identity amidst a backdrop of historical trauma. Similarly, Elamry's protagonist grapples with his mixed heritage, navigating the challenges posed by societal norms that often force him into a singular

racial identity. Both characters resist these dominant narratives by embracing their cultural legacies, highlighting the importance of understanding one's roots in the fight against oppression.

In conclusion, the research emphasizes the transformative power of literature as a means of resistance against dominant societal narratives. Through the works of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* and Ahmed Elamry's *Bilal's Code*, this research has demonstrated how literature not only reflects the struggles of marginalized communities but also actively challenges the structures that perpetuate oppression. Both authors, in their respective cultural and historical contexts, use their narratives to confront systemic racism, explore the complexities of identity, and celebrate the resilience of those who resist societal norms.

Morrison's *Song of Solomon* delves deeply into the African-American experience, weaving a narrative that connects personal identity to collective history. Her use of intertextuality, particularly through biblical and folkloric references, situates her characters within a broader cultural and historical framework that underscores the enduring impact of systemic racism. Milkman Dead's journey becomes a metaphor for reclaiming heritage and self-identity, serving as a powerful reminder that understanding one's roots is essential for resisting societal erasure. Morrison's work not only critiques the historical traumas inflicted on African Americans but also celebrates their cultural heritage as a source of strength and resistance.

On the other hand, Elamry's *Bilal's Code* provides a contemporary perspective on identity formation within a society shaped by xenophobia and racial profiling. By exploring the experiences of a protagonist with mixed heritage, Elamry highlights the challenges faced by individuals navigating multiple identities in a world that often demands conformity to rigid racial categories. His intertextual references to Islamic history and cultural traditions enrich the narrative, offering a counterpoint to dominant stereotypes about Arab and Muslim communities. Elamry's work critiques modern societal norms while emphasizing the importance of embracing one's cultural diversity as an act of defiance against marginalization.

Both authors employ double consciousness as a critical lens to explore the psychological struggles faced by their characters. W.E.B. Du Bois's concept resonates throughout both novels, illustrating how individuals grapple with conflicting identities imposed by societal expectations. Whether it is Milkman reconciling his African-American heritage with

his personal aspirations or Elamry's protagonist confronting prejudice tied to his mixed background, these narratives underscore the emotional toll of navigating identity in oppressive systems. By portraying these internal conflicts, Morrison and Elamry invite readers to empathize with their characters' experiences while challenging them to reflect on their own roles in perpetuating or dismantling systemic biases.

This research underscores the enduring significance of literature in fostering critical dialogue about race, identity, and social justice. Morrison and Elamry demonstrate that storytelling is not merely an act of reflection but also an act of resistance—a means through which marginalized voices can assert their place in history and society. Their works remind us that literature has the power to illuminate complex human experiences across diverse cultural landscapes, bridging gaps in understanding while advocating for empathy and change. As we continue to engage with works like *Song of Solomon* and *Bilal's Code*, it becomes clear that literature remains an essential tool for addressing ongoing struggles against oppression. These narratives challenge readers to confront uncomfortable truths about race and identity while inspiring them to envision a more inclusive and equitable future. In this way, Morrison and Elamry's contributions extend far beyond their texts, leaving an indelible mark on literary studies and social discourse alike.

To conclude, the enduring power of literature lies in its ability to illuminate the intricate tapestry of human experiences across diverse cultural landscapes. As Morrison and Elamry demonstrate through their narratives, literature can serve as a catalyst for change—challenging dominant narratives, advocating for social justice, and inspiring individuals to reflect on their own identities within a broader societal context. In an increasingly interconnected world, these works remind us of the importance of embracing complexity in our understanding of race and identity, urging us to recognize the shared humanity that binds us all together in our struggles for recognition and dignity.

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