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# THE LAST WATCHMAN OF OLD CAIRO

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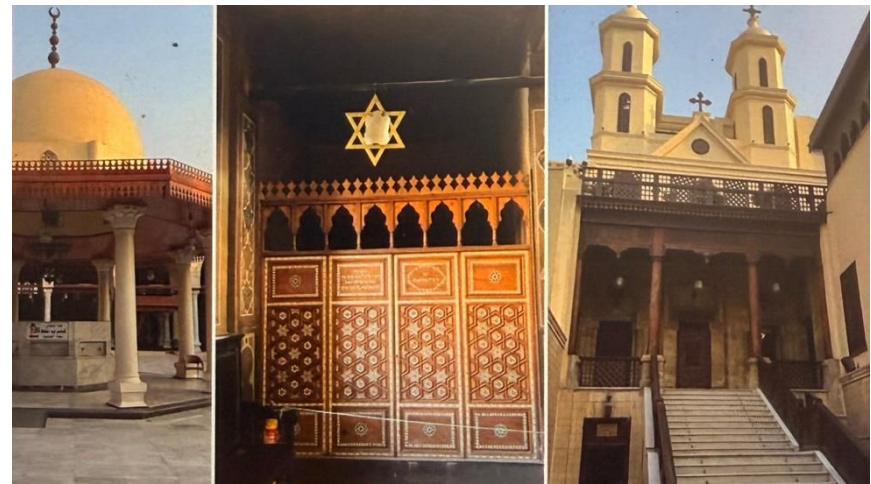
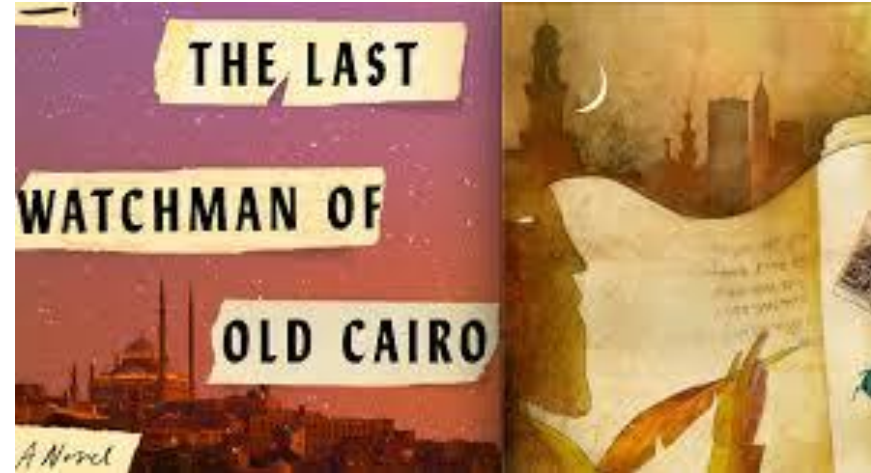
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## THE NOVEL

- **Nostalgia:** In the context of current Middle Eastern conflicts, the novel is compelling because it reveals a longer and more complex history of Jewish–Muslim interaction than the narratives of conflict that dominate contemporary discourse
- Understanding one’s history is fulfilling one’s **identity**
- **Subtext:** colonization
- the role of the USA as a world power in shaping socio politics of the ME



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# PIECES OF A PUZZLE

- Strength in the novel
- Narratively: Fragments as a motif
- Fragments discovered lead main character to understand his own fragmented identity and heritage.



# COSMOPOLITAN TO CONSERVATIVE



Colonization → Cosmopolitan → Independence → Postcolonial Pan Arabism → U.S. political intervention → sectarianized politics

## 1. Cosmopolitan

Until the sixties of the twentieth century, cities like Cairo and Alexandria had large mixed populations (religions and ethnicities)

## 2. Beginnings of the change

The creation of Israel and subsequent wars  
Nasser's Arab nationalism  
Minority crises

## 3. Worsening situation

In seventies Egyptians left to find work in the gulf region.  
Sadat's Islamist bend to fight communism.  
USA interference in the region

## 4. Possible change:

Arab Spring aftermath, MBs rule for a year.

U.S. policies—along with regional factors—helped shape the political conditions in which **sectarian identities became central to political conflict.**

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# PERSONAL PUZZLE





يوميجا  
أشغال منزل أنته  
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# COLONIZATION TO COCA-COLONIZATION

- 1948: Support for Israel increased suspicions of Jews
  - Cold War and Beyond: The U.S. supported anti-communist governments and monarchies across the region; support for authoritarian governments
  - U.S. tolerates / engages Islamist movements → strengthens sectarian political currents
  - Nineteenth century domination through military–political power was replaced by U.S. influence through culture and consumer goods
  - Media, films, and consumer brands spread images of **modernity tied to American lifestyles**.  
West = modern / progressive  
East = traditional / needing modernization
  - Power maintained not only through force but through **consent**
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# ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WEST

- Complicated related to social standard
- After the Camp David Accords, Egypt became closely linked to U.S. political and economic networks while also experiencing expanded American cultural presence in **Cairo**.
- Many in the Middle East see the United States as promoting democracy rhetorically while supporting military power, regional allies, and policies that often contradict those ideals.



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# MISTRUST

- Mistrust of the United States in the Middle East developed over decades
  - U.S. prioritizing strategic interests over democracy
  - U.S. rhetoric about democracy and human rights appears inconsistent with its intervention
  - U.S. military interventions serve geopolitical interests rather than regional welfare.
  - Perception of Double Standards
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- History of colonization: Difference between Nineteenth/Twentieth centuries and modern times
- Twenty First century is all about economy
- Power structures still exist: First vs. Third world dynamic
- Whoever is in control owns knowledge
- Philosophically: reality is fragmented, identities are multi layered

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# REFERENCES

- <https://www.medieval.eu/genizah-medieval-cairo-discarded-history>
- Said, Edward. *Cultural Imperialism*. 1994.

