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Power and Counterpower in Naguib Mahfouz's Khufu's Wisdom (1939) and Sons of Our Alley (1959): A New Historicist Study

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ABSTRACT

Notions could be warriors in a battle, totally ready to fight against other notions without shedding the blood of their utterers. Naguib Mahfouz's two allegory-based novels Khufu's Wisdom (1939) and Sons of Our Alley (1959) were banned when they were first published because they symbolized some religious figures. Accordingly, Mahfouz became a subject of an issued fatwa of a death sentence that led to an unsuccessful assault in 1994.

This paper attempts to prove that Mahfouz's main target behind using religious symbols was to criticize and attack some political figures. Mahfouz's aspirations of a classless society, a democratic system, freedom of speech and acceptance of diversity did not come true after the revolutions of 1919 and 1952. This paper tries to analyze the two novels through neither allegorical nor religious level, but through Greenblatt's New Historicism and Foucault's theory of power. The two narratives display myriad types of counterpower that can challenge and defy coercion and oppression. The paper aims to find an answer to which extent the oppressed can stand out against the single power wielding and defeat the oppressors' invincible coercion.

Keywords: *Mahfouz, New Historicism, theory of power, oppression.*

1. INTRODUCTION

New Historicism, which was first coined by Stephen Greenblatt in the 1980s, is the critical approach that does not perceive history as universal, objective, unbiased, progressing or linear. Nor does it put literature above history in an enshrined elevated place. Rather, history and text are perceived as co-texts and constitutive to each other; in other words, the historical background and the literary foreground are of equal importance. There is no accurate or complete analysis of texts; however, any analysis is always partial and restricted to limited and biased views. Furthermore, New Historicism's main target is to learn about the author's biography, the perceptions circulating at the time of writing and the reception of the literary texts by readers and critics throughout various periods of time. Nevertheless, Michael Foucault who introduced theory of power in 1991, regarded power factors and its effects as the main concerns of New Historicism. Simply put, New Historicism is the theory that offers us various interpretations of the novels in which the reader can relate the current incidents of the era to the events of the novels and the power sources in order to produce new interpretations. Geoff Danaher (2000) stated in Understanding Foucault:

> *So rather than thinking of history as a single, fixed entity, complete unto itself, Foucault would encourage us to think of multiple, overlapping and contesting histories... Partly, for Foucault, this is because conventional history writing regards history in terms of a single and steady progress unfolding over time. This progressive view of history (sometimes called a teleological view) tends to see the world gradually evolving into some ideal state, or utopian society (Danaher 98-99).*

For ages, power in literary texts has been represented as coercive only; a sovereign source of power that vehemently masters authority above a helpless submissive recipient that repressively surrenders. This picture has been widely forged for decades. According to Foucault, there are other types of power: knowledge, togetherness, individuality and pastoral power. Such types could be strong enough to stand against coercive power and defy it. For Foucault, power is neither negative nor repressive; however, it is productive because it produces resistance. Such resistance assists people or groups to shape their identity, actions and views of the world. The two main brilliant insights that Foucault adopts are firstly that power disseminates among all people, rather than just the oppressing of the strong to the feeble. The second insight is either what to do or who to be.

Foucault (1978) declared that societies should not accept the concept of repression when dealing with power and knowledge, but rather they should change repression into positive mechanisms that "produce knowledge, multiply discourse, induce pleasure, and generate power... In short, we must define the strategies of power that are immanent in this will to knowledge" (Foucault, p. 73).

Mahfouz's harbinger novel Khufu's Wisdom (1939) displays one of the most popular stories in ancient Egyptian history, shedding light on the king's coercive power towards the citizens. Hence, it is interpreted as symbolizing the dissatisfaction of the Egyptians under the British occupation and the Turkish Empire during the 1930s. In Sons of Our Alley (1959), Mahfouz again is not satisfied, as well as the Egyptians, during the 1950s due to the atrocities of the 1956 war despite the bright promises of the 1952 Revolution.

These two selected novels were widely rejected and even banned when they were first published because they were interpreted through one single perspective as religious abuse ignoring other political or social interpretations. Then, after some decades, they were revisited and finally accepted.

2. POWER AND COUNTERPOWER

It was a strange coincidence when Mahfouz wrote his two novels: Khufu's wisdom (1939) and Sons of Our Alley (1959), through partly similar circumstances: a promising revolution that was followed by a great depression. Mahfouz had always valued the nation's freedom, the human rights of expression, the classless society and the democratic system that accepts diversity. He struggled for their sake and never gave up; however, he did not witness their achievements. Written under the same circumstances of dissatisfaction, the two novels instigate the reader to ask one question: to what extent can the oppressed confront the oppressors and beat their invincible coercion?

Ursula Lindsey (2018), a Swedish journalist who once met Mahfouz in Cairo in 2006 and inquired about his overview of the Egyptians' journey towards freedom and democracy writes, citing Mahfouz's own words: "Moments of hope—the revolutions of 1919 and 1952—were invariably followed by concessions, failures, and repression: 'The moment we breathe we find there is someone crouching over us, snatching our breath and ruining our lives.' Yet he maintained that all his writing had been 'a struggle against futility'—a struggle that he never gave up".

Mahfouz was brought up in a family that treated him with respect and open-mindedness, enabling him to freely express the deepest emotions and the most challenging situations of humanity. Thus, he participated in the 1919 revolution because he was not satisfied with the oppression that Egyptians experienced under the British occupation. A fifteen-year-old demonstrator would undoubtedly be an overthinking grown-up who is never reckless in exerting all efforts to see his country economically, politically and socially progressing. Concerning the social status of the Egyptians, most of them lived in alleys, supervised by the futuwwas; the strong men who protected the inhabitants in return for money or gifts and sometimes had brutal fights together. They had been legalized by the police system till the late 1920s.

The political status of the Egyptians was neither stable nor promising during the 1920s and 1930s. Although the protectorate ended with the proclamation of independence on February 28, 1922, myriad issues were controlled by the British such as the defence, the protection of foreign interests and minorities.

Sultan Fouad was crowned King Fouad I of Egypt and Sudan on March 15, 1922 and ruled until his death in 1936. Mahfouz regarded King Fouad's regime as responsible for both promising as well as bleak consequences. During the reign of King Fouad, the first constitution was issued in 1923, education of the primary stage became free, press and law were unbiased, a cultural upheaval took place, represented in theatres, broadcasting and universities in addition to the establishment of the Air Force.

To sum up, a quantum leap occurred in Egypt's economic, cultural and agricultural life echoing the European one. However, King Fouad ruled Egypt with the one-man show system that ignored the administration of law. Hence, Egyptians discovered that the new constitution was for the sake of the king, not the nation. King Fouad's dream was to be crowned as the Muslims' Khalifa, especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1925. Accordingly, the king showed a severe prejudice against literary men as Taha Hussein whom he rejected as a minister of Education at the beginning. It was King Fouad who insisted that Egypt should continue as a kingdom through the constitution to bequeath it to his son. Furthermore, Mahfouz felt deeply depressed when the 16-year-old prince inherited the throne and became Egypt's king. Mahfouz described such an act as a drastic fall the country suffered.

3. KHUFU'S WISDOM AND SINGLE-POWER WIELDING

Mahfouz started his literary career in 1939 when he wrote his earliest novel Khufu's Wisdom. He wanted to criticize the conditions of the Egyptians after the 1919 Revolution. Mahfouz wrote in his diary: "I confess that I was not honest to the royal regime in Egypt and I did not bear it. When I wrote my first two novels; Khufu's Wisdom and Radopis, I crystallized my hatred for two kings who betrayed their nations and they ended up being isolated". (Al Naqqash 2011, p.186, my translation and the original Arabic quotes can be found in the appendix)

Mahfouz found the ancient history of the Pharaohs as a good milieu to shed light on the frequently repeated tale of oppression that was exercised upon the poor Egyptians. Khufu's Wisdom includes all kinds of suppression directed to a helpless youth by King Khufu, an analogy of the famous tale of Moses:

> *The Egyptian author used past archives "as vehicles to critique current social and political problems beneath a historical veneer" ... Confronted by analogous paradoxes of power, the Egyptian novelist treats the distant past less as a source of knowledge of the individual than as a means of making fiction speak, allegorically, to the present. (Gould, 2012, pp. 208-209)*

Khufu's Wisdom is set during the reign of Khufu, the builder of the Great Pyramid. He believes in being the source of power and life, which is why he enjoys the power to the utmost level and brags about it in front of his people. He perceives that the nation has to withstand the terrors of the arduous work and obey him due to his divine power:

> *Truly, power is a virtue not only for kings, but for all people, if only they knew it...And what brought me from being a prince into possession of the throne and of kingship was nothing but power...And what cracked their bravura to compel their submission, if not power? And what raised me up to my divine status? And what made my word the law of the land, and what taught me the wisdom of the gods, and made it a sacred duty to obey me? Was it not power that did all this? (Mahfouz, Khufu's Wisdom, 2003, p. 58)*

Once the king asked Mirabu, his commander, a repeated question throughout ages: "Who should give up their life for the benefit of the other: the people for Pharaoh, or Pharaoh for the people" (Mahfouz, 2003, p. 60). The astounding reply is that the commanders, the priests and the whole nation are totally ready to give up their lives for the pharaoh.

King Khufu, who believed himself the Son of Khnum, Radiance of the Rising Sun and Ruler of the Worlds,

launches a battle against Fates when a fortune teller informed him that he would rule without interruption till the end of his life and none of his descendants would succeed him, but rather a boy born to a priest of the deity Ra. "Fate is a false belief to which the strong are not fashioned to submit...I invite you all to ride with me to witness the tremendous battle between Khufu and the Fates" (Mahfouz, 2003, p. 69).

Rather than obstructing Fates' plans by killing the unborn kid, Khufu is made the very tool for the fulfilment of the prophecy: he kills the wrong baby and unintentionally saves the right one from further peril. As the Fates has intervened to save the priest's son Djedef from being killed, the Fates have put the king in a position to secure Djedef's journey in the desert with Zaya his servant, who claims that she is his mother. When she discovers that her husband was one of the martyrs, it is the Fates that make the king order for houses to be built for the families of the deceased labourers. Djedef is brought up in one of these houses under the supervision of Bisharu, the inspector of the pyramid.

Meanwhile, Djedef shows progress and superior mastery of the arts of war, gaining a reputation in the military academy never before attained by any pupil. Fates let Prince Khafra choose Djedef to be one of his guards to prepare him to display his eloquent mastery of war when he saves the prince from a lion attack and is elevated to be the chief of the prince's special guards, till he becomes the closest companion and the most highly positioned in the army.

Once more, Fates let Djedef meet his biological mother in his war against the Bedouin that outrageously kidnapped her twenty years ago. His reconciliation with his mom is another tool of Fates to strengthen his status and be aware of his true enemy who was the reason for the whole family's devastation.

When the king's son ordered Djedef to murder his father, Djedef has faced an internal conflict: his duty towards the Pharaoh and his duty towards the prince, he finally resolves the whole matter and follows a twofold mission; to arrest the traitors including the prince and to warn the king of the peril. Djedef succeeds in his mission, putting Khufu in a despicable situation, disabled to grieve his son's murder. Here, Fates do their unexpected deed and the king changes his beliefs and gives the throne to Djedef- the most despotic person for him in the past, but the king has learned a lesson in his final days: no one can challenge Fates.

King Khufu, who murdered a new baby born to defy Fates in the past, finds within himself an overawing power over the sublimity of human emotions. He feels that his fatherhood towards the believers is of more importance than his fatherhood towards his sons. Ironically, King Khufu, who has described fate as absurd and contrary to human dignity at the beginning of the narration, is the same person who announced that fate does not only defeat him, but also mocks him and destroys his pride:

> *Some twenty years ago, I proclaimed a war against the Fates, ruthlessly challenging the will of the gods. With a small army that I headed myself, I set out to do battle with a nursing child. Everything appeared to me that it would proceed according to my own desire, and I was not troubled by doubt of any kind. I thought that I had executed my own will, and raised the respect for my word. Verily, today my self-assurance is made ridiculous, and now - by the Lord - my pride is battered. Here you all see how I repaid the baby of Ra for killing my heir apparently by choosing him to succeed me on the throne of Egypt. What a marvel this is. (Mahfouz, 2003, p. 232)*

All evidence mentioned, it is concluded that all the exerted attempts for defying fate were twisted for the sake of Fates, even the prophecy itself was a part of Fates' power. The king's and his son's coercive power entirely failed by all means to stand against Fates.

According to Michael Foucault's theory of power, power in Khufu's Wisdom is proven to exist everywhere as pervasive and dispersed. Power is not limited to the negative coercive and dominating acts of the oppressor. Power is wielded not only through the king and his son, but also through Djedef who does possess some different sorts of power. In other words, Djedef's high sense of duty, good manners, self-sacrifice and benevolence could have powerful influence as the coercion of the king, or even mightier:

> *This narration revolves around Egyptian society,*

> *revolting against oppression, and humiliation as a reaction to the British influence and occupation... In Khufu's Wisdom, man is found resisting his destiny, challenging his inevitable fate, and ending only with more conviction of divine wisdom. (Gomaa, 2020)*

Mahfouz tried to be optimistic by not drowning the king like Moses's Pharaoh; however, only the king's son is punished, but the king shows mercy and forgiveness when he embraces Djedef and marries him to his daughter. That was what Mahfouz longed for: to find an Egyptian ruler who would be ready to act for the sake of the people:

> *Mahfouz wants to direct his messages to the occupier as well, that Egyptians are the owners of an ancient civilization and the present is governed by the past... His novels are not in vain, but rather to crystallize a* national awareness by showing the Egyptian Pharaonic experience. His writing represents his spirit and pulse to set out a new world with an old new experience. (Boogie, 2009, pp. 212-213)

But as the winds blow counter to what ships desire, during WWII, Egypt witnessed one of the worst years in its history due to the deterioration of the economic state and social welfare. The world's greatest armies were fighting each other on Egypt's land, misusing its resources and leaving it in dire conditions. Although the population grew rapidly, all means of economic flourishing drew to a halt in such devastating conditions.

However, Mahfouz never lost hope, especially when the Free Officers started their union during the 1940s. Once the 1952 Revolution was launched, Mahfouz participated and recalled the old days of 1919 as a promising path for freedom and democracy. He never abandoned the slogans of equality and democracy crystallized in a classless society- these were the slogans that had long been echoed since 1919:

> *Mahfouz was aware of both the positive and negative results of the revolution. It succeeded in creating a new social system in which the peasants and workers were given rights to education and work. (Hezam, 2015, p. 88)*

The Free Officers set some guiding principles; for instance, terminating the British occupation and its Egyptian supporters, eliminating feudalism, ending capitalist domination, establishing social equality, forming a strong army and establishing democracy. At first, Mahfouz, like all Egyptians, was emotionally moved with Nasser's decision of the Suez Canal nationalization which aroused the flow of belonging and nationalism in a way that made people face the 1956 war with strength and perseverance.

Ragaa Al Naqqash (2011) wrote that Mahfouz at that time, "discovered that we were militarily beaten in 1956 and that the illusions of victory were through the media only. Nasser made a drastic mistake when he was biased toward the USSR and showed enmity to the USA. Egypt suffered atrocious results of the Suez Canal nationalization (pp. 208-209). Wael Tawfiq (2020) implied in Al Dostor magazine some of Mahfouz's confessions concerning his discontent about some of Nasser's policies:

> *I confess that Gamal Abdel Nasser was the strongest proponent of the poor in our history. ... Nasser's bias to the poor is ruined by his interest in external affairs. I longed for a ruler who would give entire care for his starving bare-footed nations... I longed for a ruler who would not risk his country's internal development for the sake of improving his relation with the whole world.*

4. SONS OF OUR ALLEY: A POLITICAL OUTCRY

Disillusioned with the revolution's outcome, losing affiliation to any political party, biased to his country's welfare and obsessed with an enormous intellectual revival project for literature, Mahfouz decided to surprise the whole world with his legendary novel, Sons of Our Alley, after a seven-year hiatus.

Sons of Our Alley has been a source of attack, debate and even assault for years. Mahfouz wanted to stress on the pitfalls of dictatorship and the one-man show ruling, but his novel was misinterpreted as religious abuse: "It is said that then-Egyptian President Gamal Abd al-Nasser hated the book for its harsh depiction of a society ruled by tyrants and goons, and wanted to ban it. In any case,

Al-Azhar University objected to the book and kept it out of print, sparing Nasser the trouble of doing so" (Theroux, 2001, p. 667).

Mahfouz announced several times that he was not a philosopher but just a dreamer. Rasheed El-Enany declared that politics has been a major concern for Mahfouz throughout his creative career, a fact he himself emphasizes in all his writings. The reader may find a story which ignores love, or any other subject, but not politics; it is the very axis of Mahfouz's thinking despite his use of the religious frame that used to be widely misunderstood at the time of publishing. Mahfouz believes that man should be freed from the class system and all forms of exploitation. An individual's position should be determined according to his qualifications. The individual should enjoy freedom of thought and belief under the protection of law and democracy.

> *For El Anany, Sons of Our Alley was an allegorical lamentation on the failure of mankind to achieve social justice and to harness the potential of science for the service of man, rather than his destruction. Such, then, was the extent of Mahfouz's disillusionment with the 1952 revolution during its heyday in the 1960s and even before its crowning failure in the shape of the 1967 defeat in the war with Israel. (El Anany, 2005, p. 25)*

The novel is divided into five chapters, each named after a significant character, and follows a loose chronological order. The first chapter retells the thinly veiled story of Adam and Eve; the next three chapters parallel the histories of Moses, Christ, and Muhammad; and the final chapter introduces Arafa, a modern science symbol. The characters live in a Gebelaawi-controlled alley and experience history as a never-ending cycle of hope and misery, only escaping oppression for a brief while. This paper tackles only three stories as they are highly concerned with power: Adham, Gebel and Arafa.

Sons of Our Alley is the story of an imaginary Cairo alley, narrated by an unidentified alley inhabitant:

> *For each person who tries to do good you will find ten strongmen brandishing their cudgels and looking for a fight, so people are accustomed to buying security with protection money and peace with submission and degradation... We are as poor as beggars, that we live amidst filth and flies and lice, that we have to be content with crumbs, and that we go about half naked. They see these strongmen strutting around and are overcome with admiration, forgetting that it is on our chests that they strut. (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 3)*

First, after Idrees was expelled out of the Great House due to his insult to his father, he uses the power of persuasion and pretence cunningly and viciously, to get his benevolent brother driven out as well. He succeeds in convincing him to commit a mistake by entering their father's private chamber room and sneaking a look at the Trust Deeds Book that was forbidden to be touched by any member of the family. Thus, Adham is permanently barred from the mansion and its beautiful gardens.

At the beginning, Adham does not try to show any counterpower and is totally submissive and helpless, but over time, he regrets his despicable crime and tries all his best to fix it. However, when Idrees tries to convince his brother that work is useless and unsuitable for his race, Adham shows the counterpower of insistence and perseverance. He works harder, waiting for his father's forgiveness and that he would return to the Great House one day. Again, when Qadri, Adham's son uses coercive power to kill his benevolent brother, it ends up with him as helpless, fearful and powerless in front of his brother's corpse. He attempts to get him back to life, but in vain. In other words, it is obvious that death conquered Qadri after he buries Hamam. "Death has defeated me... As long as I can't give back life, I can't claim to have any power" (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 83). Therefore, Qadri displays entire weakness when his father forces him to hold his brother's corpse back home and face his mother.

Although Idrees seems to be more powerful than his brother at the beginning through malicious deeds, hitting him when they were young and mocking him after his expulsion and his sons' loss, Adham gets power through his perseverance, hard work and hope; hence, he becomes more powerful after the visit of Gebelaawi who soothes his pain, announces his condonation and promises that the trust would be for Adham's descendants. Here, the power of Adham's patience, hard work and regret defeats the coercion and violence of Idrees.

Secondly, after the passage of twenty years, the Trust which became a source of conflict, is managed by The Effendi, a greedy Trustee who fiddles accounts, pares down the allowances and pays money for Futuwwas to threaten the peaceful citizens and attack the decent hard-working inhabitants of the alley. Consequently, people get poorer, filthier and more miserable, while Futuwwas and the Trustee live in ease and plenty. Injustice prevailed and people got nothing from the revenues except pain, trouble and humiliation. As a result, the Trustee mercilessly shows absolute oppression and subjugation against the people of the alley:

> *This is my father's Trust and my grandfather's; you have no claim on it. You pass round your fairy stories and believe them, but you have no proof- no evidence... If you all told me that my house belonged to one of you, would that be enough to take my house from me, you fool? A real alley of dope-heads. (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 109)*

Gebel, who was the foster son of the Trustee decides to leave his luxurious life and defend his poor people of Hamdaan to whom he belongs. He is overwhelmed by the desire to contemplate his people's hard status as a result of the Futuwwas' oppression and Trustee's injustice:

> *I swallow the humiliation without a word. How strange that the people of our Alley should laugh! What are they laughing at? They think that the world of whoever wins victory and rejoice in whoever is powerful, and they worship cudgels; and so they hide the terror that is in their hearts. We eat degradation with every mouth in this Alley. Nobody knows when his turn will come for the cudgel to crack down on his skull. (Mahfouz, 1997, pp. 119-120)*

Gebel represents the counterpower that robustly confronts the coercive power of the Trustee and futuwwas. He proves that violence sometimes needs equal violence, perseverance, boldness and decisiveness to defeat it. Gebel confronts the Trustee with his intentions, showing some magical tricks to threaten him. Through his knowledge of conjuring, Gebel clears the Trustee's house from the snakes and refuses to take money or any position: "I am not asking for money. I want your word of honour that you'll respect the dignity of Hamdaan's people and their rights in the Trust'' (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 169).

Gebel, who is called the saviour of the paupers and Victor over vipers, admits that all he wanted was that people should receive their rights of the revenue and that he did not intend to have any authority or positions. Hence, Gebel feels relieved that he fulfilled his promise with Gebelaawi and continued to be humble, wise and honest with his people:

> *Being Strongman is not my aim. Find somebody else to protect you; I only want the full rights of Hamdaan's people... When riches flow in our hands, we'll make our houses as good as the Great House. That is the wish of our Ancestor Gebelaawi. (Mahfouz, 1997, pp. 178-179)*

Gebel is successful in defeating the oppressive power of evil in the Trustee, futuwwas and even his people of Hamdaan who sometimes show weakness and indifference. Through abiding by Gebelaawi's orders, Gebel, who was once alone, chased and weak, overcomes the oppression he faced. Mahfouz's message is that despite the fake fragility and unreal weakness of benevolence, it has the power and the boldness to oppose suppression and would be able to defeat it through good deeds:

> *He obtained such power that no one disputed it with him, and yet he refrained from strongman methods and crookedness and from getting rich by taking protection money and strength and order amongst his people... he never wronged nor harmed any of them, he was a good example to everyone. (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 187)*

In the final story, people got miserable and destitute again under the rule of a new Trustee, Qadri and futuwwas who makes them believe that they would surely die either by wire or water, devils or cudgels. Arafa, the son of a poor fortune teller wants to be rich, respected and powerful, so he works in the field of medicine, grains, amulets and incense. He tries all his best to offer people good things for their sake, not to destroy them. He gives presents to all sectors of the Alley to please them, "My real power is seen when people are sick or infertile or feeling weak" (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 407).

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He believes that through his rare knowledge of medicine, he would be more powerful than futuwwas because all people needed his advice. The more people trust him, the more he feels relieved and strong: "Magic is truly wonderful. There's no limit to its power. Nobody knows where it will end. For somebody who possesses it, even cudgels are children's toys". His honest friend Hanash warns him from futuwwas: "You hope to become powerful, but here nobody's allowed power except them" (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 415).

When Arafa was accused of killing Gebelaawi's servant who was thought to be Gebelaawi, he decides to write all his experiments of medicine and knowledge of magic in a secret book because he believes in the invincibility of the power of knowledge- one of the Foucault's types of power. Hence, Arafa did not want to end his magic with his expected murder. So, he stays at the new Trustee's house, threatened by futuwwas' families who mistakenly believe that he was the culprit of all crimes.

Boredom and hopelessness creep to his heart, wine, hashish and affairs with women turn him to a worthless person. Here, one thinks that Arafa's end of power seemed obvious. However, he is able to confront the Trustee with his true beliefs that their life was terribly awful because they did not care for poor people. They had to give them back their shares of the revenues, and hence they would only feel better and remove their sufferings and disease: "If it wasn't for the envy of those around us who are deprived, the taste of life would change in our mouths (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 481). At that moment, Arafa feels once more powerful especially when he dreams of the old woman telling him that Gebelaawi was pleased with his deeds. Arafa uses the power of magic to face the coercion of the Trustee and Futuwwas.

As Foucault believed that power is not a fixed constitution or a structure, but a complex situation of relational power, Arafa's power proves to be relational. Arafa gets powerful when all the people of the alley and the trustee were in dire need of his knowledge of medicine to cure them. Yet, he loses much of his power when he is dragged to Hasheesh and drugs in the Trustee's house. Nevertheless, once he gets his sanity back, he orders the Trustee to reconsider how harsh they treat the poor people of the alley. Arafa's power keeps going up and down till it reaches its utmost strength by his death. Foucault described such type of power as subjugated knowledge that needs to be exploited:

> *Subjugated knowledge are, then, blocks of historical knowledge that were present in the functional and systematic ensembles, but which were masked, and the critique was able to reveal their existence… Well, are we really still in the same relationship of force, does it allow us to exploit the knowledge we have dug out of the sand, to exploit them as they stand, without their becoming subjugated once more? What strength do they have in themselves? (Foucault, 2003, pp.7- 11)*

Although Arafa is murdered by one of the futuwwas, misunderstood by poor people for whose sake he fought all his life and regarded as the killer of Gebelaawi, he possesses more power than his enemies even after his death through his friend Hanash and the book of secrets that could make good his mistakes, destroy his enemies and reawaken hope in the grim Alley. His last words were really inspiring to all people afterwards:

> *Hanash got away. He escaped with all the secrets. He'll come back one day with irresistible power and he 'll free the Alley from your wickedness…Don't be afraid: fear doesn't stop you from dying, but stops you from living. People of our Alley, you are not alive; you will never be granted life as long as you fear death. (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 491)*

After Arafa's death, people know the truth about Arafa and the wonderful life he had wanted for them through the magic of medicine. People are filled with love for Hanash in his unknown refuge. A wave of joy and optimism sweeps away their despair and servility. They saw in Hanash the only path for deliverance, "for it seemed that the magical power possessed by the Trustee could be defeated only by a similar power such as Hanash was perhaps making ready" (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 496). Young men started to join Hanash and learn magic to prepare for the promised day of deliverance. At that moment,

fear gripped the Trustee and his men… They fixed the harshest punishment for the slightest offence… But people bore the oppression bravely and took refuge in

patience and hope. Whenever they suffered injustice, they said: Oppression must end as night yields to day. We shall see in our Alley the death of tyranny and the dawn of miracles. (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 497)

Unconsciously, people of the alley who follow Hanash become powerful due to Arafa's discoveries and experiments. Such power is not coercive as the Trustee's or the futuwwas', but it is the glowing and productive power of knowledge as well mentioned earlier in Foucault's theory of power. If power dominates people, knowledge sets them free:

> *This time and for the first time, power becomes available to all. This possibility triggers a new wave of tyranny from the ancient masters of the alley. But this time, all sense that the tyrants' days are numbered. And indeed, while Qassem's system worked only so long as Qassem himself led it, it may be that Arafa's bequest does more good without Arafa himself, when every one of us is free to use Arafa's magic for himself or herself (Frum).*

The final line of the book expresses optimism for the future: "Injustice must have an end, as day must follow night. We will see the death of tyranny, and the dawn of light and miracles'' (Mahfouz, 1997, p. 497). Finally, Arafa succeeds to defeat Qadri through a new type of power represented in perseverance, hope and boldness. Hence, Adham, Gebel and Arafa represent the counterpower facing the coercive power of Trustees and Futuwwas, and succeed in defeating evil no matter what hardships they pass through:

> *What the people need to realize their potential power, in Mahfouz's view, is a true leader who with his intelligence and devotion can employ their power to establish a just order free of tyranny and exploitation. The three good leaders in the novel are presented as having democratic temperaments. They are not tyrants but companions to those who serve them and share in their enterprises. (Hezam, 2015, p. 93)*

In Sons of Our Alley, Mahfouz wanted to pose two questions: one directed to all humanity, how to achieve justice, whether through force, love or science (Al Naqqash, 2011, p. 259), and the other was directed to the Free Officers, whether they wanted to follow the path of the prophets or the Futuwwas (Shoeir, 2018, p. 102).

5. CONCLUSION

Power that is believed to be a productive network that circulates through the entire social body in Foucault's theory, is possessed by all characters of Mahfouz's novels. Mahfouz presents two forms of power: good and evil. King Khufu, the Trustees and Strongmen show evil and coercive power, whereas Djedef, Gebel and Arafa wield good power. Although Mahfouz believes that evil exists vehemently, he shows a great range of optimism in Khufu's Wisdom and Sons of Our Alley. Coercive power is entirely defeated by Djedef's good manners and loyalty, Adham's hard work, perseverance and hope, Gebel's boldness, force and justice and finally Arafa's audacity, hard work, sharing of rare scientific information and deep knowledge. In Khufu's Wisdom, Djedef's power is individual due to his loyalty and patience, whereas the reformists' power in Sons of Our Alley is not individual, and their uprisings against oppressors are not individual. Foucault's pastoral power exists in Sons of Our Alley, represented in the people's collective might, not their individual strength, which was what allowed them to defeat the criminals' power. People of the Alley are always in dire need of a good leader to direct their actions.

In conclusion, Mahfouz's two novels include the coercive power represented in the overwhelming characters as King Khufu in Khufu's Wisdom and futuwwas in Sons of Our Alley. Those characters harshly exercise power on other characters who might appear weaker in relation to their social, financial or physical status. However, the latter successfully prove their points of strength, represented in the power of knowledge, patience, hard work, cooperation and benevolence.

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APPENDIX

(Originally Arabic Quotes)

p. 4

لا بد أن أعترف أنني لم أكن مخلصا للنظام الملكي ولم اكن اطيقه، حتى أنني عندما كتبت رواياتي الأولى، خاصة "عبث الأقدار" و "رادوبيس"، تطورت الأحداث في الروايتين للتعبير عن هذا الرأي و تاكيده. كان ضمن أحداث الروايتين ملكان يخونان شعبيهما، فيكون مصيرهما العزل، و نحن أبناء لثورة ١٩١٩ و حزب الوفد، تربينا على كراهية النظام الملكي." "صفحات من مذكرات نجيب محفوظ"، رجاء النقاش، دار الشروق، ٢٠١١

p. 6

فكان نجيب محفوظ في هذه المرحلة يعبر عما يعانيه المجتمع المصري من استغلالٍ وعبوديَّة في ظل الحكم الإنجليزي الظالم، ففي رواية "عبث الأقدار" نجد الإنسان يقاوم قدره، ويتحدى مصيره المحتوم، فلا ينتهي إلا إلى مزيد من الاقتناعِ بالحكمةِ الإلهيَّة
.الرؤية السردية و القناعات الفكرية في تجربة نجيب محفوظ"، مصطفى عطية جمعة، مقال منشور عبر مدونة فكر بتاريخ ٣١,١,٢٠٢٠"

p.6

يريد محفوظ أن يوجه رسائله إلى المحتل أيضا، بأننا أصحاب حضارة قديمة، نستطيع أن نتحاور معكم، لأن الحاضر محكوم بالماضي ... رواياته ليس عبثاً، وإنما لبلورة وعي وطني من خلال إظهار التجربة المصرية الفرعونية، فجاءت كتاباته تحمل بنيات هذا الصراع مع الغزاة، إذ يكتب محفوظ رواياته من مرجعية ثقافية وحضارية واجتماعية، ارتبط بها أشد الارتباط، فهو يكتب من خلال الكتاب الذي يترجمه، فقد أدركه جيدا وتمثل روحه ونبضه للانطلاق نحو عالم جديد بتجربة جديدة قديمة .٢١٣.
روايات نجيب محفوظ التاريخية (تحليل للمرجعية والجمالية)"، محمد بكر البوجي ،من خلال مدونة مجلة جامعة الأزهر بغزة، سلسلة العلوم الإنسانية بتاريخ ٢٠٠٩ ،المجلد ١١ ،العدد ٢ ص ٢٠٧-٢٤٠

p.7

اكتشفت أننا تعرضنا لهزيمة عسكرية و أن أوهام النصر صنعها الإعلام وحده- خسائر مصر بسبب تأميم القناة كانت فادحة- عبد الناصر" أخطأ عندما اتجه للكتلة الشرقية و اصطدم بالولايات المتحدة، و من أكبر أخطاء الثورة اعتمادها على الأسلوب الحماسي و ابتعادها عن ".التخطيط العلمي
صفحات من مذكرات نجيب محفوظ"، رجاء النقاش، دار الشروق، ٢٠١١"

p. 7

أعترف أن أكبر نصير للفقراء في تاريخنا كله كان جمال عبد الناصر" انحيازه للفقراء هو ضيعه بتطلعه للخارج، خارج حدده، أنا كنت عاوز» «حاكم يهتم بالداخل، بالشعب الجعان، الحافي، ويحسن علاقته بالعالم كله، ولا يدخل أية مغامرة تضر بالتنمية الداخلية للبلد
كنت ناصري: اعترافات نجيب محفوظ عن ثورة يوليو"، وائل توفيق، الدستور، أكتوبر ٢٠٢٠"

p. 12

(هل القوة هي السلاح لتحقيق العدالة أم الحب أم العلم؟"(٢٥٩ "
صفحات من مذكرات نجيب محفوظ"، رجاء النقاش، دار الشروق،٢٠١١"

p.12

"كنت أسأل رجال الثورة: هل تريدون السير في طريق الأنبياء أم الفتوات؟ .
أولاد حارتنا: سيرة الرواية المحرمة"، محمد شعير، دار العين للنشر بتاريخ ٢٠١٨ "