

## The Manifestation of Sovereign Power in the Novel *Yauma Qutila al-Zaim* by Najib Mahfudz

M. Hafidzulloh S.M<sup>1</sup>, Aprinus Salam<sup>2</sup>

Faculty of Cultural Sciences Universitas Gadjah Mada<sup>1,2</sup>

Jl. Nusantara, No. 1. Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia.

Correspondence Email: hafidzulloh@ugm.ac.id aprinus@ugm.ac.id

ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7026-885X

### ARTICLE INFORMATION

#### Publication Information

#### Research Article

#### HOW TO CITE

Amran, Y., & Nisa. (2021). CSR in the Covid-19 situation in Indonesia. *Journal of International Conference Proceedings*, 9(1), 23-31.

#### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32535/jicp.v4i2.1292>

Copyright@ year owned by Author(s).  
Published by JICP



This is an open-access article.  
License: Attribution-Noncommercial-  
Share Alike (CC BY-NC-SA)

Received: 14 September 2021

Accepted: 2 October 2021

Published: 30 November 2021

### ABSTRACT

Polemics and social inequality are the primary basis for story building in several of Najib Mahfudz's works. As the primary source, the social constellation presents to seek the formation of relations between social structures and literature. Various social systems come with articulations in economic, cultural, and political forms. This article will explore the context of government and state apart from being an executive institution and exercising sovereignty with its power. The identification of sovereignty is closely related to very paradoxical power. This type of research is qualitative. This type is classified because the primary data source in the study is in the form of textual data from the novel *Yauma Qutila al-Zaim* by Najib Mahfudz using a postmarxis approach. In this study, two main problems are discussed. First, how is the manifestation of the dual function of state power and sovereignty; second, why sovereignty is placed and positioned as a structure with very high absolutism. The duality formation between sovereignty and power that forms a network of sovereignty with all its forms of transformation. The sovereignty network then includes a working logic of power and sovereignty with all forms of attribution inherent in it.

**Keywords:** Biopolitical Reason, Manifestation of Sovereignty, *Yauma Qutila al-Zaim*

**JEL Classification:** Z11, Z12, Z19

## INTRODUCTION

The tendency of some of Najib Mahfudz's works is very thick with the description of social class. It can say that the social reality described by Najib is in direct contact with the social conditions of the middle class. From this tendency, as an author, Najib always uses narratives closely related to the nuances of social course, struggle, criticism, and the resistance of the Egyptian people in his work (Naem & Janoory, 2020).

Najib Mahfudz's work in Arabic literature is considered very influential and has a significant role in further developments. He is evidenced by writing techniques and narrative characteristics unique to his work, related to society, social class, and government (Nijland, 1984). The shape of this epigon also brought Najib an award in the form of a Nobel Prize in 1988 (Kamil, 2008; Latifi, 2008). Almost all of his works are identical to the picture of social reality that intertwined in his life (Barakat, 1993).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the works that tend to expose social realities with a government system reflects in his novel, *Yauma Qutila al-Zaim*, or *The Day The Leader Was Killed*. The characters, narration, and social reality in this novel are almost similar to al-Karnak's previous one. In *al-Karnak*, Najib narrates the society of the Gamal Abdul Nasser era with the consequences of the defeat of the war against Israel. In *Yauma Qutila al-Zaim*'s novel, Najib forms a pattern of domination in the period of Anwar Sadat's leadership, thick with nuances of government arbitrariness towards citizens. (Abu Auf, 1991). *Yauma Qutila al-Zaim*'s novel is a social representation of Egyptian society in the era of Anwar Sadat's leadership. This era occurred in the 1970s, which was thick with various social inequalities, and from that situation, the status and fate of the Egyptians at that time were filled with anxiety and uncertainty in life (Gover, 2013).

*Yauma Qutila al-Zaim*'s novel tells how the composition of life, which consists of political, economic, and social structures, has decreased significantly. The structure of government and political constellation is narrated as a structure that neglects social care. So that the political and government atmosphere present in this work intersects with the despotic attitude of government (Alahmad, n.d., 2016). They use this power in the form of material to dominate several other figures. From this domination emerged an instinct to provide real action in the form of class struggle (Manshur, 2012).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research will utilize the type of qualitative descriptive research. Wherefrom this type of research because the main data in this study comes from words, sentences, and phrases from the novel *Yauma Qutila al-Zaim* by Najib Mahfudz. The research data is then accumulated by configuring it with the main theme and research subject. The data accumulation is then analyzed based on Giorgio Agamben's theory of state sovereignty. There are various theoretical and conceptual foundations that will be used to investigate how state sovereignty is manifested in the concept of state structure by positioning itself in the systematics of state life.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sovereignty as an Enigma

There are three main narrators in building the story, namely Muhtasyimi Zaid, Alwan Fawaz Muhtasyimi, and Rondah Sulaiman Mubarak. The three narrators are told to

come from the lower class of society, all of which are experiencing inequality, ranging from social, economic, and political. Starting with economic problems in the family, Muhtasyimi Zaid and Alwan Fawaz live in one house with affluent family status.

“Good morning, young people, piled up in buses, your faces looking out behind cracked glass panes like those of prisoners on visiting days. And the bridge bursting with passers-by. Cyclists greedily—but unremittingly—devouring beas sandwiches.

“With every mounting crisis comes relief,” said my grnadfather.

Dear Grandpa, till when will we go on learning things off by heart and arroting others? He’s my best friend. And I’m but on orphan. I lost my parents when they lost themselves in continuous work from morning to night, shuttling between the government and private sector to take out a meager living. We meet only fleetingly. No time for idle philosophizing, please. Can’t you see that we can’t even find time for sleep” (Mahfouz, 1997:8).

It is true that the quote above explicitly states that with the work done by both of Alwan's parents, he is still unable to cover the needs of their family. Both of Alwan's parents are willing to spend time after time by busying himself to work; of course, the main reason for doing so is the family economy. Because of that, Alwan called himself an orphan, and his parents often spent time outside the house for work. A job that requires them to always leave time with Alwan, their only child who is the hope of the family in the future. With discipline in work, they will be able to meet themselves, be able to be responsible both for themselves, the surrounding community, and the environment (Riwukore et al., 2021).

### **Utopia: A Dialectical Condition**

As it is widely known that sovereignty is a form of power with various forms that are inherent in it. The manifest form of sovereignty, according to Agamben, is a discursive practice that, in turn, is a form of citizen normalization (Agamben, 1998; DeCaroli, 2013). This shows how the logic of work and the paradigm of biopolitics where utilizing power and sovereignty form the power to destroy the structure of citizens' lives. The key to realize the ideal dimension is good public service (Taan, 2020). Sovereign power is not an abstract and not absolute entity, but the essential concepts that are built in the relationship between power and sovereignty are given in utilizing sovereignty in the category of subject and object in power (Hardt & Negri, 2020).

All this within earshot of Israeli tourist. I find solace in just sitting there listening. If this kind of talk disturbs you, then just take a look at the street. Watch the passers-by closely: ceaseless, uninterrupted, brisk motion. Sullen faces. What do thet conceal? Men, women, children, and even pregnant women no longer stay at home: the tragic or the comic sums them all up” (Mahfouz, 1997: 46).

The classical typology of authority is defining as a power that is recognized as having legitimacy. Its status is privileged and subordinated, and all of them go hand in hand. As a result, according to Hardt and Negri, sovereignty presents two very complex definitions. Sovereign power is not an abstract and not absolute entity, but the essential concepts that are built in the relationship between power and sovereignty are given in utilizing sovereignty in the category of subject and object in power (Hardt & Negri, 2020). In this process, what is known as biopolitical production puts forward various elements of life in it, economic, social, and political. With the weakening of government

figures in the public sphere, all will feel the impact, especially the social constellation of society (Yuliastuti & Tandio, 2020).

### **Restore Sovereignty**

Dialectics created from the relationship between citizens and the state can create a hierarchical view. This view was born because the involvement of citizens in a state structure is often distant from the government. This distinction is made clear when the state, as the executor of sovereignty, abuses its authority to represent the citizens themselves. This means that people's sovereignty as a source of power to form sovereignty is gradually fused into a hierarchical construction in affirmation of sovereignty in the reins of power.

“We are a people more given to defeat than to victory. The strain that spells out despair has become deeply ingrained in us because of the countless defeats we have had to endure. We thus learned to love sad songs, tragedies, and heroes who are martyrs” (Mahfouz, 1997: 80-81).

To explain how the nation's condition when it experienced defeat, simultaneously, with the hope that the collapse would soon pass. The future with all forms of futuristic thinking seems to disappear in a classy defeat. All nations can only accept what is happening to them; despair is the right answer when that moment occurs, and hope that the warriors who defend the truth die in perfect condition.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the explanation in this article, it is explained what is said to be the construction of sovereign power has a position that often raises the face of a paradox. This can be seen when all forms of sovereign crises are present as a form of implication in maintaining sovereignty. As a form of power, in this case, politicization and social legitimacy to strengthen the position as a powerful and sovereign becomes an enigmatic condition. A condition that holds a variety of circumstances by wriggling to develop issues of power and sovereignty. Therefore, various forms of practice and discourse regarding sovereign power correspond with the systematics and structuring of citizens' lives. In addition, various forms and expressions of sovereignty are presented with figures who can problematize life by presenting sovereignty. In practice, bring up the duality of power practices based on the sequence of state sovereignty.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

This research would have been impossible without the support by Directorate of Research Universitas Gadjah Mada. We also would like to thank Dr. Aprinus salam for his comments and expert advice and encouragement this research.

### **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

We have no conflict of interest to declare

### **REFERENCES**

- Abu, A. A. (1991). *الرؤى المتغيرة إيات . ال الأولى*. Cairo: Haiat 'Amah Misriyyah.
- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford University Press.
- Alahmad, M. (n.d.). Necip Mahfuz'un “Başkan'ın Öldürüldüğü Gün” Adlı Romanındaki Karakterlerin Sanatsal Yapısı, Toplumsal ve Psikolojik Boyutları. *İlahiyat Tetkikleri Dergisi*, 45, 233–259.

- Barakat, H. (1993). *The Arab world: Society, culture, and state*. Univ of California Press.
- DeCaroli, S. (2013). Political Life: Giorgio Agamben and the Idea of Authority. *Research in Phenomenology*, 43(2), 220–242.
- Gover, D. (2013). When Cairo Exploded in the Past: The Historical Fiction of Naguib Mahfouz. *Journal of the African Literature Association*, 8(1), 39–47.
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2020). *Empire*. Harvard University Press.
- Kamil, S. (2008). Sejarah prosa imajinatif (novel) arab; dari klasik hingga kontemporer. *LiNGUA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 3(2).
- Latifi, Y. N. (2008). Kajian Kesusastraan Arab di Era Postmodernisme. *Jurnal Penelitian Agama*, 17(3), 607–630.
- Mahfouz, Naguib. 1997. *The Day The Leader Was Killed*. Trans. Malak Hashem. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Manshur, F. M. (2012). Teori Sastra Marxis Dan Aplikasinya Pada Penelitian Karya Sastra Arab Modern. *Bahasa Dan Seni: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, Dan Pengajarannya*, 40(1).
- Naem, A. D., & Janoory, L. B. (2020). The Cairo Trilogy: An Existential Reading in Three Generations of this Novel. *Budapest International Research and Critics in Linguistics and Education (BirLE) Journal*, 3(1), 1–10.
- Nijland, C. (1984). Naguib Mahfouz and Islam. An Analysis of Some Novels. *Die Welt Des Islams*, 136–155.
- Riwukore, J. R., Susanto, Y., Pilkandis, J., & Habaora, F. (2021). Analysis of Employee Performance in The Department of Education and Culture, Lubuklinggau City. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management and Education (APJME)*, 4(2), 95–109.
- Taan, H. (2020). The service quality of population document to improve community satisfaction index. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management and Education (APJME)*, 3(2), 58–66.
- Yuliastuti, I. A. N., & Tandio, D. R. (2020). Leadership style on organizational culture and good corporate governance. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management (IJABIM)*, 5(1), 23–33.