

## A Comparative Study Of The Concept Of Waiting For A Redeemer In Naguib Mahfouz's Three Novels

Awlād al-Ġibilawī, Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma and Malḥamat al-Ḥarāfiš

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**Abstract:** Waiting for a righteous redeemer to rescue people from injustice and oppression is one of the most significant themes in Naguib Mahfouz's three novels namely *Awlād al-Ġibilawī* (أولاد جبلاوي / أولاد حارتت), *Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* (رحلة ابن فطومة), and *Malḥamat al-Ḥarāfiš* (ملحمة الحرافيش) containing forms of waiting for a promised savior. In these novels, Mahfouz focuses on the savior's features, and illustrates man's condition and the process of waiting for a redeemer. Mahfouz attempts to show that waiting is a kind of tranquilizer keeping men hopeful about the future, and preventing them from disillusionment and senselessness in a promised land like "Utopian thought" and at the best time. But at the end as a consequence by an analytical and descriptive approach in order to locate instances of this expectation for savior in three novels, it would be said that Naguib Mahfouz in his works continuous, focus on the perpetual moment of redeemer's coming by mixing the absurdist literature concepts and existential movements. The significance of article lies in the fact that Mahfouz distinguishes that humanity is equipped for unbelievable ability for the social evil but first from themselves.

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### 1-Introduction

The concept of the manifestation of a righteous savior at the end of the world is one of the most fundamental issues raised in various schools of thought, divine prophets and their followers<sup>1</sup> and even atheistic religions throughout the world. The savior who appears at the end of the world will protect the world and human beings from cruelty and injustice, and provide the world with equality, freedom, progress, and justice.

The thought of the promised redeemer, who expedites ethereal progression, honesty, and universal peace, is an integral theme of all the divine religions including Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrian, Islam and Buddhism. Judaism believes that "the Messiah will bring about the spiritual and political redemption of Israel and the Jewish people"<sup>2</sup> Christianity claims that Jesus, who is the promised savior, will come as a fair judge and peacemaker "in the name of the only Son of God"<sup>3</sup>. Buddhism followers are ardently waiting for Kalka who is expected to be a world teacher or leader"<sup>4</sup>. According to Zoroaster, Saoshyant "will be born and he will lead humanity in the last battle against evil"<sup>5</sup>. In Islamic theology and in Shi'ites, *Mahdī*, son of Imam *Ḥassan al-ʿaskarī*, is believed to be alive and "He is in occultation (*Ġayba*)"<sup>6</sup>. Allah in the Holy Quran says that "And certainly we wrote in the book after the reminder that (as for) the land my righteous servants shall inherit the earth"<sup>7</sup>. Sunnite followers generally believe in the

reality of *Mahdawiyyāt*, However, "they do not consider the son of *Ḥassan al-ʿAskarī* to be *Mahdī*, nor they do accept the idea that he has been in occultation"<sup>8</sup>. In contrast, they believe that *Mahdī* will be born from Mohammad's family near the end of the time and he has not been born and his advent is known to God. *Mahdī* will end the injustice and tyranny and fill the earth with justice and fairness. Regardless of some variations in savior belief among different religions and the schools of thought, all believe in underlying and important issues about the idea of manifestation of the promised savior. Nevertheless, the coming savior or the superman with different names and specifications "stands resplendent high above the narrow walls in which humanity is cut up and divided"<sup>9</sup>. Redeemer nation has become an existential theme in the modern body of literature: fiction and poetry, particularly by the late 1970s and early 1980s<sup>10</sup> in order to (specifically in novel) critique the contemporary human condition. This element is found in Naguib Mahfouz's some works and given his monumental influence in the novel in the Arab community.

Mahfouz depicts a genuine and knowledgably portrait of the blights of the Egyptian society after World War II, the colonialism governing Egypt, and the Revolution 1952, and it's terrible consequences. He could revive Arabic fiction which in his novels, and depict the sufferings of Egyptian people, their miserable conditions, and describe his thought of

human dignity after unorganized conditions that caused much pain, tribulation and humiliation. Notably, in the postwar period, the great wave of European literature began to find the way into Egypt, and the literary atmosphere was filled with such modern ideas as surrealism and the social novel<sup>11</sup> and much attempts were made to the portray the problem underlying Egyptian society.

Mahfouz presents an analytic and sharp portrayal of hopes and aspiration of the characters in their incessant endeavor to achieve an excellent condition. His stories are almost always set in the heavily populated urban quarters of Cairo, where his characters, mostly ordinary people, attempt to cope with the modernization of society and the temptations of western value, and mainly aspire to wait for a redeemer who would be able to provide them with happiness and equality. Therefore, image of the savior expectation has been considered in Mahfouz's outstanding literary works. Mahfouz's *Awlād al-Ġibilawī* (أولاد حارتنا أو أولاد جيلوى) (1959), *Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* (1983) and *Malḥamat al-Harāfiṣ* (1983) are very significant novels that depict the oppressive image of the squalid life of the man, where torture is mixed with disillusionment, and the signs of the manifestation a promised redeemer can be sensed throughout the novels.

## 2- Methodology

Literature research methodology in this study is to read through, analyze, describe and sort Mahfouz's three novels using comparison as the main instrument in order to identify the savior's characterize and their functions. In the other words, the present article sheds light on the issue that how the savior identity has been presented and characterized through the three novels authored by comparative method and how does Mahfouz employ the existing them to deal with waiting themes like savior, injustice, oppression and the coming a redeemer? The novels have not been randomly selected in the current article and they are considered to be best examples of Mahfouz's messianic novels in which two concepts of salvation and savior are the underlying theme.

## 3-The concept of savior in Naguib Mahfouz's novels

Naguib Mahfouz, “the son of two civilizations”, the first and biggest Arab author to win the Noble Prize for literature in 1988, was a pioneer writer in the contemporary Arabic novel. Mahfouz undoubtedly is the best known and most important realistic novelist in Egypt and in the modern Arabic fiction in twentieth century. In the words of Edward Saeed: “Mahfouz is decidedly a Catholic with an overbearing view on his country”<sup>12</sup>, his fictions emanate from his homeland or Egyptian nation, which are influenced by his education in philosophy letting him create thoughtful

and deep literary works, besides intellectual aspects of his works, as Badawi noted “Mahfouz was part of a generation of Egyptian writers calling for the reformer of Egyptian society”<sup>13</sup> and he said:

“Intends to show the craving and dreaming for a charismatic leader who can restore the alley back to days of righteousness, and encourages people to engage in free actions”<sup>14</sup>.

On the other hand, he is searching for an ethical society that can be redirected by a “free-mind philosopher”.

Mahfouz's ideas about the redeemer fall in this category. We notice that the expectation nation appears throughout Mahfouz's three works and the cornerstone of his stories is waiting for a redeemer and ardent enthusiasm for emancipation. Indeed, Mahfouz's advocates change and improvement in human society and in the current situation of human beings. This interest motivates him enough to pay attention to the concept of redeemer. It is cause that we see him pending between the modes of desire and horror; desire to reach the destination and horror of not reaching. This makes him wittier and elevates his literary talents as the proliferate author. Therefore, Mahfouz creates fiction adventurous characters such as *Ibn Faṭṭūma*, *Aṣūr al-Nāġī* and *Arafa*, who are looking for reality, truth, true perfection and finding a way in order to achieve social justice, righteousness, and real redeemer and to maintain fairness. Considering characters and events in three selected novels, we will understand that Mahfouz deals with waiting issue and promised savior. The manifestation of a noble and exalted savior and solving the unsuitable society conditions are seen in these novels. This savior and noble person sometimes in *Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* is Mohammad *Qandīl al -Annābī* and sometimes in *Malḥamat al- Harāfiṣ* is *Aṣūr al-Nāġī* and sometimes in *Awlād al -Ġibilawī* is *Arafa's magic power*. These characters with their specific traits narrated skillfully by Mahfouz are the manifestations of axis of justice, establishing equity and eliminating oppression.

Indeed, in these three novels, Mahfouz mostly presents autobiographical dimensions and often interprets his perspective and existentialist ideology and also man's struggle for existence, and he emphasizes the importance of developing a new sense of ideal situation as a force for political and social changes, and advocates the Cultural Revolution.

## 5- Expectation for salvation

### 1-5 - Awlād al-Ġibilawī (Children of our Alley or Awlād Hāratinā)

*Awlād al-Ġibilawī* (1959), has always been one of the Mahfouz's controversial and philosophical novels, not only in Arab world literature but also in the universal literature, this novel with its an allegorical

nature “that mixes reality and symbols...real and imaginative”<sup>15</sup> narrates “a unique allegory of human history from Genesis to the present”<sup>16</sup>, shows an “aesthetic anticipation of the future”<sup>17</sup>, a societal panorama and follows “the course of mankind's history of faith through a series of leaders who attempt to provide a moral and spiritual base”<sup>18</sup>.

The novel, followed the revolution of 1952, recreates the interlinked history of the three monotheistic Abraham—religions »Judaism, Christianity, and Islam«, allegorized against the setting of an imaginary 19th century *Cairene* alley using symbolic language and allegorical characters, which “their religious teachings are different responses to the two basic human quests: the search for justice and the meaningful existence”<sup>19</sup> and also, “social reformers who strove to the best of their ability to liberate their people from tyranny”<sup>20</sup>. Mahfouz give us the story of allegorical characters including *Ġibilawī*, *Adham*, *Idris*, *Gabal*, *Rafa'a*, *Qāsim* and *Arafa* that each of them, respectively, is symbol of God, Adam, Satan, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Mahfouz uses these allegoric characters to interpret the human archetypal family from Adam to contemporary man in the form of an allegory that relates the chained history of human and religion since the earliest time to the present day with “a demythologizing humanity's religious quest”<sup>21</sup> and also to address the social and political problems of current time.

The novel begins with *Adham's* chapter and his wife in *Ġibilawī's* “Great house”. *Ġibilawī*, mysterious character of novel, has lived long period than the human lifespan, and has a secret book in his house. *Ġibilawī's* indirect presence through story, and as well as his communication with the novel heroes, is seen until his decease at the end of the story, that was connected with one of his grandson, *Arafa*, attempting to abduct his secret book. *Ġibilawī* selects among his sons, *Adham*, as his representatives to manage the trust and orders to him that does not near his book. But one day *Idris* deceives *Adham* and his wife, *Omayma*, to help him have access to *Ġibilawī's* book. *Ġibilawī* realizes the stealing. *Adham with his Omayma* is expelled from Great house to the *Hara* near him» the earth«, and in this case the story resembles *Qur'ānic* story of Adam. At *Hara*, he starts a new life, while he observes cruelty and violence. *Adham* with his subsequent descendants live on earth. The novel narrates the life of three of *Adham's* grandchildren namely *Gabal*, *Rafa'a* and *Qāsim*. Each of these descendants attempts to spread social justice and fights the curls in the *Hara*. Until eventually, after *Qāsim's* death, a man called *Arafa* and *Hanash*, his companion, with a magic power appear in the *Hara* from an unknown place. *Arafa* tries to use his magician power

in a notebook to destroy the gangsters but he teaches the gangsters, who pay more, using magic power to cure people. After that, *Arafa* tries to steal *Ġibilawī's* secret book. In his attempt, he ran into a person and pushes him away and flees. The next day, he hears that *Ġibilawī* was murdered. *Arafa* thinks that he had killed him. But one night his wife tells him that he had not killed *Ġibilawī*, the person murdered was *Ġibilawī's* closest servant. *Ġibilawī* died from chagrin just after servant's dying, but before he died, *Ġibilawī* had told her to announce *Arafa* that his grandfather was pleased to him. *Arafa* decides to escape, but gangsters caught and bury him alive and then people start to seek *Arafa* who taught them his magical power to surmount their poverty and evil. But *Hanash* began to look *Arafa* notebook:

فهذه الكراسية... تلك الكراسية، هي أمله و أمل الحارة،...<sup>22</sup>  
جديرة بإصلاح أخطائه و القضاء على أعدائه و بعث الأمل  
”فى الحارة المتجمهة“

“This notebook was the last hope he had left in his life, it was his hope, and the alley's... this notebook could redress his wrongs, finish off his enemies and spared hope throughout this infernal alley”.

Nobody knows whether *Hanash* could find what he was looking for or not. But people began to whisper that

بأنّ الكراسية التى أخذها حنش ما هى إلا كراسية السحر التى  
و أنّ حنش سيتم ما بدأه عرفه ثم... أسرار فنونه و أسلحته أودعها عرفه  
”يعود إلى الحارة لينتقم من الناظر شر انتقام“<sup>23</sup>

“*Hanash* had taken was the same magic book to which *Arafa* had entrusted the secrets of his arts and weapons... *Hanash* would finish what *Arafa* had started, and then come back to the alley to take the most terrible revenge on the overseer”.

People are deprived of justice, freedom, redeemer and exploited by ruling powers and that redeemer is not except *Hanash*:

يلعبه حنش فلم يعد أحد يشك فى الدور المنتظر أن  
امتد العطف... فى حياتهم، و ارتفعت فى الأنفس موجة استنثار و تقاؤل  
إلى ذكرى عرفه نفسه و تمنى الناس لو يتعاونون مع حنش فى موقفه  
من الناظر لعلهم يحرزون بانتصاره عليه نصراً لهم و لحارتهم و أمناً  
(لحياة خير و عدالة و سلام)<sup>24</sup>

“No one doubted any longer the role that *Hanash* was expected to play in their lives. A wave of optimism and rejoicing rose up in their souls... their hearts were filled with tenderness that now included *Arafa* too. The people wished they might cooperate with *Hanash* in standing against the overseer, perhaps in his triumph over the overseer they could score a triumph for themselves and their alley”.

Afterwards the people of the *Hara* began to wait and whenever the more they were persecuted by tyrants, the more they were just inviting to wait, and they were saying:

لايبد للظلم من آخر، و للبل من نهار، و لنرن فى حارتنا مصرع  
(الطغيان و مشرق النور و العجائب)<sup>25</sup>

“Injustice must have an end, as day must follow night. We will see the death of tyranny, and the dawn of light and miracles”.

The main concept or motivating factor of *Awlād al-Ġibilawī* is forming a new government based on social justice by five men calling for freedom expansion and tyranny obliterate. That is to say these goals in every period of human life have not entirely been established, because after several periods at the end of the novel, and after *Arafa's* death, oppression and injustice still continues in the people's life in the alley and the people expect that oppression and tyranny must cease because previous government only based on religious could not give people completely their freedom and all rights. Thereupon they are waiting for a redeemer:

لا شأن لا بالماضي، و لا أمل لنا إلا في سحر<sup>26</sup>  
و لو خيرنا بين الجبالوى و السحر لأخترنا عرفة  
(السحر)

“We have nothing to do with the past, our only hope lies in *Arafa's* magic”.

Mahfouz believes that the current community conditions are unfavorable and turbulent that religion and its manners alone cannot recover and improve it without the help of science.

Therefore another savior who is expected to appear as a redeemer and leads the dark society to the salvation is *Arafa's* magic power:

فقال حنش بحزن: كان من أولاد حارتنا الطيبين  
لكن الحظ خاتمه، كان يريد لكم ما أراد جبل و عرفة و  
27(قاسم، بل و أحسن مما أرادوا)

“He was one of the good children of *Ġibilawī*, but his luck turned on him. He wanted the same things for you that wanted *Gabal, Rafa'a* and *Qāsim* even better things.

In fact, by “magic” he means science which he believes is able to revive God in the people's spiritual lives and make them eternal. This is the dignity of science presented in *Arafa's* words<sup>28</sup>. In other words, the arrival of *Arafa*, in Arabic language, in the sense “knowledge” and “awareness”, as the leader of technology and science and the symbol of modernity, makes the dream come true so as to accomplish ideal social justice and to eradicate oppression on the light of science.

و ما كان ينشده من وراء المهرم أنّ الناس عرفوا الرجل،<sup>29</sup>  
(...سحره للحارة من حياة عجيبة كالأحلام الساحرة)

“In any case, people came to know the man and the wonderful, magic, dreamlike life he had been seeking for the alley, through his magic”.

Therefore people believe that he opens a new horizon with his magical power for people. He seeks to redeem them from oppression that all the three religions alone are not able to do. Therefore, *Arafa* plays the role of a savior for human community, who attempts to redeem the man from all the misery and

tyrannies while introducing science as the hope of humanity.

These sentences reveal Mahfouz's idea about promised savior and “the reform will be founded on two principles. The first principle is that science has not reached its perfect state. Science, however, is developing toward, not away from, progress and perfection. The second principle is that ethics, laws, religions, beliefs, science and all that is in the universe exist for the benefit of humankind and for its happiness”<sup>30</sup>.

The novel ends, after the murder of *Arafa*, with his friend searching in a rubbish tip for the notebook in which *Arafa* wrote his secrets. And the last line of the story keeps an optimistic view to 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”<sup>31</sup>. The encouraging ending of story shows that Mahfouz, through a way of symbols, convey his own interpretation of savior whose role in the novel echoes that of science (*Arafa*). He is portrayed as a savior who will advocate the whole of humanity, and aspires to establish equality and believes that science and religious are saviors, and in case of their unification, the whole world can be redeemed. These saviors currently are present, but until they have not united they cannot save the people. Therefore, all people are waiting for a savior. With these descriptions, that is to say, *Awlād al-Ġibilawī* calls for social justice. Indeed, it is “Something of an anomaly in [Mahfouz's] novelistic output”<sup>32</sup> that “depicts the realities of justice, advancement and emancipation in science”<sup>33</sup>, and “is an attempt and demythologize humanity's religious quest”<sup>34</sup>. According to Mahfouz, it is the time for the manifestation of a redeemer able to salvage people from darkness.

## 2-5- Malḥamat al-Ḥarāfiš (*The Harafish*)

*Malḥamat al-Ḥarāfiš* is an epic (*malḥamat*) novel chronicling history of the *al-Nāḡī* family “with a spiritual Sufi scene”<sup>35</sup>, and with “a postmodern episodic form”<sup>36</sup>. *The Harafish* is by far the most extended philosophical discussion of the savior concept in Mahfouz's mind. The novel “as an allegory of the discovery of metaphysical truth and social idealism in old Cairo is narrated in a mystical space interweaved with verses of *Hāfiẓ shīrāzī* poetry in Persian like the hymns that are repeatedly described as obscure in the novel”<sup>37</sup>. The *Ḥarāfiš*, “the epic of death and rebirth with an allegory of the search for metaphysical Truth and social justice”<sup>38</sup>, draws a peaceful revolution in to expression of disappointment and criticism. This novel “reworks one paradigmatic structure in *Ibn Khaldūn's* thought: a wish for the return of an expected *Mahdī*”<sup>39</sup>. It heralds an exciting narrative of a dynasty that has achieved a social and

political influence in the quarter through generations. In the other words, *Malḥamat al-Ḥarāfīš* is certainly a product of the modern man in the current world who expects a savior to manifest and put an end to all oppressive measures.

Mahfouz presents a chronicle of the dramatic history and fate of the *al-Nāḡī* family, dwellers of the surrounding district, the *Hara*. The novel begins with the story of *Ašūr*, an orphan who grew up in the house of a childless blind *Šhēikh Afra* since childhood and he was a humble coachman who resorts to the desert after a vision about a pestilence that would dawn upon the *Hara*. Later on, *Ašūr* returns to the dilapidated city and takes over an abandoned palace, repartition the wealth to revive the *Hara's* economy. By his physical prowess and strong character he becomes the leader of the people and a legend for generation to come, *al-Nāḡī* «the Savior»:

عاشور» و شاع أَنَّهُ الوحيد الذي نجا من الشوطة، فأطلق عليه ( «الناجي»<sup>40</sup>)

"The news spread through the city that he is the only survivor of the pestilence, so they called him *Ašūr al-Nāḡī*" and he becomes as a notable man in the *Hara*:

لذلك رفعوه إلى الحق أَنَّهُ لم يُعرف عن وجبه من قبل ذلك<sup>41</sup> (مرتبة الأولياء، و قالوا إنه لذلك نجاه الله من دون الآخرين

"Actually he has no conceived such a face for himself. People had held him sacred as saints because God had saved him among the others".

*Ašūr al-Nāḡī*, who helps poor people, fights for the leadership of the *Futuwwa* (Power) as instrument of redemption and justice by his spirituality. So he uses his influence and power to spread social justice in the *Hara*. Eventually, *Ašūr* was a humble celebrated as a virtuous by his people, and thus he established his own rules which restrains the powerful and protects the feeble in an atmosphere of peace and justice. In the first chapter, "one night, in the middle of the night *Ašūr* goes to *Taqiyya* and prays:

اللهم صن لي قوتى و زنى منها، لأجعلها فى خدمة عبانك<sup>42</sup> (الطيبين)

"My God, keep my strength and increase it, so I use it to serve your chaste servants".

And next day never has been seen and he mysteriously and unexpectedly disappeared "under the merciful shadow of justice pain is lost in the recesses of oblivion. Hearts bloom with confidence, drinking in the nectar of the mulberry trees, delighting in the sound of the anthems, without understanding their meaning. But will the brightness and the clear skies last forever?"

قلب من أن و ييس كل. مضت الأيام لا تحمل بصيصاً من أمل<sup>43</sup> (يرى من جديد عاشور الناجي

"Days hardly crossed and all hearts were disappointed that they again see *Ašūr al-Nāḡī's*".

After *Ašūr*, his descendants, generation after generation, falls away from its hereditary ideals and they misuse their legendary example and lose glory and they become "degeneration". None of *Ašūr al-Nāḡī's* descendants could not implement social justice and *Futuwwa* like himself, but a small hope had remained among the people, which *Ašūr al-Nāḡī* is alive and one day.

و و أن عاشور حى لم يموت... فجأة ما اختفى فجأة أَنَّهُ سيطهر<sup>44</sup> (ينشر التقوى و الأمان

"Suddenly, he will appear as he disappeared...and *Ašūr* is alive and is not dead and he will spread piety and the faith".

و إن عاشور صاحب الحلم و النجاة و العدل الشامل ظاهرة<sup>45</sup> (لا تكرر خارقة

"*Ašūr* is forbearing and savior and complete justice is a something that does not repeat".

And (السعادة إلى حارتنا.. إن عاشور رجع)<sup>46</sup>

"Felicity to our neighborhood...if only *Ašūr* is back"

And the people invite each other to patience:

رجال... احذروا الفتنة و الصبر الصبريا<sup>47</sup> (اصبروا والله شهيد

"Patience, patience, sirs,... avoid intrigue and wait and God is witness".

And they always regret the *Ašūr al-Nāḡī's* time:

لا أحد مثل... واحسرتاه على عهد الناجي و أمجاده<sup>48</sup> (عاشور، لقد انتهى عصر المعجزات

"Alas! *al-Nāḡī's* time and his worthiness...no one like him, time of miracles is finished".

Until at the end of the novel, after several generations, *Ašūr II*, the tenth *Ašūr al-Nāḡī's* descendent, appears who claims to be able to restore the clan reputation to its former predominance and return the family's fortunes to its original ideas:

(جدد عاشور الزاوية و الحوض و السبيل و أنشأ كتاباً جديداً<sup>49</sup>)

"Renewed the mosque, the fountain, the trough and built a new school", As if he is *Ašūr al-Nāḡī* reincarnates,

(يريد أن يتوقف على جدّه نفسه إنه)<sup>50</sup>

"He himself wanted to be better than his ancestor".

*Malḥamat al-Ḥarāfīš* is a mythical narrative and a perfect portrait of human intolerance and greed and also of the human magnificence which can be achieved by a superman called *Ašūr al-Nāḡī* epitomizing a time of honor and glory for the people. From the outset, Mahfouz introduces *Ašūr al-Nāḡī's* character into the novel, and he entitles the first chapter of it. His behavior and actions attracts people's positive attitude toward himself:

يجد زفافاً فيتطوع للخدمة أو بصادف. ذهب و جاء وراء اللقمة<sup>51</sup> (يرضى بالملم أو بالرغيف أو يتقدم لمن يريد حملاً أو رسولاً ماتماً حتى بكلمة طيبة

"He earned his living any way he could, helping at wedding and funerals, acting as a porter or an errand

boy, grateful for the odd coin or loaf of bread, or even a kind word”.

Then he turns into a mythical and heroic character that one day will come to emancipate people from the oppression, and eliminate all difficulties and injustices:

(...ى بحدثتى بأنه سيظهر فجأة ما اختفى فجأة قلب) <sup>52</sup>

“My heart tells me that he suddenly emerges as he suddenly disappeared”.

...Thus, the concept of *al-Nāḡī* meaning “saved one from death” is a striking repository of his creator's synthetic vision of *Futuwwa* which is an instrument of social justice and commonweal.

On the other hands, the concept of *al-Nāḡī* during the novel gradually shifts to “savior” meaning someone who will come and liberate people from cruelty and injustice, people who are fed up with injustice and oppression. All the people have exhausted by outcry, genre and incursion:

اقتنع فتح الباب بأن العدل لايجوز أن يتأخر يوماً واحداً و قال) لمعونه: علينا أن نحى عهد عاشور الناجى...العدل لا يقبل التأجيل <sup>53</sup>

*Fathulbab* was convinced that justice must not be postponed even for one day, so he told his comrades: we should restore *Aṣūr al-Nāḡī's* era... justice and fairness must not be postponed”.

And

(لابد للظلم من نهاية) <sup>54</sup>

“There is no way for tyranny other than coming to end”.

Because, waiting is hard for them:

فى الإنتظار يموت الزمن، و هو يعى) <sup>55</sup> (موتته...فليعب كل ملهوف من قدح القلق ما شاء

“In waiting, time dies while waiting will not die...so every helpless must drink anxiety cup whatever he wants”.

Therefore, all the people of the city are waiting for his return,

يوماً عاشور و هو يمضى بهيكله العملاق، يكبح المتجبرين و) <sup>56</sup> (يرعى الكادحين

“*Aṣūr* someday with his huge physique returns and he will trample bullies and he takes care of the grubbers”.

On the other hand, *Aṣūr*, throughout the story is a present-absentee character. People believe that he is alive but nobody can see him, so that a considerable number of the sentences in the novel assure readers that *Aṣūr* certainly one day will be manifested and people should not be disappointed. For example, *Jalal, Aṣūr's* grandson while speaking with the teacher, *Abdul hāliq*, says:

(إنى أعتقد أنه مازال حياً) <sup>57</sup>

“I believe that *Aṣūr* is alive and he will be back someday.”

At the last episode of the novel, *Aṣūr II* opens the door of the *Taqiyya* and like a *Darwiš* or *Sūfi* comes

out of it (as if he is extraordinary major, invisible, *Aṣūr al-Nāḡī's* representative, awaited *Mahdī*) and he says:

غداً سيخرج الشيخ من خلوته، و يشق الحارة بنوره، و سيهب) <sup>58</sup> (كل فتاة نبوتاً من الخيزران

“Tomorrow *Shēikh* will leave his sanctum and will enlighten the neighborhood giving the young a cane and mulberries”.

All these clues reveal that the features of *Aṣūr al-Nāḡī's* character depicted by Mahfouz in this novel are not far from those of the promised savior character in Islam. In fact, “in the eyes of *the Harāfiš*, he is not a mere savior onto whom they project their hopes and dreams in trying social circumstance, he is also a symbol of immorality, a universal human ideal” <sup>59</sup>. Mahfouz significantly at the first settles the character hero or waited savior in *Aṣūr al-Nāḡī*, but *Aṣūr II's* intervention make him a hero who transcends his personal situation and tries to put his ability in the services of social justice. His arrival at heroism converts him to someone giving people real existence “who was content with his life and he thought that he would remain in paradise until the end, but a voice rising from the depth of his heart told him that though the earth may seem empty it is filled with the mercy of the Compassionate one” <sup>60</sup>.

### 3-5- *Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* (the Journey of Ibn Faṭṭūma)

*Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma*, journey of pain and hope, is considered one of the most famous Nagiub Mahfouz's works. Mahfouz's *Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* is the narrate of an Eastern globe trotter, who travels several countries in search of truth cast in the form of the journey in search of utopian house of incomparable perfection. The novel is an allegorical travel which “culminates Mahfouz's engagement with modernity and Islam” <sup>61</sup>. The journey sums up a young man's perplexity called Muhammad *Qandīl al-Annābī* known as *Ibn Faṭṭūma*, who has never sensed justice and reality promised in Islam in his home land. He addresses *Shēikh Maḡāga al-Ġabalī*, his tutor:

إذا كان الإسلام كما تقول فلماذا تزدحم الطرقات) <sup>62</sup> (بالفقراء و الجهلاء؟

“If Islam is as you say it is, why are the streets packed with poor and ignorant people?”

(!الخارج الإسلام اليوم قابع فى الجوامع لا يتعداها إلى) <sup>63</sup> and

“Islam today skulks in the mosques and doesn't go beyond them to the outside world”.

*Shēikh Maḡāga al-Ġabalī* applauds *Ibn Faṭṭūma* to find assigned land and refers him to the fabled Land, *Dar al-Gebel*:

إنه أمر... ليس بعده كمال كأنها معجزة البلاد، كأنها الكمال الذى) <sup>64</sup> (...لا وجدت كتاباً عنها أو مخطوطاً...كأى سر مغلق...عجيب لا يصدق

“It's as though it were the miracle of countries, as though it were perfection itself, incomparable

perfection...It's an extraordinary, unbelievable thing...It is a closed secret...nor have I found a book or manuscript about it".

In describing his emotions says:

راح الشيخ مغارة الجبيلي ينور عقله وروحي وبيد الظلام (من حولي، ويوجه أشواقي إلى أنبل ما في الحياة)<sup>65</sup>

"*Shēikh Magāga al-Gabalī* enlightened *Ibn Faṭṭūma* and wiped away all the darkness around him and encouraged him to know the most valuable thin in the life".

Upshot, *Ibn Faṭṭūma* after a love failure, with a broken heart starts his journey and tries to attain the wisdom, insight, and proper understanding of religion and world, the kind of knowledge that his countrymen are unaware of it and it is attainable in *Dar al-Gebel*, the promised land, which never has been found. In these situations, *Ibn Faṭṭūma* who is

(محزون بالظلم والفقير والجهل)<sup>66</sup>

"Upset by injustice, poverty, and ignorance"

Thinking that (أقوم برحلة) "to undertake a journey" that

(ليس هذا بالكثير على طالب الحكمة)<sup>67</sup>

"It is not too much for someone seeking wisdom?"

And *Dar al-Gebel* fires him imagination.

(كنجم معشوق يعتلى عرشه وراء النجوم)<sup>68</sup>

"Like some much-loved star mounting its throne behind other stars"

Therefore he begins his travel believing it will guide him to a place where there is "no compulsion" to adopt their beliefs, and to be savior for his homeland,

وطني المريض أريد أن أعرف، وأن أرجع ألى (بالدواء الشافي)<sup>69</sup>

"I want to learn and to return to my ailing homeland with a remedy heal her".

*Ibn Faṭṭūma*, during his journey to *Dar al-Gebel*, like "Gulliver travels to several other societies, seeking the ideal conditions of life"<sup>70</sup>, encounters with political systems in various lands one after the other, namely: *al-Waṭan* (*Ibn Faṭṭūma's* homeland), *Dar al-Mašreq* (Land of Sunrise), *Dar al-Heraa* (Land of Arena), *Dar al-Halaba*, *Dar al-Aman* (Land of Security), *Dar al-Gurūb* (Land of Sunset) and *Dar al-Gebel*. He eventually arrives *Dar al-Aman*. In this land he prays, like a Sufi, to prepare himself to go and travel to *Dar al-Gebel*. The last chapter of this story is named *Dar al-Bidaya* (the beginning), this name originally is a symbol of the beginning of *Ibn Faṭṭūma's* journey towards achieving freedom. *Ibn Faṭṭūma* continues his journey into *Dar al-Gebel* and he leaves behind in mountains and valleys, but he never returns to his homeland and the novel ends with the quest as yet unfinished. The novel is open ending.

لا يدري أحد هل واصل رحلته أو هلكت؟ هل دخل دار الجبل أم لا؟ هل يعثر على مخطوط أم لا؟ هل أقام بها

"Nobody knows whether *Qandīl* went ahead or died; whether arrived *Dar al-Gebel* or not; whether reached salvation or not; whether stayed there or returned to his home land as he wanted to do so".

What we can infer from the concept of waiting is that Mahfouz seeks to show a different image of the savior for readers. *Ibn Faṭṭūma* who seeks truth or what he terms "محطات للروح الحائر"<sup>72</sup> "station for the perplexed soul" creates the concept of the just land or the land of bliss and he designs an idealized prospect in the reader's mind that he is getting closer and closer to it at any moment, but it will not never be found. In the other hand, it is a journey motivated by a reckless want to discover the missing eternal land remains.

In *Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma*, the savior who devotes his life to reach the real freedom and social justice for people, who are suffering from injustice and cruelty, is no one except *Ibn Faṭṭūma*. However, this savior himself leaves his homeland for a great goal and he is waiting for fetching up *Dar al-Gebel*. In the other words, *Ibn Faṭṭūma* himself has a morally upright and self-sacrificing nature with a willingness to do what needs to be done with no regard for personal safety and well-being just for humanity emancipation and justice. *Ibn Faṭṭūma* continually stands to find *Dar al-Gebel*, the enigmatic and elusive "Utopia", at the summit of a mountain, but in the end of the novel he disappears and it is not clear whether he could arrive *Dar al-Gebel* or not and when all human achieve justice. Stopover at this point of the repetitious concept of waiting:

أريد أن أعرف، وأن أرجع إلى وطني المريض (بالدواء الشافي)<sup>73</sup>

"I want to learn and return to my ailing homeland with a remedy to heal her, I will return".

Throughout his journey, *Ibn Faṭṭūma* experiences many struggles both on an existential and intellectual level as he enthusiastically seeks to achieve the meaning of life in relation to who he is. The themes raised in *Ibn Faṭṭūma's* journey revolve around how to organize a proper society and his personal existential struggles. The main character, *Ibn Faṭṭūma*, journeys to several lands so as to discover an ideal territory and when he fails to find one, readers are not able to realize whether a perfect and idealized society really exists or not. *Ibn Faṭṭūma* endeavors to explore the meaning of life in relation to which he is, and the story relies significantly on self-interpretation creating a path to discovery for *Ibn Faṭṭūma* and the reader leaving everyone to question what the real journey was. Open ended *Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* demonstrates to its reader that there is no the promised *Dar al-Gebel* and "the salvation is in our hands", and we seek what we can create it. In this novel, what might be withdrawn is that *Ibn Faṭṭūma* failed to find the fable

*Dar al-Gebel*, where provides incomparable perfection and social justice for people, because the whole Utopia project is in people minds. *Ibn Faṭṭūma* trying to become the savior of his homeland does never arrive *Dar al-Gebel*.

Indeed, Mahfouz's *Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma* can be considered as a sample absurdist fiction like "waiting for Godot". *Ibn Faṭṭūma's* saving project, involving finding the paradigm of the mental Utopia and healing drug for his homeland's people, provides means of relationship between absurdist fiction experience, for when *Dar al-Gebel* as an Utopia in the novel becomes a object of perception, it cannot be found anywhere and at anytime, and existential movements such as truth, freedom and justice which cannot be found by waiting for a promised redeemer who is self-annihilation, making indefinite future.

### Conclusion

Based on the clues in these three novels, it could be inferred that thoughts and behaviors of three protagonists, *Arafa*, *Aṣūr al-Nāḡī* and *Ibn Faṭṭūma* have some similarities to those of the character of promised redeemer.

Such characters often have a code that they live by, which is often not the code of the society in which they are. The signs and symbols in these three novels, like *Aṣhūr's* sudden disappearance, *Arafa's* statements and *Ibn Faṭṭūma's* truth seeking, are significantly linked with the belief of the promised savior. Despite the heavy blow of society's frustration in novels, the three protagonists of novels still keep on seeking a solution to get rid of tyranny because that is their only way for they believe only them can save society.

In *Awlād al-Ġibilawī*, there are luminous aspects eyeing coming of a powerful savior to take them out from the tyranny into the light, from ignorance into science and from discouragement into intensity. These factors keep the people on waiting which coming from the unseen and this waiting gives significance to existence to them.

All of these because of thought expressing of the conflict between good and evil from everlasting and this idea that human has been created for earth remediation, but they have forgotten their main intent and because of power they fight each other, until a new redeemer comes and reminds them their main aim.

At the end of the *Harafish*, a possible waiting steadily occurs for *Harafish's* to achieve a wish which bring a new redeemer who is embodied at *Ashur II*.

In the *Rihlat Ibn Faṭṭūma*, Waiting for a redeemer at the end of three novels almost is related to

the future and somehow it transfer waiting object from "for what" stage to the treatment and cures stage "then what". Therefore these stages show waiting in absurd sometimes and comfort the minds of the next generation by a real hope seldom.

Mahfouz, by waiting for a savior them in these three novels, shows the living condition of the contemporary man who are away from God and expresses their attempts for getting rid of this situation. So, the only way will be to wait for a world redeemer.

### These are short Biography of Authors

1- **Dr. Taebeh Amiriyan** obtained her doctoral degree in modern Arabic literature from Bu Ali Sina University in 2016. The topic of dissertation was a study (Reflection of Iranian Sufism literature in Naguib Mahfouz's Novels 70s and 80s). She has published several research on modern Arabic fiction. She began by publishing three studies of works by Mahfouz: (A reading of mystical signs in "Shaykh of Sanan and Christian girl" and "The journey of Ibn Fattuma"), and (Literary language in Arts (Manteq Al-tayr) Attār and Naguib Mahfouz's Journey of Ebn Fattomeh) and she has also published (the Algerian Post-Colonial novel and its linguistic and content features). She also has prepared two articles on cultural diplomacy between Iran and Arab world on the basis of Persian Language and Literature and Arabic Language and Literature. Taebeh Amiriyan recently is working in Jihad Daneshgahi institute of Higher education.

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