

NAGUIB MAHFOUZ AND HIS SIGNIFICANT WORKS

To help to comprehend the study it is necessary to know the author of the novel being analyzed. This description of the author is rewritten from the introduction of the novel Respected Sir with some redactional changes.

Naguib Mahfouz was born to a middle class family in Cairo 1911. He began to write when he was seventeen. As a student of philosophy he has been influenced by many western writers; Falubert, Zola, Camus, Dostoyevsky and Proust. After finishing his university education he worked for the government until 1972. Now he lives in Cairo suburb of Agouza with his wife and two daughters.

He is known as the leading Arabic novelist. He published his first novel in 1939 and since that date he has written thirty-two novels and thirteen collection of short stories. Now in his old age he is still known as a productive writer by producing a novel a year.

Naguib Mahfouz's works of fiction can be divided into four distinguishable stages. At the first stage in 1939-1944 his writing based on the history of ancient Egypt. The most interesting novel of this stage was The Struggle of Thebes, a novel about heroic struggle of the

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Egyptians in forcing out the Hyksos under their Pharaohs leader. The novel was meant to describing the struggle of the Egyptians against British occupation at that time. A New Cairo in 1945 was the beginning of the second stage of Naguib Mahfouz's themes. In 1956-1957 period was the peak of this stage with The Cairo Trilogy publishing. During the stage, Naguib Mahfouz's writings were known as the portrait of sociopolitical ills of the society. Three of his novel were translated into English; Midaq Alley, The Beginning and The End, and Palace Walk (the first part of The Cairo Trilogy). The novel pictured the Egyptian urban society in the twenty or so years between two world wars. Naguib Mahfouz experimented to use Freud's theory of psychoanalysis for the first and the last time in The Mirage in 1948. The novel of this phase were "document" of the country's political, social and intellectual life of the time. In 1959 he serialized his novel The People Of Our Quarter in Al Ahram daily in Cairo. The novel was entitled Children of Gebelawy. It was an allegory of human history from Genesis--the beginning of the creation-- to the present day. In it the masters of Judaism, Christianity and Islam are stripped of their holiness and represented in thin disguise, as no

more than social reformers who strove to the best of their ability to liberate their people from tyranny and exploitation. In 1962 His novel The Thief and The Dogs sigified the third phase of his themes. The works were no longer viewing the world though realist or naturalist eyes, he was now to write short novels with social and existential in their concern. He concentrated on the inner working of the individual minds in its interaction with the social environment. The novel being analyzed,-- Respected Sir--was written in this phase. It was first serialized in Al Ahram daily before it was published in book form in 1979.

Following the year of 1967 his writing were not get much literary merit. Love Under The Rain (1973), and The Karnak (1974) were novels of direct social and political commentary. In 1982 he described the failure of successive generation of leaders and their adherents to bring peace and prosperity to Egypt with his novel The Only Remain One Hour and in 1985 his work The day The Leader Was Murdered described the situation in Egypt in Sadat era. Now in the fourth phase of his development which has yet to be studied, Naguib Mahfouz tries to lift up the indigenous narrative arts of Arabic literature as

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found in *maqama* and in Arabian Nights. His experimental novel of this phase are The Epic of The Riff-Raff, The Nights of The Thousand and One Nights and others.

S Y N O P S I S

Respected Sir is a story of a man in finding his destiny in life. Othman Bayyumi, the main character of this novel is pursuing a high position in a governmental department in his entire life. He thinks that his struggle to reach his dream is a religious sacred duty from God.

The story opens with the meeting of Othman Bayyumi with the Director General, the one who responsible for entire administration of the department. The event is very impressing for Othman Bayyumi. For him, it is not just a meeting between the Director and his employee, but more than that. It is a religious event. He feels that he stands in the devine presence.

As a graduate of secondary school, Othman Bayyumi's position is the lowest position in the department. Othman Bayyumi starts working as an archives clerk in Archive Section. He is very must appreciated for what has been reached for the time being. He is now the first white collar worker of his neighbourhood of al-Husayni Alley. He is a member of a lower class people in Cairo, al-Husayni Alley is a place for carts and donkeys. A place where no murmurs or whispers can be heard. Voices are

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loud, sometimes crude and sometimes full of wisdom. A simple neighbourhood, where nobody has ever left it for good except for the grave.

Othman Bayyumi, the son of a donkey cart driver. He was brought up in very sad childhood. His father died of hard work and lack of nutrition. His Mother died of appendicitis while working as a washer woman. One of his brothers died in prison while the other who was a policeman died in the hand of demonstrator. His sister died of thypoid. He is the only survivor of his family. Now, he lives with his mother's friend Omm Husni who regards him as her own son. He is very grateful for his parents' effort to give him education, especially his mother who worked very hard to earn money, hoping that his bright son will be a great man some day. The sad experience of his life makes Othman Bayyumi's faith in God is very strong. He becomes very confident person.

Like other people in his alley, he practices Islam in his daily life. He never misses a prayer, especially the Friday Prayer at al-Husayni Mosque.

For the people of al-Husayni Alley he is very successful man. Sayyida, his girl friend is very proud of him. She is now waiting for his marriage proposal. Like

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other people of the alley, she thinks very simple; when a man gets a job then he has to be married, building a family and raising children. Othman Bayyumi has other plan. He is not satisfied for the position. He still have a long way to go, the archive section is just a start of a long and tiring journey to the top. Therefore he refuses to propose Sayyida. He is very sad for his own decision for he loves her very much.

Othman Bayyumi is very eager of promotion. To make that possible he must have extraordinary knowledge. Othman Bayyumi attends night courses of a university to aquire law and finance knowledge. He learns French and English as well as his own language, Arabic. In the office he works with all his heart and tries to be nice to other colleagues, helping their work as if it is his own responsible. At the prayer time, he leads the worshippers at the ministry prayer hall. No one in the department has ever doubt his helpfulness and efficiency.

After aquiring the university degree, he makes a promotion proposal, but nothing happends. Othman Bayyumi has entered a nepotist neighbourhood. Knowledge and skill are not enough. It needs connection, good relationship with the senior officers, political back up, or wealthy

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family support the promotion. He does not possess all of them, and he does not want to be another person's servant. He believes in hard works and the Grace of God.

His prayer is answered. The Chief of Archives Section who is impressed with his work performance promotes his grade to grade seven, but still in the Archives Section. He is very grateful for the promotion and works harder.

As a normal man he needs a relation with a woman. Sometimes he regrets his decision toward Sayyida, but it is too late to regret, for she is now somebody's wife. To calm the fire within his heart toward Sayyida he visits a prostitute quarter, where he meets Qadriyya. Those visits are usually followed by a wholehearted plea for forgiveness and prolonged resort to prayer and worship.

The rumour about the position of the Director of Administrative and the Director General is achieved because of their wives or more precisely their wives' family has made Othman Bayyumi's view about marriage is slightly shifted. He does not regard marriage as a barrier anymore, but as a short cut to success. Othman Bayyumi asks Omm Husni to find him a wife but none of the candidates meets his criteria; comes from a wealthy

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family and/or a respectable family. At the office, tries to make a relationship with some of his women colleagues but he fails to build a healthy relationship. The only companion is a half negress prostitute, Qadriyya.

At the office, his career is sure but very slow. Everytime, there is a vacant position in higher grade, it will be filled with some important officers's relative. Othman Bayyumi always become the second candidate. When the position of the Director of Adnistrative is vacant, the one appointed is a relative of the minister. Othman Bayyumi is very angry at the condition, but he can not do anything. The only thing he can do is work as good as possible as usual. He does not want to betray his beliefs that working as a government officer is a sacred duty of God. He is never unfaithful to his job.

This condition makes him uncomfotable. He is getting old. He has no family. The only companion is a fat prostitute woman, that actually intensify his guilt as man of faith. Then he makes an important decision. He takes Qadriyya, as his wife to save his faith. He thinks that he has saved two souls by marrying her. by doing that, he can perform his prayer with a clean conciousness. Seems that comfortable life is not suitable

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with Othman Bayyumi. Qadriyya becomes an alcoholic because of she is very sad that she can not give Othman Bayyumi a baby. Othman Bayyumi send her to a clinic to cure her addictive but she fails it. At the office, Othman Bayyumi, who is gets a new young secretary, Radiya Abd al-Khaliq. Othman Bayyumi is interested with her. After sometime, he proposes her as his second wife and accepted. Then they are married with her aunt's objection because of their marriage is unpublic.

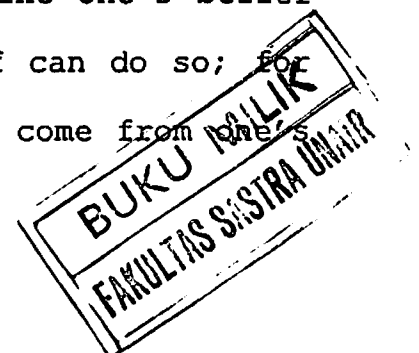
Othman Bayyumi's career is nearly finish. He is now the Director of Administrative, the one next to the dreamed position, the Director General. At the office, he feels more senior than the new Director General, not just because he is older, but more that that, he is the one who actually runs all the responsible. With all his competences he shows his full capacity to run the administrative responsibility. He gives full cooperation with the Director General. For him, cooperating with the Director General is a sacred ritual of government service, and he has never unfaithful to the duties of his office.

Then, the opportunity, comes again. The Director General is appointed as the Under Secretary of State for

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Foreign Affairs. The post of Director General is vacant, now. All employees and officers are talking about Othman Bayyumi's chance to fill the position. He has very great of hope about the promotion. Time goes by without news. He is suffer of a long waiting. To calm down his eager feeling, he plans to announce his marriage with Radiya.

But noone has ever know what will happend. He gets a heart attack. He is taken to hospital and the doctor asks him to resign for his health is very bad. While he is in the hospital, the decision is made to appoint him to fill the position of Director General. Othman Bayyumi is very happy and sad, all at once. He is happy, that at last his dream is reached but he cannot enjoy his happiness. Othman Bayyumi then cut himself from outside world. No body is allowed to visit him. He is back to his own solitude. His faith in the sanctity of his convictions, in the harshness an holiness of life, the struggle and the agony, and the faraway and exalted hope, all remain unshaken. He says to himself that occasional failure to achieve one's aspiration does not undermine one's belief in them. Not even illness or death itself can do so; for all that is noble and meaningful in life come from here.



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determination to pursue them. Now he is waiting another glory in life, death.

Down there, he could hear the cries of hawkers announcing the approach of winter. May be it was as well that the new tomb out there in the sunlight had given him such pleasure.

(Mahfouz, 200)