
Practice of Naturalism in Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley*

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ABSTRACT

Naturalism novels portray the reality of life in a sharper and more decisive way than realism novels. Naturalism takes the place of building a narrative, like shooting a photographic reality by zooming in. Narrative naturalism normally provides a sharp depiction of reality without idealization. This study identified the description of reality through elements of naturalism in the novel *Midaq Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz. This study deployed Emile Zola's naturalism theory with a qualitative descriptive approach. The primary data source was the novel *Midaq Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz, supported by secondary data from relevant books and journal articles. The data were in sentences or paragraphs collected by reading and note-taking techniques. The results of this study figured out the elements of naturalism in the novel *Midaq Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz, including aspects of objectivity, setting, determinism, pessimism, and plot twists. The provisions for selecting these elements were based on findings practiced in writing the novel *Midaq Alley*. The novelty of this article lies in the discovery of elements of Emile Zola's naturalism in the novel *Midaq Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz and the evidence of a picture of the postwar situation of Egypt depicted in real, alive, but natural by the author.

Keywords: *Egypt; Emile Zola; Midaq Alley; Naguib Mahfouz; Naturalism*

INTRODUCTION

The camera's focal point is a window for the photographer to record the world's reality from the perspective of what it is. Through the resulting image, the authenticity of the objects visible will be photographed in a real and realistic way, which is the model of realism (Muhtarom, 2014; Shahab, Faruk, & Rokhman, 2020). However, when the realism model takes pictures that appear to the eye as they are, naturalism touches objects in even more detail, in a way like a camera zoom. Things previously invisible to realism become more sharply visible in the naturalism camera.

The phenomenon of portrait naturalism using a camera is sufficient to explain the difference between how realism and naturalism try to present events and reality in literary works. The more events in literary works are photographed using the zoom model, the

more stories in literary works can be identified with narration using the naturalism model.

The flow of naturalism is a writing idea that has been widely accepted among literary writers. Naturalism describes social reality in society without idealization. French writer, Emile Zola initiated the flow of naturalism through his naturalism novels, including the novel *Germinal*. Naturalism novels describe the good and bad sides of life, which have a major influence on the nature and character of the characters (Anissa & Hanan, 2018; Sameer & Qadir, 2018).

The *Midaq Alley* novel, one of the works of the Egyptian novelist, Naguib Mahfouz, is considered very naturalist in describing the events experienced by its characters (Pung, 2021). The story is allowed to flow without the author taking sides with the

fate of the characters. *Midaq Alley* depicts the life of the lower economic class, a slum environment, cramped buildings, and a lack of people's income. The characters depicted experience injustice, inequality, uncertainty, sacrifice, and disappointment in every construction of the story (Romagnoli, 2023; Selini & Nouredine, 2013).

Midaq Alley is one of Naguib Mahfouz's novels that received the Nobel Prize for Best Literature in Egypt in 1988. The novel was written in 1947 as a real picture of the daily life of the Egyptian people in the Midaq area after the British and French colonization of Egypt. The colonization of these two countries still leaves a strong impact on the lives of Egyptians, especially in Midaq Alley. Through this novel, Mahfouz indirectly describes the attitudes and characteristics of each Egyptian community in responding to the chaos of the post-war era, some give up, despair, and some work hard to live life while hoping that tomorrow will be better.

As the idea in the theory of naturalism, *Midaq Alley* illustrates relevant issues related to the situation of the people of Cairo, Egypt, after the British and French colonization, with a sharp perspective. The novel presents the reality of the postcolonial world with its problems without idealization. The characters in the novel are not given the power and freedom to determine their own future and fate. Meanwhile, environmental factors become dominant in determining the fate of each character, such as the background of poverty, the chaotic social situation, and so on (Surur, 2023). Thus, the researchers will bring out the dark side of every human character and provide an understanding of the natural state of the world based on the situation, to understand it much better.

In the mission to bring out the dark side of humanity, the characters in Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley* will be portrayed through the perspective of Emile Zola's naturalism theory. Naturalism comes from two words: natural, which means "raw" and "-ism", which means understanding. Emile Zola describes economic, psychological, physical, and social conditions as representing the dark side of life that shapes human behavior (Aulia, 2014; Wayan, Pradnyana, Artawan, & Sutama, 2019). Emile Zola's naturalism style is to present a reflection in a literary work, with the author's position not taking sides with a character or historical situation introduced (Shahin,

2021). The characters follow the social conventions of heredity and environment.

Emile Zola's flow of naturalism contains five important elements: objectivity, setting, determinism, pessimism, and plot twist. First is objectivity, described by a true story without any perspective (Barnaby, 1997; Zhang, 2010). Second, the setting in naturalism is described as a dirty, harsh environment that can affect the nature and behavior of every human being: in this case, the characters in literary works (Afaq, Hassan, & Gul, 2022; Baizán, Ribas, & Piferrer, 2022). Third, determinism, factors that dominate the inability of humans to change their lives so that naturalism sees heredity and environment, for example, will determine the fate of society (Delgado, 2020). The fourth element of Emile Zola's naturalism is pessimism, it describes the helplessness of character. The characters are depicted in a state that is difficult to get out of reality because there is a great force from the external space that suppresses the strength of each individual (Placik, Taylor, & Wnuk, 2020). Fifth, the plot twist. Naturalism believes life is not always predictable. Unpredictable events can ruin a person's life (Beigi, Callahan, & Michaelson, 2019; Pérez, 2020).

The researchers conducted a literature review to show the renewal and position of this research to previous researches. Eight previous studies were found by researchers, especially those using the *Midaq Alley* novel as an object of study, analysis that reveals the orientation of female protagonist, social image, symbols of male and female character, feminism, linguistic metaphors, constructive item, Islamic value, and social hegemony (Ajeng, Widayanti, Dea, & Wibowo, 2016; Diyanti, 2016; Eruaga, 2021; Fauziah, 2021; Gohar, 2015; Hussein & Fawzy, 2022; Pung, 2021; Shaida, Akram, & Butt, 2022). From these previous studies, we have not found any other researcher who has used the naturalism approach to dissect the *Midaq Alley* novel. Therefore, the novelty of this article lies in the discovery of elements of Emile Zola's naturalism, as well as proving that the post-war picture in Egypt is painted real and natural in the *Midaq Alley* novel by Naguib Mahfouz.

Elements of Emile Zola's naturalism are revealed through descriptive qualitative methods, and presenting sentences or paragraphs that relate to the theory (Satori & Komariah, 2014). The *Midaq Alley* novel is the main source for this research, while related books and journals serve as research support

sources. Data was collected through reading and note-taking techniques and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's analysis (Jan, Jin, Crina, & Sydney, 2021).

This research uses a close reading method to collect the data. The researchers read the object carefully and meticulously: reading section by section to identify elements of naturalism and annotating the use of naturalism elements found in the novel. Analysis was conducted through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, data was identified through reading and then grouped. At the display stage, the data is presented and interpreted, while at the conclusion stage, the data is concluded from what has been presented and then interpreted, then the use of naturalism elements applied in the novel.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Elements of Naturalism in the Naguib Mahfouz's *Midaq Alley*

Objectivity in *Midaq Alley* Novel

Objectivity is the author's attempt to seem like an impartial observer of what the characters are going through. The focus of attention in the *Midaq Alley* novel by Naguib Mahfouz is its depiction of social reality. The visualization of this novel is presented as it is without involving the author's partiality towards a character. *Midaq Alley* is told with the nuances of the past that are still inherent in some of the lives of the residents of an alley, with the setting of shops, coffee shops, bread stalls, flats, and a simple neighborhood, far from the glitter of the city.

فقال المعلم كرشة وهو يتخذ مجلسه المعتاد وراء صندوق الماركات: عرفنا القصص جميعاً وحفظناها، ولا حاجة بنا إلى سردها من جديد، والناس في أيامنا هذه لا يريدون الشاعر، وطالما طالبوني بالراديو، وها هو ذالراديو يرُكَّب، فدعونا ورزقك على الله

(Mahfouz, 1947: 8)

The cafe owner took his usual seat behind the till and replied, "We know all the stories you tell by heart and we don't need to run through them again. People today don't want a poet. They keep asking me for a radio and there's one over there being installed now. So go away and leave us alone and may God provide for you . . .

Sheikh Darwish, with his rebab and rebab

accompaniment, always accompanies several stalls in *Midaq Alley*, like the Kirsha coffee shop in the past. Sheikh Darwish's job as a poet is to get money from some of the patrons of Kirsha's stall.

However, the accompaniment of these verses was no longer needed when Kirsha already had an old radio to play music for visitors. The radio was installed on the wishes of its visitors long ago. Meanwhile, Sheikh Darwish reminded that poetry had been sung in his stall since long ago. Kirsha expelled Sheikh Darwish and firmly reminded him that times have changed.

In the dispute between Kirsha and Sheikh Darwish, the author does not seem to display the idea of partiality towards one of the characters, such as by using ideas or sermons that the author smuggles into the novel. This is in line with the element of objectivity in the theory of naturalism, that the author lets events unfold naturally, and happen according to reality, without the idea of favoring certain characters (Surur, 2023). Here, the author functions to describe the story with visualizations that appear to the reader as they are (Fatmawati, 2021).

In addition, the author in the *Midaq Alley* novel depicts the moral decay that occurred in that era clearly through the character Hamida who plays a prostitute.

ثم قال لها بسرور وفخار: بالأمس يا عزيزتي دعواتي بالقواد، فاسمحي لي بأن أقدم لك نفسي على حقيقتها: محبك ناظر مدرسة، وستعلمين كل شيء في حينه

(Mahfouz, 1947: 143)

Then he spoke with pride and delight: "Yesterday, my darling, you called me a pimp. Now allow me to present my true self to you. Your lover is the headmaster of a school, and you will learn everything when the time comes.

Hamida has fallen into Faraj's trap. She accepts Faraj's invitation to live in his apartment. Hamida is attracted by all the luxuries Faraj has to offer, even if it means becoming a prostitute. After Hamida agrees to Faraj's invitation, he begins to introduce himself, and how all the power lies with him. This puts Hamida under Faraj's control.

Hamida knew how the people closest to her would look at her, but the economic limitations of her family and the difficult jobs she could find in *Midaq*

Alley made her accept Faraj's invitation. She began to get used to wear seductive clothes, and was even accustomed to getting kisses from her clients.

Seeing Hamida's condition, Naguib Mahfouz objectively describes the moral decay that occurred in that era. Mahfouz describes how jobs and the luxuries of life are hard to come by, making people justify any means to obtain them, such as being a prostitute. Work that requires sacrificing one's dignity to get what one wants is considered normal and familiar. Mahfouz does not give an explicit moral judgment on the act and leaves the reader with a real picture of the conditions at that time.

In addition, in *Midaq Alley*, Mahfouz shows the resignation of the narrative to the events or incidents that occur.

فتناول واحدةً وهو لا يدري ما يفعل وقذفها صوبها بكلِّ ما يملك من
قوةٍ وغضبٍ وقنوط، في سرعةٍ خاطفة لم يستطع أن يمنعها أحد، لا من
الجنود ولا من عمَّال الحناة

(Mahfouz, 1947: 197)

...hurled it at her with all the force of the anger and despair within him. He acted so quickly that no one, neither the soldiers nor any of the tavern employees, could stop him...

Abbas is a good, hardworking, and loyal young man. In fact, when his loyalty was betrayed by Hamida, Abbas was willing to help her to solve her problem with the man who took her away, Ibrahim Faraj. When Abbas arrives at the Vita Bar to meet Faraj regarding Hamida's issue, Abbas sees Hamida sitting with a group of soldiers. Abbas's anger peaked; Abbas felt lied to by Hamida, and this made Abbas throw a glass bottle at Hamida's face until blood was pouring from his nose.

The author allows the dispute to happen between Abbas and Hamida. Objectivity displays the author as an observer who does not take sides with any character. The author also displays that she does not want to interfere with the problem (Surur, 2023). Thus, the dispute between Abbas and Hamida that hurt Hamida's face is allowed by the author to be portrayed objectively, as if there were several disputes in post-colonial Egypt at that time.

Setting in Midaq Alley Novel

The setting influences the character as if it becomes

a kind of character itself. Naturalist novels tend to depict situations where the characters are so tied up with environmental factors (Surur, 2023). The *Midaq Alley* novel is based on daily life in Midaq Alley, Cairo, Egypt. It tells of limitations, dissatisfaction, and struggles to live in a harsh environment. This is how the author describes the state of the passage.

كيف لا وطريقه المبلط بصفائح الحجارة ينحدر مباشرة إلى الصناديقية،
تلك العاطفة التاريخية، وقهوته المعروفة بقهوة كرشة تزدان جدرانها بتهاويل
الأرابيسك، هذا إلى قديمٍ باءٍ، وتهدم وتخلخل، وروائح قويّة من طبّ
الزمان القديم الذي صار مع مرور الزمن عطرًا اليوم والغد

(Mahfouz, 1947: 5)

How could it be otherwise with its stone-paved surface leading directly to the historic Sanadiqiya Street. And then there is its cafe known as Kirsha's. Its walls decorated with multicolored arabesques, now crumbling, give off strong odors from the medicines of olden times, smells which have now become the spices and folk cures of today and tomorrow...

Midaq Alley is the setting for a series of stories in *Midaq Alley* novel by Naguib Mahfouz. The author describes Midaq Alley as a dirty and simple place. The author shows that the passage is still designed from slabs of stone, which sometimes still give off strong smells, like concoctions of past medicines.

As in the naturalism theory, the environment has a very important role in determining a person's character. The environment that depicts a limited life makes the residents of Midaq Alley do various ways to survive, the treasure-crazy Hamida character is willing to become a prostitute because of the situation that fits the setting of the novel. Zaita who likes to make people give up on her work, by making someone disabled, as well as Dr. Booshy, the only doctor trusted in Midaq Alley, because of the difficult living conditions in the midst of a war situation, had to steal a corpse's gold tooth. Such is the setting created in the *Midaq Alley* novel, even the setting itself seems to be a kind of character itself, a character that is not made of a human-shaped figure (Surur, 2023).

The author also shows economic limitations through the house the residents live.

وقد وجد فيه سگان بيته-المعلم كرشة في الطابق الثالث، وعم كامل
والخلو في الطابق الأوّل

(Mahfouz, 1947: 10)

The people who lived in his house--Kirsha on the third floor, and Uncle Kamil and Abbas, the barber, on the first

Due to the generosity of Mr Ridwan Hussain, he rents out one of his houses for several residents in Midaq Alley to live at an affordable price. Mr. Kirsha was placed on the third floor, while Mr. Kamil and Abbas were placed on the first floor without the increase in house rent as stipulated by the military for housing. Therefore, we can see the economic limitations and access to places in Midaq Alley.

The author can describe the environment that can influence Mr. Ridwan Hussain's behavior or attitude with such limited space. The helpful character of Mr. Ridwan Hussain shows that the environment has a big role in determining the character of naturalist characters.

In addition, the author describes several places in Midaq Alley that are described clearly, in detail, and with simplicity.

وراح يؤمها السُّمَّار. هي حجرة مرَّعة الشكل، في حكم البالية، ولكنها على عفائها تزدان جدرانها بالأرابيسك

(Mahfouz, 1947: 6)

The cafe is beginning to fill with customers. It is a square room, somewhat dilapidated. However, in spite of its dinginess, its walls are covered with arabesques.

The only coffee shop in Midaq Alley is Kirsha's coffee shop. The author describes the shop as an old stall; the walls are starting to rickety, so the reader can see that the shop is old. Apart from that, the Kirsha coffee shop is still decorated with Arabesque. Arabesque is a traditional Arab architectural art with elaborate ceramic or woodwork full of mosaics. It shows that the past influences the coffee shop.

Besides a coffee shop, Midaq Alley has a bakery owned by Mrs. Hasniya and her husband, Jaada

بناء مُرَّع على وجه التقريب، غيرمُنْتَظَم الأضلاع، تحتل الفرن جانبه الأيسر، وتشغل الرفوف جدرانها، وتقوم مصطبة فيما بين الفرن والمدخل ينام عليها صاحبها الدار: المعلمة حسنيَّة وزوجها جعدة

(Mahfouz, 1947: 40)

It is an almost square building, its sides built unevenly. An oven occupies the left side and the wall is lined with shelves. Between the oven and the entrance is a bench on which the owners of the bakery, Husniyya and her husband, Jaada, sleep

The bakery is one of the highlights of Midaq Alley's livelihood. The author describes a bakery with its limitations. A large stove for baking bread, covered with walls lined with shelves. It leads to the reader's impression that the bakery could be better. In addition, between the stove and the entrance, there is a long bench for the owner to sleep on while looking after the bakery. The author describes a bakery shop that is very narrow and simple.

From the description of Kirsha's coffee shop and Jaada's bakery, the author tries to depict Midaq Alley in more detail. While realism depicts the setting with its reality, naturalism tries to depict the sides that are not visible through the glass of realism. These invisible sides contribute to solve the dark sides of human character through the appearance of the surrounding environment.

In *Midaq Alley*, the author also shows brothels as supporting the bad side of life.

رأت في وسط الحجرة امرأة عارية منتصبه القامة

(Mahfouz, 1947: 152)

In the middle of the room she saw a woman standing naked.

The author describes the brothel as a hotel with special rooms. One of the rooms is called "class for learning the basics of English." However, the class shows a naked woman. Faraj's brothel is different from the others. In other places, after getting a job, the prostitute immediately meets the client. However, in Faraj's brothels, the prostitutes have to go to basic classes. One of the basic classes to be entered is an English class for debriefing dealing with clients from abroad, such as America.

The novel describes in detail the places of prostitution. Not only a room but equipped with basic rooms for the provision of a prostitute. Another bad side of life, the author describes the existence of a bar in Midaq Alley as a place to sell liquor.

وطلب كأسين، فجاء بهما الخواجا ووضعهما على المائدة ومعهما

طبق ترمس

(Mahfouz, 1947: 173)

He ordered two glasses of wine, which the bartender brought along with a plate of bitter nuts.

The author completes the bad side of Midaq Alley's life with a bar, where people get drunk, gamble, or party. Also, describes what is sold in detail, such as liquor and bitter nut seeds. From the depiction of brothels and bars, he tries to describe Midaq Alley where the good and bad of the environment will influence each character in the story. Everyone agrees that bars are considered synonymous with negative places (Adista, 2022).

Determinism in Midaq Alley Novel

Determinism is external causes that cause a character to have a certain line of destiny. Life in Midaq Alley is described as a natural life. Thus, Emile Zola sees that heredity and environment can control the attitude and character of each figure.

وهيئات أن يكذبني ظني، فهي موهوبة بالفطرة... هي عاهرة بالسليقة... وسوف تكون نادرة المثال

(Mahfouz, 1947: 137)

I'm quite sure I'm not wrong about her. She has got a natural gift for it . . . She's a whore by instinct. She's going to be a really priceless pearl.

Faraj sees Hamida as a potential prostitute. This assumption arose when Faraj gave a kiss to Hamida, but there was no rebellion from him. Every woman will rebel if she gets a kiss from someone she does not like, even if she does not know. If you look at her mother, umm Hamida was known as a person who arranged matches for people who did not have a partner, such as Mrs. Saniya Afify. Thus, Hamida indirectly understands the love story of adults in a marriage relationship.

Mahfouz describes Hamida's prostitute spirit as arising from her mother's work, who used to find people's matches. It makes Hamida understand a little about adult romance problems and makes her want to imitate or practice it. In this situation, heredity is

considered an external factor capable of influencing and controlling a person's character journey (Surur, 2023).

Besides the character aspect, the work of a character can also be influenced by the parents who care for him (Dwintanissa, 2020).

وقد اكتسب البراعة في فنّه من تجارب الحياة التي صادفته، وعلى رأسها جميعاً اشتغاله عهداً طويلاً في سرك متجول، ولاتصاله بأوساط الشحاذين - اتصالاً يرجع عهده إلى صباه حين كان يعيش في كنف والدين شحاذين

(Mahfouz, 1947: 41)

He gained his skill by working for a long time with a traveling circus. Zaita had, moreover, been connected with beggar circles since his boyhood, when he lived with his parents, who were beggars.

Zaita is an expert at turning disabled people into beggars. Most of Zaita's customers are normal people who want to have their legs or arms broken to help them become beggars after failing at work several times.

Hamida was raised by parents who used to be beggars. Almost every day she saw how beggars work. This led to her idea of disfiguring someone, to turn them into a beggar. Zaita influenced many people becoming a beggar was the easiest way to sustain the economy in the difficult, post-war period. In addition, Zaita's experience working in a traveling circus made her even better at grooming people.

However, Zaita's efforts to help some people as a beggar did not change anything. Her work as a beggar does not show the economic sufficiency of the community in general. This can be seen through the entire narrative of the novel, which does not show the results of Zaita's efforts, as if determinism is brought in by Mahfouz through Zaita's efforts with the patients, beggars, who do not have the slightest effect on the economy of the community. This illustrates the inability of society to change its fate for the better.

Pessimism in Midaq Alley Novel

Pessimism is author's fatalistic world view/dark life prospects of the characters. In the *Midaq Alley* novel, pessimism is described by individual helplessness, like the fight between Kisrya and umm Hussain, who are already familiar. After some of Kirsha's actions,

umm Hamida was tired but could not leave Kirsha.

ووالله لولا عشرة العُمر والأبناء لهجرت بيته لغير رجعة أبداً

(Mahfouz, 1947: 65)

By God, if it were not for my age and the children, I would have left his house long ago and never returned

Kirsha's homosexual illness made udarwm Hussain uncomfortable and tired of all means to cure her husband. In addition, there were some of Kirsha's deeds that hurt um Hussain. Until it crossed umm Hussain's heart to leave Kirsha because she hated her actions, but was hindered by her age and child.

Seeing Hussain who is an adult, indicates umm Hussain's age is not young anymore. The author describes the pessimism of umm Hamida who persists with Kirsha and cannot do anything because of her old age and for the sake of her son, Hussain. Umm Hussain's attitude towards the problems illustrates the character of someone who does not have much chance to change fate. As in the life journeys of naturalist characters who always show resignation to the fate that befalls them, without the power to determine their own destiny (Surur, 2023).

In addition, pessimism in the *Midaq Alley* novel depicts a character who cannot get out of heinous deeds. Like Hamida, a woman known for her tough temper who had a bitter experience with Ibrahim Faraj. Hamida was forced to obey him because he was bound by labor laws.

والآن لا تستطيع عنه فكاً كما بحكم هذا العمل، والطغيان عواطفها نفسها

(Mahfouz, 1947: 178)

Now he spoke only of the work and profit. It was this work, together with the tyranny of her own emotions

Hamida, who is tough tempered and easily persuaded by men, is entangled in Faraj's false love. Faraj comes to Hamida with a myriad of love and possessions. However, who would have thought that Faraj only wanted to hire Hamida as a prostitute. Gradually, Hamida was brokenhearted and disappointed, she felt played by Faraj. It feels like Hamida does not want to follow Faraj, but what is hard is that she is already bound by labor laws, namely as

a prostitute.

The author describes the pessimism of the character Hamida who has no power over his decisions. Hamida wanted to quit her job as a prostitute, but she could not do so, due to the labor laws governing her. The law was approved by Hamida without understanding it. Inevitably, she must follow and not violate it.

Pessimism is also depicted by the character Hussain who wants to change the fate of his life from Midaq Alley to a good life. However, the environment does not approve it or everything will be useless.

ولكنه لم يهجم واختفى (حتى في تلك اللحظة لم يقل إنه مات) تاركاً شيخ المغفلين صفر اليدين، والبك شقيق الست؟

(Mahfouz, 1947: 146)

But he hasn't attacked; instead he has disappeared, leaving the biggest fool alive empty-handed! His lordship is Madam's brother?

Hussain was tired of the limited life of Midaq Alley. Hussain decides to leave home and go to Tal Al Kabir to become a British soldier to change his fate, with a better life. However, nature does not approve of it. Hussain returned home and received insults from his father. Condemnation for people who have vilified Midaq Alley, but the place to go home is Midaq Alley. He explained that his work as a soldier was useless. The army leadership had lied to him that Hilter was dead. Thus, all soldiers returned empty-handed or were fired. The pessimism of Hussain's character is described as his hard work to turn his life to Tal Al Kabir but apparently deceived by the British army leadership. Thus, Hussain was sacked and returned to his origin, Midaq Alley, with a limited life.

Hussain's fate illustrates that the characters of naturalist novels have little chance to change their life. It is not easy for every naturalist character to get out of the fate that ensnares him, seeing many environmental factors and social conditions that always seem to control him.

Plot Twist in *Midaq Alley* Novel

The plot twist is a novel ending that is unexpected or unpredictable. The *Midaq Alley* novel is narrated in a flowing manner, both in terms of characterization, setting, and presentation of existing conflicts,

without any judgment from the author. Readers are encouraged to have their perspective, thus bringing up several unexpected events, such as plot twists by the reader.

وتمخض العاشق عن تاجر الأعراض

(Mahfouz, 1947: 178)

He dropped his role of lover for that of the flesh merchant

Faraj's appearance in Hamida's life is as if he is the lover of her dreams, who comes with love and is full of wealth. Faraj comes with sincere love and some glittering treasures. Therefore, captivating Hamida's heart to come live with him.

As it turns out, this is how Faraj works. He captivates women's hearts as he comes with much love and treasure. When the woman is under control, he takes her to a brothel to work under the labor law. Hamida is disappointed that she had hoped that Faraj would take her for marrying her, but instead, it is Faraj's game.

In this novel, readers have the perspective that Faraj loves Hamida to death until he dares to kiss her and take her away. However, then, the author brought up a plot twist that Faraj only used Hamida's beauty to be hired as a prostitute. The ending of Faraj's story with Hamida illustrates the work of a naturalist who always presents a plot twist in the story (Surur, 2023). The characters experience the futility of their struggle. It happens to Hamida who came with Faraj and expected her life would be filled with wealth. However, in reality, Hamida is utilized by Faraj to make money.

In another narration, the author introduces a plot twist from a well-known person and very meritorious in Midaq Alley, Dr. Booshy

ولم يتناه إلى زقاق نأ القبض على الدكتور بوسي وزينة في مقبرة الطالبي
إلا عند عصر اليوم التالي

(Mahfouz, 1947: 158)

The news that Dr. Booshy and Zaita had been apprehended in the Taliby sepulcher reached the alley the next evening

The only dentist in Midaq Alley is Dr. Booshy. From his services, he once promised a gold tooth to

fill Mrs. Saniya Afifi's cavities. However, once he was caught stealing gold teeth from a recently deceased corpse. This news shocked the residents of Midaq Alley, especially Mrs. Saniya Afify.

The author describes the character of Dr. Booshy as a good dentist who likes to help Midaq Alley residents. However, the author brought the plot twist when Dr. Booshy was caught stealing gold teeth before keeping his promise to Mrs. Saniya Afify about gold teeth. Perhaps, the alternative Dr. Booshy was also given to previous patients also from things that were not good.

The plot twist of the story is shown by Dr. Booshi's behavior. He is the only doctor trusted by the people of Midaq Alley, but he also commits heinous acts. At the beginning of the story, the reader is led to believe that Dr. Booshy can provide the best and in a good way to his patients. But one incident arises that the dentures he will use are obtained from stealing the gold teeth of a corpse.

The author also brought up the plot twist of someone who fought for love but had to run aground on the road of Abbas Hilu.

واختلقت صراخها بزئير السمارة الهائجين، وانقضَّ عليه الغاضبون
كالوحوش الكواسر

(Mahfouz, 1947: 197)

Her screams mingled with the enraged shouts of the drunks in the tavern, and angry men fell on Abbas from all sides like wild animals.

Hamida explains to Abbas that his betrayal was not of her will but forced by Faraj. According to Hamida's words, Abbas also intends to take revenge on Faraj by meeting him at Vita Bar. However, when he arrived at Vita Bar, Abbas saw Hamida sitting pretty with the soldiers. Abbas' anger peaked, and a fight broke out between Abbas and the soldiers. Because the bottle thrown by Abbas hit Hamida's face, soldiers rushed at Abbas. He also fell in the incident.

Mahfouz revealed a plot twist that the reader had not previously imagined. He leads the reader to Hamida's disappointment so that the reader sees Hamida as a victim of Faraj's actions. However, the author created a plot twist through Hamida's actions. The author reveals that heinous acts have become a job in Hamida's interest. Therefore, when Hamida is disappointed with the hope that Faraj has given her,

Hamida turns to the soldiers.

CONCLUSION

Emile Zola's representation of naturalism is very well illustrated through the daily life of the Egyptian people, especially in the Midaq area during the British and French colonial times, in a novel called *Midaq Alley*, by Mahfudz. This novel naturally depicts the various characters who experience limitations, injustice, and disappointment without the author's partiality towards the characters. Various community characteristics, some surrender and give up on the situation, and some are eager to build hope that tomorrow will be better, even if it ends empty-handed. Likewise, the depiction of the setting supports the plot and construction of the story.

The influence of British and French colonialism is still very much felt in *Midaq Alley*, such as the lack of public income that drives the strong desire of some young people to join the British army to survive or to get a better life. Naturalism looks at the environment indirectly by presenting various events and social situations during World War 2 that spread to Egypt, which influenced the fate of the characters in *Midaq Alley's* life journey. This article lies in the discovery of elements of Emile Zola's naturalism, as well as proving that the post-war picture in Egypt is painted real and natural in the *Midaq Alley* novel by Naguib Mahfouz.

COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

The author(s) herewith declare that this article is totally free from any conflict of interest regarding the data collection, analysis, editorial process, and the publication process in *Poetika: Jurnal Ilmu Sastra*. All authors in this article were not involved in any step of the editorial review and editors' decision at all costs.

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