

Football between identity, society, and contemporary Arab literature: influence and being influenced.

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Abstract:

Football is the most popular sport in the world, especially in the Arab world, as it is considered the center of sports for children and all age groups. Politicians, media figures, and businessmen pay special attention to it, as it has become an important part of people's culture and has been linked to many other topics and fields, such as identity and literature.

This article deals with the interrelated relationship between the world of football as a sport and identity and the field of contemporary Arabic literature, This research studies how modern Arabic novels and various types of discourse and arts are influenced by "football", revealing a strong relationship between the cultural, social and artistic dimensions of football and the power of the written word and pictures.

Keywords: football, identity, society, contemporary Arabic literature, influence, being influenced.

Introduction:

In contemporary Arabic literature, we find that football is not just a game but a cultural symbol reflecting the intersection of national identity and societal challenges. With all its details and complexities, it represents a mirror that reflects the diversity and developments of modern societies.

Literature provides an opportunity to understand the cultural, social, and political dimensions of this popular game, highlighting the interaction between sports and literature as open texts that express the spirit of the times.

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Literature and sports are considered cultural elements that reflect the values and lifestyle of individuals in their societies. For a long time, sports, like art, literature, and music, have been an important part of human social life, expressing human emotions, sentiments, reactions, joys, pains, achievements, pride, failures, life's complexities, friendship, brotherhood, loyalty, patriotism, and more. All these are means that help individuals acquire moral, intellectual, national, mental, spiritual, and aesthetic qualities.

Contemporary Arabic literary texts have begun to represent football, transforming it from the center of sports to the margins of literature. This shift reflects a broader trend in Arabic literature where authors draw inspiration from various sources, including Western authors like Kafka and Virginia Woolf. Exploring sports, particularly football, in Arab diaspora literature reveals a new dimension of cultural expression and identity formation. Additionally, studying Arab adolescent stories delves into how young Arab characters navigate societal structures through sports and other means, highlighting the multifaceted nature of their experiences and struggles.

As Arabic literature continues to evolve and diversify, the inclusion of football narratives adds depth and complexity to the portrayal of contemporary Arab society and culture, enriching the literary landscape. Sports, like literature, mirror societal development and serve as indicators to measure the civilization level of nations. It is perhaps a mistake to view them often as merely physical recreational activities devoid of content, especially when they have become an effective tool used in various aspects of life. Understanding contemporary societies and cultures has become difficult without grasping the place of sports within them.

Therefore, our sociocultural research starts from the following problem: **how contemporary Arabic literature influenced by football as a cultural symbol reflecting national identity and societal challenges? and how it allows us to understand the cultural, social, and political dimensions of this popular game?**

1. The impact of football on identities, and society:

According to Martin Heidegger, language is the essence of the truth of existence. It is the identity and being of individuals and societies that forms discourse to express that. Football speaks the language of the field and expresses cultures and societies and their different identities, and the discourse that conveys all of this has spread to reach what is called football

literature, so we must study and analyze this overlap.

1.1 Representation of National Identities through Football Teams:

Identity is a loose term used to express an individual's self and his relationship with groups that share a number of essential elements with him. Belonging to an identity has become dependent on several factors such as geography, culture, language, religion, and others. The national identity these days is the most important because it refers the individual to a specific homeland and no other.

Football teams play an important role in representing and shaping national identities. The victories of national football teams can promote a sense of national unity and reduce ethnic divisions. "As we have seen in sub-Saharan Africa, significant victories have led to a decrease in ethnic identity and an increase in interethnic trust" (Chauvin, Durante, & R.Campante, Building nation through shared experience: evidence from African football, 2018, p. 03)

In the new century, football players born in different countries have become able to change their sporting nationality to represent countries with which they have some relationship, such as their parents' origins, or with an offer from the officials of that country, thus acquiring a new identity in addition to their previous identity. In addition, footballers with dual identities face challenges in negotiating their allegiances to both their countries of origin and their adoptive countries, highlighting the complexities of national identity in multi-ethnic societies in Western Europe. (Sonntag & Garcia Garcia, 2020)

Accordingly, the football eliminates ethnic differences and contributes to the unity of races under the banner of national identities.

National football teams are often depicted as symbols of national identity and culture. They are made up of players from diverse backgrounds, reflecting the ethnic and religious diversity of society. For example, Egyptian literature highlights the growing loyalty of young people to international clubs at the expense of local teams, reflecting the impact of globalization on cultural identity.

Algeria lived under the influence of French colonialism for more than a century, and during the liberation revolution that began in 1954, "the National Liberation Front saw the necessity of creating a sports organization that would bear its name and be its ambassador in international forums that would hear the voice and suffering of the Algerian people (...) so it decided to establish a football team of players Algerians who belong to the French

Championship, where it addressed a call to them to boycott the French Championship and join the revolution and form a national football team affiliated with it and support its” (لونييسي، 2010، صفحة 21) This team was an ambassador for the Algerian revolution and contributed to proving the determination of the people, their sovereignty, the uniqueness of their identity and their independence from the colonialists. The players were chanting a hymn from a poem by the poet Muhammad Shabouki, which began:

Our Algeria, oh land of ancestors
we have risen and broken the chains on you
In you, despite the enemies, we will prevail
and be ravaged by injustice and the oppressors

The poem is very famous in Algeria to this day and even served as the national anthem before independence. It contains a challenge to colonialism, a determination to achieve independence, achieve freedom, restore national sovereignty, and prove the identity of the Algerians, which has no connection to the foreign occupier.

The success of the Spanish national team in major tournaments, “such as Euro 2008 and the 2010 World Cup, has been analyzed as a means of expressing national identity in Spain during times of political and social crisis” (Resina de la fuente & Limon Lopez, 2014) This is in order to know the impact of achieving sporting successes on national unity, especially with the presence of Spain’s internal problems with the Catalonia region.

Moreover, the rivalry between football clubs in Croatia reflects regional identities and political tensions within the country, showing how football can reflect and influence wider societal divisions (Ramon, 2020)

From the above, we conclude that football plays a major role in forming cultural identity in the Arab world, and this is evident in literary texts that use sports to highlight national and cultural identity. Through their works, writers reflect how football enhances the spirit of belonging and national pride, whether by depicting popular celebrations of sporting victories or by highlighting the cultural and social dimensions of sport.

1.2 The impact of sports on individuals and society:

Sport has a great social impact on various age groups. It helps individuals integrate into society early and then helps teenagers to be disciplined, build their personalities, and work on planning well for their future, not to mention its effective health impact. A sporting society is a society that is healthy in body and mind.

Research indicates that sports events play an important role in social integration, economic sustainability, and environmental awareness. This emphasizes the importance of involving interest groups from the planning stage to ensure a positive long-term legacy (Fonseca, Bernate, & Tuay, 2022)

Sports also affect the personality of individuals by making them more disciplined on the health and professional levels, so they develop themselves and strive to achieve success. “Most of the evidence reviewed suggests that sports and exercise programs contribute to social capital by encouraging social interaction and the development of relationships and social networks. However, due to reliance on cross-sectional analysis and program evaluations, there remains uncertainty regarding the direction of causal relationships between sport and exercise participation and social capital.

Overall, the evidence supports the hypothesis that sport promotes both bonding and bridging social capital, although there may be more evidence to suggest that participation in sport generates bonding capital by increasing social connectedness and sense of belonging among homogeneous population groups. To some extent.” (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson, & Tayleur, 2015, p. 52) . Additionally, “It was found that students who practiced organized sports achieved higher levels of numeracy than those who did not practice organized sports, and that students who performed dedicated extracurricular activities related to a sports environment improved their educational achievement in numeracy

A positive association has also been found between sport/exercise and educational attainment in early adolescents” (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson, & Tayleur, 2015, pp. 55-56)

Sport also occupies an important place in society by promoting education, health, and well-being, emphasizing the importance of regular physical activity for all individuals (Akhmedov & Utayev, 2020)

Sport contributes to the advancement of morals and good academic achievement, and it works to form good individuals in their work, speech, and in public and community life.

Accordingly, the status of sport has become very important, so countries allocate ministries and large institutions to it for organization and management. Sport and the huge amounts of money it brings can be used for negative purposes, as it creates a culture of crowds through which groups and masses can be directed and even controlled.

Sporting events are recognized as powerful tools for creating positive social impacts, attracting participants, volunteers, and large audiences. However, there are concerns about the allocation of public funds and the broader societal impacts that extend beyond the event experience.

"So far, no well-developed methods have been created to measure the impact that sport events have outside the economic domain. The social impact as a result of a sport event is, to a certain extent, obvious and unquestionable (e.g. Mourato et al., 2005) (...) Sport events may attract large-scale attention, live, on TV and via the internet (live streams and social media). Indeed, sport events are among the most broadcast and viewed, creating social impact with sport events television programs, they make for larger than life headlines in newspapers, and turn winners into national icons. But how exactly this 'magic dust of sport events' (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013) may or may not transform the lives of participants, spectators, volunteers and local citizens in the long run, remains a question yet to be answered satisfactorily." (Hover, Dijk, breedveld, Van Eekeren, & Slender, 2016, pp. 07-08)

Sports, especially football have become a large industry, a financially profitable trade, a means of safety and prevention in terms of health, and a means of social and human solidarity. It can also be exploited politically and for other purposes, as it falls within the cultures of the masses that cannot be separated from life in its various manifestations.

2. The impact of football on media discourse and contemporary Arab literature:

Football's status is the center in the world of sports, so in the remainder of our research we will address the impact of this game on media and literary discourse, especially contemporary Arabic literature.

2.1 the cultural impact of football on literature:

Sport is used as a way to transcend cultural and national boundaries, enhancing a sense of global citizenship. This is especially manifested during events such as the World Cup, where sports celebrations converge with political and social issues, giving writers an opportunity to explore the impact of sport on international relations and understand different customs and traditions.

For example, "authors such as Eduardo Galeano and major literary figures in Brazil have used football to build a sense of nation and identity in their works". (Castqaneda, 2009)

Children are an essential segment of any society and have a natural inclination to play and practice sports, especially football. The media, media, and texts are among the most important means used to encourage them to do so.

Through their texts for children, the media focuses on guiding them, bringing sports closer to them, urging them to practice it, and thus working to shape children's daily lives and playing practices. "In Vietnam, football is not only a sport but also a tool for nationalism and socio-economic development, as professional football clubs play an important role in shaping local communities and identities, both positively and negatively, through their social and cultural effects." (Thien & Boonrod, 2019, p. 02)

This game has become one of the most important carriers of culture and can be exploited in many fields, and literature was not isolated from it, so it began to depict it in its various literary genres, including stories, novels, and poetry. An example of this is the novel "Penalty Kick" by the Algerian novelist Rachid Boudjedra, which was published in 1981 in French and was translated. To the Arabic language in 1985.

The Arab writer is not usually concerned with most popular matters such as food and sports clothes and the like, There is no novel about cooking or traditional dress or a game, except rarely, and the reason for this is the political reality that the Arab writer lives in, which makes his writings necessarily adopt major issues, so the issues are separated in his view into higher and lower part of society, so he links fine literature to major issues.

"In the context of football and the nation, this complex, and deeply hidden, relationship, we find one of the most recent books written about football and its stories, written by an Algerian sports and literary journalist who made his name famous when he published it after the Algerian national team won the African Cup in 2019. It is a book distinguished by its title and cover, "VAR The Secret Stories of African Heroes." He even added to his literary classification, when he engraved on the left of the title the category to which he belongs "Football Literature", to boldly record an unprecedented step in exporting this type of writing to the public. Competing with other types of literature, and perhaps surpassing some of them, or taking away some of their audience, or sharing them in it. (مدقن، 2024، الصفحات 28-29)

Football and literature are similar. They both require hard work and patience in order to hone talent, then creativity to achieve distinction and success, and reach the desired goals individually or collectively. They are

both related to the individual and the group, and they are influenced by each other and merge through literary works that address topics related to football, or through genres. The various literary works emerging from this game and its surroundings: such as the singing and poetry of the masses, the creative speech of commentators, or the biographies of heroes narrating their journey and its circumstances.

2.2 the intersection of football with political events and media photography:

Football often intersects with political events and media portrayals, enhancing its significance in Arabic literature. Literati use football as a lens to examine political and social issues, relying on sporting events to highlight the challenges and tensions faced by societies. The depiction of sports matches and events in literature reflects political, economic, and cultural dynamics, enhancing readers' understanding of these issues through familiar sports experiences.

The intersection of football with political events and media filming is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon." Visual media representations of protests play an important role in politics, creating a performance event with emotional aspects". (Salojarvi, 2022)

Images have the power to influence emotions and shape social movements, being used to spread ideas and rally support.

Iconic images, such "as those taken of Alan Kurdi, have the power to change public discourse and politics, show casing the impact of visual images on humanitarian issues and political decisions". (AMIS, 2023, p. 34)

The image of this drowned child coming from Syria influenced the asylum policy laws and was used by many football fans in the stands and the image was placed on huge banners in support of his family and denouncing the war and the tragic situation that innocent children are experiencing as a result.

In addition, the use of images of political events in educational materials can provide heuristic analysis and generate ideas, enriching teaching practices through visual means. Automated methods of image analysis provide a way to systematically understand visual representations of political actors and events, expanding the scope of traditional visual analysis to a wider scale through computer vision and deep learning technologies.

2.3 narrative techniques used in sports literature:

Writers often use various narrative techniques to embody the passion and intensity of football. For example, they use flashbacks to return to pivotal moments in the life of players or the history of teams, as well as multiple perspectives to display the thoughts and feelings of fans, players, and coaches.

These techniques contribute to the liveliness and dynamism of literary texts, reflecting the unpredictable and inspiring nature of football.

"Narrative techniques in sports literature include elements such as narrative order, duration, frequency, mode, and voice". (Fahrur & Zakaria, 2020) These techniques are essential in shaping the process of storytelling and character development in sports novels.

In football, the writer needs different narrative techniques while talking about a previous match, for example, as he is faced with a situation of chronicling and narrating events. This requires narrative techniques related to time, place, and events, in addition to a special language to suit the event.

Furthermore, "analyzing linguistic characteristics, types of constructions, verbal tenses, and pauses in the oral features of sports events provides insight into the structures used in sports storytelling". (Ramirez & Cardenas Navarro, 2020)

Sports literature depends on narrative techniques and aesthetic images, but what is most important is conveying experiences honestly to express the passion and emotions that accompany playing the game, to create an open text that is not only related to sports, but to culture, identity, and humanity in general. "Understanding how identity processes influence the emotional experiences of athletes through social identity can also contribute to a deeper understanding of emotions in sports literature." (Campo, M.Makie, & Sanchez, 2019)

Narrative techniques in sports literature play a vital role in conveying stories, developing characters, and ensuring emotional involvement, thus enriching the reader's experience.

2.4 The relationship between football and issues of contemporary Arabic literature:

Over time, the relationship between literature and sports especially football in the Arab world has evolved. Sport has become an integral part of people's lives, performing many functions that promote the progress of societies and help shape the consciousness of their members.

The literary and intellectual circles are part of the society in which they live, so it is natural that there would be a relationship between literature and

sports, especially through sports and cultural clubs in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century. After the Balfour Declaration of 1917, Palestine witnessed an acceleration in the establishment of sports, cultural, and social clubs as a means of resisting the Zionist threat. These clubs included large numbers of intellectuals and artists and worked to promote patriotism and a sense of belonging. Palestinian newspapers reported on the cultural and social activities of these clubs, reflecting an awareness of the importance of sports as part of cultural and national life.

The relationship between literature and sports in Palestine was represented in three ways: literati whose lives were intertwined with sports, literati who were members of sports clubs, and literati who were fans of athletes and sports clubs. One of these writers is Mahmoud Darwish, who expressed his admiration for players such as Maradona and Zinedine Zidane. The poet Samih al-Qasim was also a football fan and showed his pride in the victory of the Palestinian national team in the Challenge Cup.

Sport plays an important role in Palestinian literature as a form of resistance against the occupation. While much of the literature focuses on political and social resistance, the use of sport as a means of challenge is evident. Palestinian writers have explored various forms of resistance, including sports, to express their struggle against oppression. The literature shows how activities such as sports can serve as a platform for Palestinians to reclaim their identity and resist the challenges posed by the occupation. By engaging in sports, Palestinians demonstrate not only their physical prowess but also their resilience and determination in the face of adversity, contributing to the broader narrative of resistance in Palestinian literature.

Mahmoud Darwish is considered one of the greatest Palestinian poets and thinkers who struggled with their pens to regain their land and identity. Perhaps everyone who reads his literature realizes the extent of his attachment to football and realizes his great creative ability in linking poetry and this game.

“In the eighties of the last century, he wrote an immortal poem about the late Argentine player Maradona for his brilliant play in the 1986 World Cup:

It escapes like a sound
He has the face of a child, the face of an angel
He has the body of a ball,
He has the heart of a lion
He has the feet of a giant deer

And he has our acclaim" (مدقن، 2024، صفحة 16)

Mahmoud Darwish, in this poem and his book "Memory to Forget," sought heroism from Maradona and football after the suffering he and his people experienced because of the occupation. He sees Maradona as a hero against the English occupier. Rather, he sees him as a Messiah who saved the Argentines against the English. He seeks in him heroism and revolution against the colonizers.

In Egyptian literature, football is part of everyday life. Novels and short stories reflect the challenges, joys, and pains that accompany this game. The writer Alaa Al-Aswany, for example, uses football as a means of examining social and political issues in his novels. Through his characters, Al-Aswany reflects on the impact of football on the daily life of Egyptians, and how this sport intersects with politics, economy, and culture.

The media discourse surrounding football matches, such as the Egypt-Algeria game in 2009, has been analyzed for its role in depicting events and shaping perceptions through language strategies. However, this has more to do with media studies than the literary representation of football in Egyptian literature. (chemerik, 2020, p. 03)

In Algerian literature, football is a way of expressing political and social challenges. The writer Yasmina Khadra, in his novel "The Swallow Does Not Die," uses football as a means of examining the issues of terrorism and violence in Algeria. Khadra reflects through his novel how football affects the daily life of Algerians and how sport can be a means of social and political change.

3. Results and discussion:

Through this research, we can reach the following results:

- ✓ Both literature and sports, especially football, aim to promote the comprehensive development of individuals.
- ✓ Literature seeks to elevate emotions and conscience, conveying the passion for sports and football to advance the human being in all aspects, including physical and health integration.
- ✓ The relationship between literature and football reflects the importance of sport as part of national culture and identity as a means of propaganda and resistance. It emphasizes the need to understand the place of sport in contemporary societies and cultures.

- ✓ Media portrayal of football on various platforms and the type of discourse used in this makes it a front for expressing various orientations, especially political and ideological ones, so negative use of it must be avoided.
- ✓ The Writers uses football as a lens to examine social, cultural and political issues, enhancing readers' understanding of these matters through a familiar and beloved sporting experience.
- ✓ Sports, especially football, have their own culture and patterns that are linked to the social and political conditions of people and contribute to the intersection of cultures through their expression in the media, literature, and art.

4. Conclusion

This article discusses the relationship between football, as the most famous sport in the Arab world, and its relationship to the identity of individuals and society. It also examines the representations of this game on the media, political, and literary levels. The relationship between football and various types of discourse is a relationship of influence and influence. Football has had a great share in the field of contemporary Arabic literature, poets and novelists talked about it. Resistance fighters exploited it to regain their freedom and expressed through it their suffering and heroism. Its place today in the hearts of young and old is not the result of coincidence, but rather a process of integration whose results appear most beautifully in contemporary Arabic literary texts.

خاتمة:

يناقش هذا المقال موضوع كرة القدم باعتبارها الرياضة الأكثر شهرة في العالم العربي، وعلاقتها بهوية الفرد والمجتمع. كما يبحث في تمثيلات هذه اللعبة على المستوى الإعلامي والسياسي والأدبي. فالعلاقة بين كرة القدم وأنواع الخطاب المختلفة هي علاقة تأثير وتأثير. إذ كان لكرة القدم نصيب كبير في مجال الأدب العربي المعاصر، فقد تحدت عنها الشعراء والروائيون. واستغلها المقاومون لاستعادة حريتهم وعبروا من خلالها عن معاناتهم وبطولاتهم. ومكانتها اليوم في قلوب الصغار والكبار ليست وليدة الصدفة، بل هي عملية تكامل تظهر نتائجها بأجمل صورها في النصوص الأدبية العربية المعاصرة.

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كُرَةُ الْقَدَمِ بَيْنَ الْهُوِيَّةِ وَالْمُجْتَمَعِ وَالْأَدَبِ الْعَرَبِيِّ الْمُعَاصِرِ: التَّأثيرُ وَالتَّأثرُ.

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ملخص:

كرة القدم هي الرياضة الأكثر شعبية في العالم وخاصة في العالم العربي، إذ تُعتبر مركز الرياضة بالنسبة للأطفال ومختلف الفئات العمرية؛ ويوليها السياسيون والإعلاميون ورجال الأعمال اهتماما خاصاً، إذ أصبحت جزءاً هاماً في ثقافة الشعوب وارتبطت بمواضيع ومجالات أخرى عديدة كالهوية والأدب.

يتناول هذا المقال العلاقة المترابطة بين عالم كرة القدم كرياضة والهوية ومجال الأدب العربي المعاصر؛ ويدرس هذا البحث كيفية تأثر الروايات العربية الحديثة ومختلف أنواع الخطاب والفنون بـ"كرة القدم" وتفاعلها معها، كاشفاً عن علاقة قوية بين الأبعاد الثقافية والاجتماعية والفنية لكرة القدم وقوة الكلمة المكتوبة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كرة القدم، الهوية، المجتمع، الأدب العربي المعاصر، التأثير، التأثر.