



NAGUIB MAHFOUZ, EXISTENTIALISM AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM CONCEPT IN HIS WORK: IN LITERARY AND BUSINESS CONTEXT

SHABANA NAZAR¹

ABSTRACT

The theory of existentialism refers to the fact that human beings are distinctive in having their thoughts, will power, ability to choose what is good for them and the desire to stay free. Similarly, theorists have argued that employees and business persons in organizations are first required to be considered as an individual that helps in findings the relevant roles. Thus, it is an ideological philosophy referring to the fact that the purpose of life depends on one's own will and determination. In the 20th century, it rose up as a movement from both literature and philosophical aspects. But, it is originally an old concept and the concept of existentialism is evident in many of the novels written by Naguib Mahfouz. For his contributions, he was awarded with Nobel Prize in literature in the year 1988. Cairo Trilogy is one of his most celebrated novels, comprising of Palace Walk (1956), second is Palace of Desire (1957) and the last one is Sugar Street (1957). This paper has discussed the literary profile of Naguib Mahfouz in light of available literature with consideration of his characterization of man and Islamic symbolism.

Keywords: Business, Existentialism, Religious, Islamic Symbolism

JEL Codes: M00, N30

I. INTRODUCTION

The characteristic which surpasses the worth of humans over other organisms is existentialism. The theory refers to the fact that human beings are distinctive in having their thoughts, will power, ability to choose what is good for them and the desire to stay free. Thus, it is an ideological philosophy referring to the fact that the purpose of life depends on one's own will and determination. In the 20th century, it rose up as a movement from both literature and philosophical aspects. But, it is originally an old concept (Naem & Janoory, 2019). It highlights that without the presence of a dictating authority (God), humans exist as free creatures. Thus, people tend to have their own priorities and beliefs as compared to other organisms. Thus, this is the only justification to the concepts that do not possess any specific explanation (hardships in world, death and the obliteration from face of earth). This philosophical concept mainly highlights the worth of human life. It also states its developing factor in the decade of 1930 to 1940 and this is commonly not understood by many people since it does not possess a definitive meaning. The term existentialism was basically coined by a philosopher from France, named Jean Paul Sartre, born in 1905. He is considered to be a true supporter of the concept. Initially, he was a teacher at Haver, later on he taught at French Institute, Berlin. He was imprisoned for 1 year in 1940 (Hosseini & Sattari, 2018). In his book, Husserl and Heidegger, initially he supported Communists but in the midway, he diverged towards existentialism. Thus, since from then he stayed at a par with communalists.

Thus, the two are never on the same page. Sartre was a believer of socialism concept (Salehi & Khalili, 2015). The concepts of existentialism and non-existence are dealt from an emotional aspect by the authors. This is considered to be a contagious concept, deepening roots but focuses on future to seek solution of the mishaps. The concept of existentialism is evident in many of the novels written by Naguib Mahfouz. He opened his eyes in Cairo in the year 1911. He spent his early life in the same city and later on married, having 2 daughters. He initially started writing at seventeen years of age. He was mainly motivated by authors of the Western culture, namely Flaubert, others being Balzac, Camus, and the famous ones are Tolstoy and Zola, Dostoevsky. But among them, the most superior one is Proust. Naguib mainly re-wrote the old concepts with a modern tinge comprising of forty novels and many short

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

excerpts. These are basically re-imaginative stories based on political scenario and culture of Egypt. Thus, for his contributions, he was awarded with Nobel Prize in literature in the year 1988. Cairo Trilogy is one of his most celebrated novels, comprising of Palace Walk (1956), second is Palace of Desire (1957) and the last one is Sugar Street (1957). It was a moment of glory for the Arab literary world, when on 10th of December, 1998, the King of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf gave Nobel Prize in literature to Naguib Mahfouz (1911-2006) (Stock, 2018). This was presented to his daughters, in Stockholm on Naguib's behalf. (It was not realized by the prize winner at that particular time that the two events coincided on his 77th birthday, actually celebrated on 11th of December). After six years, round about the time of October, 1998, he was attacked by an extremist. It was basically due to the reason that his novel, *Children of the Alley* (1959) was basically considered to be blasphemous (Roulette, 1998). The orders were issued by Omar Abdel-Rahman, known as "Blind Shaykh". He was the same extremist who ordered to kill President of Egypt, Anwar al-Sadat in the year 1981. Moreover, he is responsible for tourists' attack of 1090. He was then imprisoned for conviction charges of attack on World Trade Center in 1993. He died there in medical facility section of federal prison of North Carolina, in the year 2017. Such an attack was observed only once for a person related to literature. My review has been supplemented by *The Georgia Review*, with slight difference of opinions.

II. BIOGRAPHY

Naguib Mahfouz opened his eye in 1911, in Cairo. He started literary writings at the age of seventeen years. In 1939, he published his first novel, followed by ten others till 1952, ending with Egyptian Revolution. After that, he took a break. One of his novels was divulged back in 1953, followed by publishing of Cairo Trilogy in 1957. Others included *Bayn al Qasrayn*, *Qasr al Shawq* and the *Sukkariya* (Les Prix Nobel, 2021). Thus, he became famous for representing basic life. He officially re started his career with *Children of Gebelawi* (1959). This time, politics was his focus. His novels of this time include *The Thief and the Dogs* (1961), other being *Autumn Quail* (1962), *Small Talk on the Nile* (1966) and the *Miramar* (1967). Mahfouz served as a civil officer until 1973 in the department of Ministry of Mortmain Endowments. After that, he was the Chief of Censorship in the Bureau of Art, the Director of Foundation for the Support of the Cinema. At last, he served as a consultant for the Cultural Affairs in the Ministry. Egyptian bureaucracy flourished after his retirement. Thus, he is writer of 30 major novels, cent short stories and twice as much article. His novels are also filmed, gaining more popularity in Arab. Thus, he is one of the most celebrated writers from Gibraltar to the Gulf to many significant literary contributions (Nobel Prize, 2021). The major concepts of his writings included basics of life, values and norms of society, phenomenon of time, beliefs and knowledge, and love for things. Initially, most of his stories are set in Cairo, his homeland. Later, he diverted towards society, with some including metaphysical nature (Allan, 2016).

III. LITERARY PROFILE

The real name of Najib Mahfouz is 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Sabīlī, known in Western world as Naguib Mahfouz (1911-2006). He is one of the most celebrated and well versed novel writers of the twentieth century. He is first Arab literary figure to be awarded Nobel Prize in Literature for his contributions (1998). He was born during Colonial era, thus, he has seen the cruel rule of Britishers which he quoted and referred to in many of his books. In 1934, he pursued degree in humanities and philosophy from Cairo University (Allan, 2016). He left novel writing in 1952, after Egyptian Revolution. After this, the British rule came to an end Egyptian Republic came into existence. He left novel writing basically because he thought he had no topic to contemplate over. But, he changed his mind and after political issues of Nasserism, and started writing again in approximately 1957. This time, he started writing in other genres most significantly the political issues concerning republicanism ranging from leaders as Nasser to Mubarak and other issues of that age. He became a critic of the concept of nationalism and Nasserism; his writings leaned towards the political aspect leaving behind fiction. This examples include *al-Tariq*, *Al-Simmān wa al-Kharaif*, *Tharthara fawqa al-nīl*, *Miramār*, *al-Hub Taht al-Ma t.ar*, *al-Karnak*, and *Yawma Qutila al-Za'im* (Elmarsafy, 2014). During the period of colonialism in Egypt, his works were based on humanitarianism relating to self identification. Moreover, it also criticizes the English rule. This is evident in *Middaq Alley* (1947) and the *Cairo Trilogy* (1952). Basically, the *Cairo Trilogy* refers to an Egyptian family and its struggles of the period of revolution, starting from 1919 to 1952 (Bulghaith & Prasad, 2014). The key role played by Jews, Europeans and others has not been mentioned by Mahfouz in his literary works. This absence of significant period refers to the history of Egypt from social aspects. In the initial period of nationalism, the Egyptian Muslims did not trust any of the foreign or non Muslim residents except the ones in Copts. Thus, this can be a valid reason of why Jews are not mentioned by Mahfouz in his novels. Still, in some of the excerpts of *Cairo Trilogy*, he has mocked the sanctimony of the people of Egypt. Moreover, his future writings have a greater insight, mainly because of his degree of philosophy supplemented by the historical approach of Egyptians. As an instance, the novel, *al-Simmān wa al-Kharaif* (1962);

translated as Autumn Quail) has an opening with an era of war, terror of Cairo. The conflicts and riots of political parties have also been mentioned. This also led to decline of old concepts and birth of new ideological frontiers. In one of his novels, the loss of finance of Isa al Dabbāgh has been mentioned, to which he replies by saying that the subsiding environment should be allowed to do so in order to cause the uprising of original concepts (Salehi & Khalili, 2015). In the novel, Cairo Modern (1945), an aspiring man, Mahjūb ‘Abd al-Dāyim, has been referred to, looking for job in a pandemic of underrestraint, depression and corrupt environment (Akande, 2019). Mahfouz’s has also referred to the youth of Egypt after the period of revolution, which has no destiny and seems to be lost, difficulty earning bread for survival. The turning point in the history of Egypt has been mentioned in Cairo Modern (1945). In this, the obsolete and old concept of the Egypt has been replaced by its new and modern outlook supplemented by an industrial approach. But this approach has weakened the roots of the Egyptian nationalism (Akande, 2019). In this modern Egypt, the concept of morality has the most superior role in Cairo megalopolis. Thus, the gap in his literary period definitely refers to the difference in his pre colonial writing relating to the British colonialism and post colonial period referring to the concepts of philosophy and politics, thus, new ideologies and ideas pertaining to his works. The degraded conditions of socio-political and socio-economic status have been referred to in Miramār (1967) (El-Ariss, 2018). This is story of a group of people, who met accidentally at Alexandria. This has a multidimensional approach, intervening both subjective and objective approach, thus, making the reader to stay curious over the validity of narration or narrator. Zuhra, a girl who ran away from his village, was tried to be mutilated by the pensioners of Alexandria and then arranged marriage but was saved by a journalist named Amir Wagdi. This analogy of the condition of women highlights the concept of patriarchy and tyranny in the modern Egyptian times (Roulette, 1998).

In case of political analogies, as done by Mahfouz, history is of important concern. Since politics is usually based on developing context of historical events happening in the past. Mahfouz has beautifully portrayed a picture of that era by contemplating both politics and literature. The novel writing is basically concerned with the imaginative power of the author to bring up the picture in front of the readers and highlighting various theories and themes simultaneously (Naem & Janoory, 2019). This strengthens the plot of story, whereas, on the other aspect history serves as the role of background in the development of plot. These both roles can be played only by a novel which develops slowly and gradually. This aspect of literature in Mahfouz’s writing is evident in *Yawma Qutila al-Za‘īm* (1985; *The Day the Leader Was Killed*) as a masterpiece. This has referred to multiple concepts and theories of self-consciousness (Mashayekhi & Mir Seyyedi, 2016). Despite of this, the history has to be given a title but the killing of President Sadat can be given what sort of name? And how is it possible for such a historical and theoretical concept to convey its meaning with full essence without losing the charm of historical contents and contexts? This all has to deal with the characterization of President Sadat as Anwar ‘Allām (with its direct nominal echoing of Anwar al-Sadat). This deals with concept of self consciousness. This also has highlighted the specific characters adopted by him such as *Siyāsāt al-Infītāh* (open-door policy). His house was located strategically. Moreover, he was a business oriented person. He had a good aesthetic sense concerning the history. Thus, when Sadat was killed, the rules implemented by him were discarded and dismembered during the era of Mubarak. Thus, the setting of the novel written by Mahfouz is basically referring to the era of early rule of Mubarak and destabilization of Sadat’s rule leading to the concept of de-Sadatization of the Egyptian rule (Elmarsafy, 2014). Thus, Mubarak introduced new concepts and themes according to his own will and likings. Thus, he is considered to have adopted the same strategies and policies as employed by Sadat to renovate the rule of Nasser in Egypt. Thus, it is considered to be a transformational step in order to modify people and rule in accordance with the era and new period. But, despite of these scrutinizational aspects, the main point of focus has always remained on major historical events such as killing of Sadat, and the innovations brought about by him during his rule and, the uprisings against him and his rules. It also has a focus on open door policy adopted by Sadat for the youth of his era in Egypt. Naguib Mahfouz has highlighted the past events in order to go towards the development of the day of assassination being the main event of historical importance (Bulghaith & Prasad, 2014). This provided a surge to the materialistic approach of post colonial era. This is evident by the destabilizing political conditions, increasing corruption of leaders and poverty of the common people. Thus, the importance of Mahfouz’s work lies in the fact that it has created a fictional aspect of history, supplemented by other fictional stories, which themselves represent an aspect of history. This in turn can be attributed to the fact that fictional aspects can be contributed to historical developments in a bounding manner (Greenberg, 2014). The history of Naguib Mahfouz represents the best aspect of both a witness of the development of era and the aftermaths of the events which took place. Thus, the work of Naguib Mahfouz has a relative reference to the politics, historical aspects, both colonial and postcolonial eras with highlighting the hardships suffered by the people and tyranny of British rule. This also has highlighted the development of events leading to the era of Nasser. The aesthetic development also has been joined to the developments of the era of Sadat. His work has been given significant

importance, specifically mentioning his assassination as an important event in history, followed by the reign of Mubarak. Apart from these historical aspects, the modern Egypt has been highlighted as a combination of traditional aspects and modern developments (Naem & Janoory, 2019). This also referred to the dual nature and oscillation among the concepts of money, finances and mystical thoughts. The features of labor and philosophy have also been mentioned with religious tinge, bordellos and mosques. Moreover, murder mysteries and charity has also been referred to. The faith and belief in mankind and God is written beautifully as well. Sophism and basiv gratifications are also given. A search of knowledge, individual losses, arrogances and self mutilation with bread and earner are given importance. The concepts of nostalgia and idealism are mentioned. All these concepts are intricately interwoven. The heroic figures belong to the non-Aristotelian era. The common people were able to make their life preferences but to a limited extent. The same as is Egypt in dependent in its decisions (Hosseini & Sattari, 2018).

IV. RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM IN MAHFOUZ'S WORK

Egyptian Muslim identity is represented by Mahfouz's characters in two opposing ways: some are devout and traditional, while others are inclined toward contemporary or secular reasoning (Afridi, 2008). When it comes to religion and life, Kamal in *The Trilogy* and Riyad Qaldas in *Sugar Street* are two examples of characters that represent the junction of faith with reason. Riyad Qaldas writes "descriptive assessments of reality but little more," and Kamal is a "writer who rambles in the desert of metaphysics" (Mahfouz). Because of their differing viewpoints on Islam, culture, modernity, secularism, and religious morality, this polarity shows that ideologically these individuals are at odds with one another. When they meet, there is an intellectual conflict between these two individuals because of their differing views on what constitutes truth and religion (Allan, 2016). When Riyad was asked to describe himself, he said, "I used to be a skeptic, but I changed my mind a long time ago." Because I've given up on religion, I no longer have any reservations about what I believe. However, I believe in the power of science and art. I intend to continue to do so indefinitely, God willing." With a cynical grin on his face, Abd al-Aziz inquired, "The God you don't believe in?" "Religion is a human invention," Riyad Qaldas responded, a smile on his face. God is something we don't understand. No one can honestly claim to be a non-believer in God. Or is it that he doesn't? "The prophets are the only ones who are true believers" Mahfouz (1992) (El-Enany, 2003).

As a result, there is a problem assuming a duality or dualism between conventional Islam and more progressive forms of religion. Qaldas claims that art and science are the foundations of truth, but Kamal clings to his notions about faith and philosophy. The two protagonists come from the same Egyptian Islamic community, yet they challenge the basic foundations of their religion, "religious traditions, while labeled as conventional, are a product of a dynamic evolutionary sense in which the word of discovery is processed via human interpretation or discourse." (Elmarsafy, 2014). This claim asserts that social and political influences, especially religious interpretations, alter human understanding. "Islam has often been considered in the West as a static phenomenon scripturally and behavioral, and hence anti-modern and retrogressive," writes of Egyptians (El-Enany, 2003). It is also evident in the dynamic series of political interpretations of Islam and ancient Egyptian culture. Traditional Egyptian traits are difficult to tell apart from modern Islam, which contradicts Western perceptions of Muslim culture and Egyptians (Esposito 2000). Their fictional characters show that the novelists explore the interplay between religion, doubt, hypocrisy, atheism, and religious identity. Especially when Egyptians are depicted as battling internal pressures brought on by colonialism, traditional religion, and patriarchy, these interactions stand out in all of Mahfouz's works. After World War I, Egypt had access to a slew of new educational materials thanks to European influence, which Mahfouz discusses extensively. To exemplify this is the *Trilogy* through Kamal, who exposes his preference for evolutionary science over Islam and how this departs from his father's conventional views (Mahfouz 1989). As a result, Mahfouz's stories express a sense of equilibrium among the material and moral worlds, which constantly interact with one another rather than being considered independent entities in themselves. Through his characters' rituals, ethics, and acts, he shows religion realistically. Hamida, who lives in Midaq Alley, sought help from a man of faith to end her engagement, and Kamal, who lives in Midaq Alley, seeks solace in the belief that he is religious even though his writings imply that he chooses to believe in evolutionary theory, both seek solace in religion (Afridi, 2008).

Mahfouz's books depict the permanent identification of Egyptian Muslims who are neither historically Muslim nor averse to modernity, as depicted in his novels. The intricacy of postcolonial Islamic Egyptian identity demonstrates that religion, signs of change, and modernity are crucial to the crisis and worry portrayed in many of Mahfouz's books, particularly those set in Egypt after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. According to Esposito (2000), the environment in Cairo and the socio-economic influence of colonialism led to a division in the Muslim world, which shows the inner duality and friction among secular and Muslim identity in the Muslim world today. According to

Mahfouz's revelation, there is an apparent contradiction between modernity and tradition in Egyptian Islam. Esposito argues that the two are interconnected and that, in some respects, there is no contradiction. More than a decade before Mahfouz was born, Egypt had been freed up to Western influences during Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798. Literature in Egypt during the colonial period and the subsequent flow of ideas, the breakdown of social and political structures, and the demand for national and religious identity transformation are all reflected in the novels examined in this chapter (Beard & A, 1993). Direct examples of this impact may be found at Midaq Alley, where Hamida, Abbas, and Radwan Al-Hussainy all appear to be descended from the same family lineage. It seems as though Hamida, who is purchased by the economic and opportunity strength of the West, is a world apart from her previous existence in the East's destitute alleyway.

Salim Alwan, a prosperous elderly man with his own business, beckons Hamida out of the alley, and she realizes that she has finally found the man who will provide her with the luxury and escape from the drudgery she has been praying for. For her, money was the only thing she could think of to satisfy her desire for power. In addition, she hoped it would offer her a whole new world of old and cheerful people, with dignity, gorgeous clothes, jewelry, and pride. There's no doubt that (Mahfouz 1992)

Islamic social and political growth was often viewed as a choice between two extremes. Recently, the conflict among modernity and tradition, the past and future, the madrasa (religious college or seminary), and Western attire and ideals have been defined as a collision of civilizations (El-Enany, 2003). In reality, the conflict is not between the old and the new, but rather between two divergent sectors of the society and their conflicting theories of growth (Esposito 2000). Esposito's assessment is consistent with Mahfouz's characterization of Hamida, which I discuss in further detail in Chapter Five of this book. With her shifting perceptions of whether she is contemporary or traditional, Hamida is a crucial figure in Midaq Alley (Allan, 2016). She portrays an Egyptian's existence under colonial control through the lens of her own shifting perceptions to see if she is contemporary or not conventional. However, even though Hamida is one of the most attractive women in the story and has many potential suitors, she becomes a prostitute in her need for money and security. To endure the monetary distress that envelops her alley, she displays that she needs to alternate between the ancient alley and the West, with its quicker speed of life. Hamida's desperation pushes her to leave her alley for a life on the outside, where she hopes to achieve financial success (Afridi, 2008). She is lured to a society in which luxury takes precedence over her dedication to a barber like Abbas, who can offer her nothing more than his pledge under the Qur'an, which is insufficient. When Hamida is presented with the marriage proposal of Salim Alwan, she realizes that she has made the right decision to leave her old life behind for the new. Although he is elderly and ugly, he is a wealthy man. She is so ecstatic about this prospect that she feels she has finally experienced "at long last the stroke of good fortune she had always hoped for." This was, at long last, the guy who could provide her with all of the luxuries and escape from the drudgery that she had wished for, she could not conceive of anything else to satisfy her insatiable desire for power but a large sum of money" (Mahfouz, 1992). The fact that she tells her foster mother that she should not take the advice of the local imam seriously after she has spoken with him demonstrates that she is readily contemptuous of tradition and Qur'anic guidance.

V. MAHFOUZ'S CHARACTERIZATION OF MAN

Novelist Naguib Mahfouz describes the unusual and amazing imagination of a guy in one of his novels: Naguib Mahfouz's male protagonists in all of his works are represented by only two photographs (Greenberg, 2014). A normal man who does nothing in his life and actions other than what is expected and recognizable in human behavior and this is often the image of secondary characters, and the second is a man who has a fictional summary that distinguishes him from others, and this is often the image of a heroic man in narrative roles. Many critics believe that fantasy is comprised of two types of stories: an exotic fantasy and a miraculous fantasy; others, however, believe that fantasy is comprised of all other inventive activities (Cooke, 1994), with all of their connections with humans, in a fundamental bond, which is the infiltration of all causal factors of time and space in the natural levels that humans are familiar with (Afridi, 2008). In its odd and unbelievable dimensions, fantasy can be described as a framework based on the anxiety that allows it to be formed to create other adjacent imaginary races, analogous to stopping work with regular meanings (Ahmed, 2001), and enhancing the feeling, whether the emotion is optimistic, such as pleasure, or negative, such as fear. In his novels, Naguib Mahfouz appears to have given the hero both of the forms of fantasy in its miraculous and exotic manifestations in order to benefit from the ability of fantasy to present his ideas and his narrative worlds in which many strange things happen that can only be explained in its own terms, taking advantage of the fact that "fantasy literature uses closer implications to the temperamental ramifications, which may appear strange at first as inconsistent, so it is either rigid or flexible," as

stated in the book In presenting the man in a fantasy form, Naguib Mahfouz employs fictional craftsmanship that aims to develop a special creative sensitivity that can "drop boundaries within the surface of imagination and illusions sometimes invoked by the fabric of reality" (Salti, 1994), proceeding from the hypothesis that does not see a significant difference between truth and fiction in literature, but rather believes that this observed truth is formed from fragments of the world in which we live (LeGassick, 1996). Fantasia does not oppose reality; rather, it enriches it with symbolic and semantic meanings. According to the evidence, Naguib Mahfouz chose the fantasy form of the man in his novels to express the contradictions and conflicts present in his world, which he cannot settle in his favor, so he continues to shift his interpretation about that to fantastical worlds capable of providing him with space for contemplation (Afridi, 2008; Ali and Naeem, 2017; Ali, 2011; Ali, 2015; Ali, 2018; Ali and Bibi, 2017; Ali and Ahmad, 2014; Ali and Audi, 2016; Ali and Audi, 2018; Ali and Rehman, 2015; Ali and Senturk, 2019; Ali and Zulfiqar, 2018; Ali et al., 2016; Ali et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2015), all in an attempt that stems from "an abject misery about the principle of actuality, and awareness of the sad mental transitions that man is undergoing." It is realistic to assume that Naguib Mahfouz has formed from the fantasy space in the man's world a method capable of concealing his goals and metaphors in an environment governed by the laws of taboos, censorship, and the fear of pressure forces, because fiction is an efficient and realistic way to reveal the preferences and emotions of the characters that can be hidden, and to change in frameworks ruled by tradition or cultural controls, (Elmarsafy, 2014) as it is a chance to escape from the restrictions.

VI. CONCLUSION

Rather than just creating a new experimental form that establishes, to amazement, what is good about Naguib Mahfouz's novelistic creativity, Taking a closer look at these fantasy models reveals a plethora of dark and perilous intentions that he was trying to convey to the reader via a disguise that shields him from the weight of his culpability and reputation for cruelty. Consequently, he allowed his characters to speak for themselves in terms of their moral, philosophical, spiritual, political, and social sayings. He maintained external impartiality, protecting him from the risk of severe criticism aimed at the individual, society, and authority. In case of political analogies, as done by Mahfouz, history is of important concern. Since politics is usually based on developing context of historical events happening in the past. Mahfouz has beautifully portrayed a picture if that era by contemplating both politics and literature. The novel writing is basically concerned with the imaginative power of the author to bring up the picture in front of the readers and highlighting various theories and themes simultaneously (Naem & Janoory, 2019). This strengthens the plot of story, whereas, on the other aspect history serves as the role of background in the development of plot. These both roles can be played only by a novel which develops slowly and gradually. Further, Egyptian Muslim identity is represented by Mahfouz's characters in two opposing ways: some are devout and traditional, while others are inclined toward contemporary or secular reasoning (Afridi, 2008). When it comes to religion and life, Kamal in The Trilogy and Riyad Qaldas in Sugar Street are two examples of characters that represent the junction of faith with reason. Riyad Qaldas writes "descriptive assessments of reality but little more," and Kamal is a "writer who rambles in the desert of metaphysics" (Mahfouz).

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