

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Middle East area has been famous since the prophet's existence and the birth of religion. The Middle east or also called as Arab has been generally known as the birthplace and the place where all Abraham religions has been spread and developed around the world. That is why in the Middle East the government along with religion legitimacy has been strong for hundred years. The Middle East people always receive and accept government's rules using religious symbol because they are afraid if they would become a sinner and possibly sent to hell.

Egypt here becomes one of the most important countries in the Middle East, even though its geography is located in the African continent. After Islam spread in the Middle East, Egypt became the central point for this revealed religion. After becoming the capital city of Islamic countries, Egypt filled Islamic vision in many ways and aspects of life, from people in higher classes until common ones for instance.

After so many years possessing and taking control of people's life, religion legitimacy in Egypt at that time as kingdom found their fall during the World War I. European countries like England and Germany spread their power and colonial lands until Africa and then Egypt became one of their aims. This phenomenon continued until World War II when England controlled this country.



The main point in Islamic culture, *Ulama* found their religion and legitimacy offended by colonialism. It made them start to support people struggling colonialism in order to make revolution. Knowing their struggle supported by *Ulama*, people felt happy and decided to support *Ulama* by following their *fatwa*. Actually, before the revolution they also had followed *Ulama's fatwa*. Their faith grew stronger after the revolution.

After reaching their freedom, Egypt's *Ulama* started to continue their struggle with Al Ahzar authority. This authority was built to be the main resource of Islamic literature. At first, this institute was brought to stand away from government, but then this condition reversed.

Al Ahzar University has been known as the most powerful institute in Islamic world. Their power also gave influence in Egyptian life. Their *Ulama* often gave *fatwa* that became law for people in Egypt. This *fatwa* then became the main problem for modern literary world. Some people who are in power circumstances, in order to protect and to defend their power relation have used this known *fatwa*. Issandr El Amrani said in his opinion:

The history of the past 50 years in Egypt is the history of the state forging its legitimacy through the exploitation of religion. The rule of Gamal Abdel Nasser, commonly portrayed as a relatively secular period in Egyptian history, was in fact "the golden age for the revival of Islam and its men, Nasser established the High Council for Islamic Affairs in 1960 and then the Islamic Research Council, a conservative bastion with Al Azhar, and gave it wide-ranging censorship powers. In

addition, under Nasser the number of Azhari institutes in the governorates of Egypt grew from seven in 1952 to over 2,000 at the time of Nasser's death. That Sadat allowed the Brotherhood back into Egypt and allowed them to operate openly in the street and on university campuses to counter the Marxist left is well known. More recently, President Mubarak has given significantly expanded censorship power to Al Azhar. (Habibie. 56)

Therefore, the objective of Al Ahzar moved away. Then they tried to hold as long as possible their authority and kept being government puppet. Actually, Al Ahzar's position to stay close with the government has been attacked and offended by other ulama, especially those who are modern by getting new dimension of knowledge from western world such as Hasan Al banna and Sayyid Qutb. Sayyid Qutb has said that Al Ahzar's staying close with the government meant killing religion. He took *fiqh* statement from *Durratun nasihien* book that said: "Ulama that stay close with government doesn't have any right to give any fatwa, and people have not follow their *fatwa*" (Al Khaibawi 78) .In another presentation, Hasan Al banna said:

From the perspective of their private position, Al Azhar doesn't want reform and they strangle all who talk about Islam without being Azhari This is the powerful religious authority that enjoys the care of the state and the cooperation of the state. Reform cannot happen as long this traditional thought controls the Islamic world. The problem now is, as I see it, how to undo the instrumentalization of Al Azhar that has made

it both an extension of the state (which is not its intended role in society) and the tool of traditional, non-political conservatives. Another question would be whether, considering its prestige, Egyptian Muslims would want it to recede from being an interventionist force in Egypt's moral life or not. After all, there are legitimate grounds to moral censorship in any country, and many people may welcome that role. But how do you draw the line between legitimate censorship and excessive conservatism? The solution, I suspect, probably has to do with how Al Azhar functions as an institution and the type of leadership that it creates — as well as having a government that doesn't keep trying to outdo conservatives outside the regime like the Muslim Brotherhood for political gain. (An Najm 49)

After so many years, literary world in The Middle East has been keeping “silent” in facing this fact. Naguib Mahfouz, a man born to a middle-class family in one of the oldest quarters in Cairo, had given expression in powerful metaphors for over a period of half a century to the hopes and frustrations of his nation. Readers have frequently identified themselves with his work, a great deal of which has been adapted for the cinema, theatre and television, that many of his characters become household names in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. Moreover, Naguib Mahfouz too who built era of critics against old structure.

The most famous novel written by Mahfouz is *“Children of the Alley”*. This book made controversial in Arabian countries and all Islamic centres in the world. As the result, this book was banned in 58 countries globally. More than 24 years,

all information about his works was banned in every site and library in Arabian countries. Because of the controversial atmosphere brought by Mahfouz his works was that the children of the alley became the canon novel that lately has influenced many new writers to write similar novels that gave critics to events in their society.

The story itself brought us to the ancient Arabic society where we found the life of the prophet there. It also gave illustration about Adham, Gabal, Rifaa, Qassem, and Arafa. All of them were chosen by Gabalawi to solve the alley's problems, except for Arafa. All of them have different habits and methods. Adham was very weak and always afraid to face and fight against Idris. Gabal was very a hard-as-stone person, he liked to use his power to solve the situation. Rifaa used his love and charity and avoided using muscle to solve problems. Qaseem was a man who could combine all strategies of Gabal and Rifaa in solving the problems. In one side, he could be a tough person, but in the other side, he could be a very lovely one. The main and the most important part in this story was when Arafa rise because he was not chosen by Gabalawi, but he started to solve this alley's problems by himself. For him, the problem was only how wrong Gabalawi had led the Alley. Gabalawi never showed his power to solve the problem, so Arafa decided to kill Gabalawi.

The story quite disturbed Al Ahzar's ulama and the government at that time. It was because for them, religion was the biggest faith that could not be "touched" with human mind. Of course, power relation agenda behind religion cover could be revealed if there were writers like Mahfouz who always criticized. However,

ulama and the government decided to press Mahfouz in many ways such as from political side, intimidation, until influence other people especially from radical Islamic people to attack him.

In literary criticism, Mahfouz has been known as a post-colonialism writer. William Butlers Yeats from Ireland who became the canon of post colonialism writers had influenced him. However, if we saw Mahfouz's works more deeply, we would not merely find "common" post colonial text there. We would see many influences instead, like what he has said in one seminar: "I don't want to describe who am I, I'm a Marxist, I'm liberalist, I love Karl Marx and Smith, but the most important ones, that I am a Moslem" (Cossqueu, 34). In this novel, we could see how Mahfouz made and built the criticism against the socio-culture in his environment at that time that surrounded him. Another thing was also, about what actually happened when it was "hidden" behind the wall of hegemony. Then in this novel too Mahfouz tried to give picture through the story.

In this novel, Mahfouz gave critics about how power relation around him was built with religion's cover. He tried to question every hegemony which, according to him, has made people in the Mid-East became stagnant and could not make any progress in their life. In this term, Naguib Mahfouz tried to criticize the hegemony and all construction about power relation that surrounded him and he also gave critics about the main point and very sacral idea toward people in Mid-East and for almost all people in the world that is called religion.

Many of his works have influenced new scientists in the Middle East. May be if we follow the statement by Issandr El Amrani, a doctor in University of

Medina, we could simply read how Mahfouz had influenced them. According to Issandr El Amrani, if a country or a nation unites religion and nationalism into one, that would be a big mistake. Country issued and religion should not always become one, they must be separated instead.

Naming Islam as the solution exaggerates the extent to which Islam shapes Muslims' political identity. Not only do ethnicity and tribal affiliation often trump religion, but many Muslims, both practicing and nonpracticing, believe that their version of Islam should be separated or at least distanced from politics. Indeed, little consensus exists in the Arab world about the proper relationship between mosque and state. On the contrary, that world is rent by profound divisions over the very question of national identity—what it means to be Egyptian, Moroccan, Algerian, Bahraini, or Iraq, and Naguib Mahfouz spoke about that (Habibie 78)

After Influencing and mixing many theories that had filled his life, he then put it all in his works. However, that was actually the uniqueness of Mahfouz, which became an interesting point to discuss. "He is not only a Hugo and a Dickens, but also a Galsworthy, a Mann, a Zola and a Jules Romains" (Said 24).

B. Statement of the Problem

The two main contexts in this novel are first about the critics made by Naguib Mahfouz toward his environment and his social life. Second, it is about

the hegemony and construction built in his cultures from a very long time ago which had become “truth” for people.

Based on the background of the study that is mentioned previously, the researcher seeks to answer the following question:

How are feeling, thought, and perception of Mahfouz illustrated in this novel as criticism toward power relation covered by socio-religious based influence?

C. Objective of the study

Regarding to the statement of the problems, the aims of the thesis analysis will be:

To explain how Mahfouz’s feeling, thought, and perception that are illustrated as criticism toward power relation covered by socio-religious based influence

D. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to give information that could used by practitioners in the field when they see and meet Arabic community or Arabic people. Therefore, they will not be again trapped in the old dogma and the old construction about Arabic people and Arabic community.

There are still many religion masks used by those who desire to control, to get power, and to influence people. Another significance of the study is to give

different vision to people to not easily believe the hegemony of power using religion mask, and they can make more critical questions about all hegemony that use religion mask which had filled their life and their environment.

E. Scope and Limitation

The researcher limits the study only for seeing criticism given by Mahfouz against the power relation, which was covered by religion in the book (in sentences that appear in the novel or behind the sentences). Then, we will see the critics by using Expressive theory by M.H. Abrams to know the connection of how Mahfouz's background support and influence his critics.

F. Theoretical Framework

Expressive theory was built by M.H. Abrams. Even though there have been many writers wrote in Expressive way, but most people until today recognize that it was Abrams who made it famous.

In "Mirror and the lamp" written by M.H. Abrams, we see explanation that this theory sees as text. Then, we try to find the meaning behind it by looking the background of the author. After that, we connect it with results of text's close reading, and finally we will find the real meaning. According to this theory (even though there are many modern critics against this theory, especially post-modern theory), it is quite interesting when we use this theory to find the relationship between Mahfouz's background and the text itself because Mahfouz's works and

novels usually bring criticism about his environment and socio-culture around him.

G. Method of the Study

In order to gain valid data, the analysis requires reliable and accurate information. Based on this assumption, some sources that will establish the foundation of this thesis analysis will be included. This study is conducted as a qualitative study. The most important step is the technique of collecting data. The library research is considered to be a reliable method since many of its sources are accomplished through elaborate studies, such as complications of literary theories or criticism, scientific researches and some related web sites, etc.

The method in this study is a descriptive analysis. It is applied to give descriptive explanation of the problem found in the work through the dialogues, events and actions of the story itself. This method is applied based on the work and supported by other information concerning this work. The researcher will use some quotations from many sources to confirm and support the analysis.

Finally, through the analysis, the researcher tries to provide a deep understanding by questioning power relation behind the wall of religion symbol and oppression appeared in Children of the Alley.

H. Definition of Key Term

Throughout this thesis, the writer uses several important terms, which possibly be repeated many times later. These important terms are going to be discussed in the following.

Expressive: Theory that built by M.H.Abrams. This theory sees background of text's author/s and connects it with the text itself, to found meaning or material inside that works.

Ulama: Educated class of Muslim legal scholars engaged in the several fields of Islamic studies. They are best known as the arbiters of shari'a or Islamic law.

Power/Power relation: the ability to make choices or influence outcomes (power). Action to retain, support or to get power (power relation).

Tyranny: Someone or groups that force people to follow their interest

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK