

Dystopian Egypt before the Arabian Spring: Critical Review on Ahmed Khaled Towfik's *The Knife*

MOHAMMED MOSTAFA HASSOUNA

Abstract

In Egypt, where the Arabian Spring took place through the Revolution of 25th January 2011, Egyptians exploded and that led to the overwhelming rejection towards the dystopian society they lived in for decades. Within this context, this paper presents a thematic analysis to Ahmed Khaled Towfik's novel *The Knife* where he draws a complete picture of Egyptian society before the Revolution; a society which is corrupted and where it is safer not to be seen or heard. In order to portray corruption, the characters of Elshinawi District represent different features of what it will be argued as dystopian society and types of control used by the government and the regime. Towfik depicts social, political, and economical conditions that led to the Revolution and people's hope to break the strong circle of corruption they lived in. As we will see, among different characters, he presents Nawal, who sells her body for food; Mustafa, who represents religious fanatic groups; Hussien, the young unemployed man suffering from bureaucracy; Abbas as a drug dealer who sells a lot of drugs and makes a lot of money. We also find Ibrahim, a rich man who suffers consistently from a nightmare in which he lives in destitute area, and the most important character, Afaf who is sexually assaulted by Hamasa, the gang chief of the district, and his followers. As we will see, by the end of the novel, Afaf commits suicide before the train arrives writing on the wall the word "The Knife" with the black spray.

The analysis of the above-mentioned characters in this paper aims at highlighting the fact that the people who dare to dream about the possibility of breaking through a dystopian society such as the Egyptian one, become highly oppressed. They were victimized and, in the end, they could not fulfill their dreams nor going back to their old way of life. The final scene when Essam goes to The Serga and disappears, it symbolizes what it can be called the dark tunnel where new movements, illegal parties and Muslim Brotherhood compete to dominate the whole country, while the Egyptian people are the only one suffering from loss and lassitude. In this vein, the

paper emphasizes the ethics of resistance to change the catastrophic status into better one.

Keywords: Dystopia, The Arabian Spring, Egypt's Revolution

The Revolution seeds were in all these
 In Nawal who craved a half chicken to eat
 In Hussien who tried to sell nonsense
 In Afaf who kept herself virgin as her only arm in society
 In Ibrahim who lived two lives together
 In Gamal who... (Towfik 225)

1. Introduction

Ahmed Khaled Towfik (1961- 2018) is a well-known writer whose works have been translated and published all over the world. He was born in Tanta, in the north of Cairo where he was graduated from Faculty of Medicine in 1985 and earned M.D. in 1997. He started writing at the age of 10, but his real literary career started in 1992 when he joined Arab Association Publishing Company and published his first work titled *Ma Waraa AlTabiaa* that was translated into *Beyond Nature* in 1993. He has almost 500 books carrying his name, besides articles, periodicals and web magazines as he has written regularly in like: Al-Dostoor and Rewayty.

The rich library of his father formulated his literary awareness; in his childhood he had the chance to read Mark Twain, Somerset Maugham and Tolstoy. The habit of reading foreign literatures influenced his writing style, which has been described by the Egyptian Minister of Culture as one which has "enriched culture in Egypt and the Arab World" (qtd. in Yaqoob 1) this is so as it depicts events with great reality and draws his characters. He is considered the God father of new generation who believes that his work "was a revelation" (2), a reflection of their ideas and an analysis of their world view even if he incorporated fantasy and horror elements. Despite the terrible heart attack, he faced few years before death, Towfik insists on writing for adults emphasizing "I will never stop writing for them". He stresses that, "a whole generation considers me their father, and they really made my fame and success. They grew up, but many of them still look at me as a mentor. Students occupy important roles and have prominent careers in today's Egypt" (4).

Towfik's works are not optimistic and they are full of disturbing messages about the future. He admits that he has a pessimistic and grim view of the future as society has lost morals and manners. This can be explained by the fact that, from his middle-class position, he witnessed social and financial suffering of families who had become poor when no longer able to earn their living. One of the best works Towfik wrote is *Utopia 2008* that was translated into many languages and widely accepted by millions of readers all over the world as they feel it describes their status quo. Also, he wrote:

Fantasy Series 1995, Safari series 1996, WWW 2006, and The Knife 2012, besides translating many other works into Arabic.

Towfik is one of the best writers who has written about Dystopian Egypt. Through his literary works, he warns about the explosion that had taken place through 25th Jan. Revolution. The particular work we are analyzing here, *The Knife 2012* tells the story of "Elshenawi District" as one of destitute places in Egypt with many families suffering from different problems but with one common ground: the Revolution.

2. Dystopia: An Overview

The term "Dystopia" refers to the opposite of "utopia", the term coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516's work "Utopia" describing a fictional society where justice, tolerance and morality would prevail. However, More realized that there was "a tension between the affirmation of a possibility and the negation of its fulfillment" (Vieira 6). In his *Spaces of Hope*, David Harvey explains that More created "a fertile means to explore and express a vast range of competing ideas about social relationships, moral orderings, political-economic systems, and the like" (160).

Hence, "Dystopia" is a term that refers to criticizing social and political conditions that were down as perfect or ideal; it refers to badness and injustice of society. The dystopian world is that one "describe an escape, or attempted to escape, to history...to the world of contingency, conflict and uncertainty" (Morson 128).

Dystopian literature appeared with the beginning of 20th century and increased with the materialistic society where it is believed that Utopian society is a myth. E. M. Forester is considered the pioneer of dystopian fiction with his novel *The Machine Stops* (1909). Later on, many dystopian literary works appeared like: Zamyatin's *We* (1924), Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and Orwell's *1984* (1949) all regarded as highly controversial works in the literary history.

Dystopian Fiction could thus be considered a criticism to our status quo and at the same time an invitation to establish a better society. The main themes of dystopian fiction are oppression and rebellion against oppression. It is found in big cities and capitals overwhelmed by pollution. When analyzing the characteristics of dystopian society, numerous there are: first, propaganda is used strongly to control citizens. Second, information is not available for public and only what the regime wants to spread and convey is available for all. Third, freedom of thinking is restricted, and people can't adopt different views from those of the controlling regime. Fourth, in Dystopian society citizens are always closely inspected. Fifth, personality cult is one of the common characteristics in dystopian society as people tend to celebrate a person and may be worshipping him as their savior. Sixth, the natural world to citizens is a place of suspicion and distrust; they

always have the feeling of fear and being worried about their lives. Seventh, people in such society are always afraid of unknown danger from outside, they believe that the outer world is moving against them and they are ready to sacrifice their necessary needs to push this unknown danger away. Eighth, people in dystopian society speak about cons and governmental defaults, but at the same time they believe that they can't face the dictatorship and brutality of the regime. Finally, citizens reject the idea of being a rebel and protest preferring to keep themselves as they are. (www.readwritethink.org 2006)

In his essay "Anthem Types of Dystopian Control", Popo The Gazillion explains that governments and regimes are moving in four different lines to control citizens. First, the corporate power control through products, advertising and Media that can control both the income and the mind of consumers as well. The regime controls daily used products by citizens and spend too much money to direct the public to buy such products, hence the regime guarantees the channels in which citizens spend their money and at the same time, it gains too much money and restores the salaries it pays for citizens. M. Booker gives an example:

Many of the attractions in Disney world have explicit corporate sponsorship and purvey themes that glorify corporate America. Visitors are even given the option of trading in their legal currency for special "Disney Dollars." Indeed, the park is a locus of conspicuous consumption, as visitors frantically purchase useless items...to announce their participation in the Disney economy (2-3)

The second apparatus is the bureaucratic control; the government tends to put persistent regulations, routine, and incompetent officials. I believe that such restricted regulations lead to corruption and bribery, and the whole society falls in the deep wide sea of lassitude and struggle (my own words).

Then, the third and most powerful artifact is technology, this includes, computers, smart phones, robots, and scientific inventions that turn them into technology addicts. As it is much debated, consumers are turning into worshippers of technology and they are increasingly living in the virtual world. As a result, human relations become more and more superficial. In her notes for her unpublished PhD, Margaret Atwood explains:

Dystopias, Cacotopias, anti-utopias describe 'nightmare' states where men are conditioned to obedience, freedom is eliminated, men are isolated from nature where science and technology are employed, not to enrich human life, but to maintain the state's surveillance and control of its slave citizens (Brevic 21)

The final strategy for governments is philosophical and religious control. Society is controlled by philosophical ideas of a certain leader or dictator, and other societies prefer religion or theocratic governments. To this respect, in his book *Civilization and Its Contents*, the remarkable Austrian philosopher, Sigmund Freud believes that:

Religion restricts this play of choice and adaptation, since it imposes equally on everyone its own path to the acquisition of happiness and protection from suffering. Its technique consists of depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner... by forcibly fixing them in a state of psychological infantilism and by drowning them into a mass-delusion, religion succeeds in sparing many people individual neuroses (31-32)

Through these four lanes of control, governments and regimes managed to dominate their citizens and direct them to the routes they draw to keep their control. In his novel *1984*, George Orwell concludes:

It was impossible, no doubt, to imagine a society in which wealth, in the sense of personal possessions and luxuries, should be evenly distributed, while power remained in the hands of a small privileged caste. But in practice such a society could not long remain stable. For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no function, and they would sweep it away. (90)

Orwell indicates that class division, capitalism, and political corruption will lead the suffering majority to revolt against the dominant minority that governs and controls everything.

3. *The Knife* as Dystopian Fiction

Towfik's novel *The Knife* was written and published one year after 25th Jan. 2011 revolution in Egypt that toppled President Husni Mubarak's regime. The novel is an attempt to record Egyptian social circumstances that led to the revolution.

Towfik always depends on characters as his main tool to represent the events and convey the messages to his readers, and each character represents a sector in the Egyptian society. Thus, his novels are full of major and minor characters with different attitudes and disciplines. In *The Knife*, Towfik depicts the dystopian Egypt through the characters of: Afaf (the victim), Mustafa (the barber), Hussein (the young man), Nawal (the prostitute), Ibrahim (the rich man), Abbas (the drug dealer), and Hamasa (The gang chief). Each character represents a sector in Egyptian society and reflects a dystopian feature of the regime.

The narrator of the novel is Essam Alsharkawi, an unknown writer who loves to inspect new districts and cases himself to write some novellas and literary works. He comes to the haphazard district called "Dohderat Alshinawi" to discover this vague society which government and people knew nothing about who they were, how they lived and what kind of relationships they had. In fact, Alsharkawi represents the writer himself as

one of middle-class people investigates lower class people cases and status. The district is described as a haphazard place with old lanes and disorganized cottages everywhere, men and women are selling vegetables and fruits in streets and people know each other due to the narrowness of the place. No doubt, it is a dirty place with no services and no care from government that knows nothing about them; it is a place where each one has his own life and a job, they earned their living from.

The atmosphere, the bad smell and the random buildings give a clear image of the deterioration, poverty, disregard, and destitution case of inhabitants. Those people receive no service, no education and no basic accommodation and housing; To this purpose, Towfik comments:

If you go there in the morning, you can see the pierced wall with garbage piles that become higher and higher every day... you can see narrow cottages and you can realize that those families can't keep secrets at all, their life runs through the open doors¹ (9-10)

When people of the district saw Essam, they felt he may be a member of the government, but they didn't care since not even the government can penetrate into their territory. as they are stronger than the government itself. Then, Towfik starts to introduce his characters telling the reader the story of each one of them and their sufferings. The most important character is the heroine Afaf, a young girl who was living in the district and finally committed suicide after leaving a message with her black spray on the big wall; the message carried the word "The Knife". Afaf was a victim of sexual harassment since she was a young child, but she managed to keep herself safe till the end when Hamasa and his men raped her and she decided to kill herself: "Afaf crosses the railways, Afaf doesn't look, Afaf doesn't listen, Afaf doesn't care, Afaf despises the train" (24).

Then, there is Nawal, a young woman who works as a prostitute to get food and find place where she can sleep. Like dystopian protagonists, Nawal feels herself trapped into destitution and she has no one to care for her. There is nothing she can do, no job, and nothing to sell to earn her living, so she decided to sell her body as the only thing she owned for little money or a sandwich with fizzy drink to fill her belly. Nawal represents a sector into Egyptian society who has nothing to keep them alive but being prostitutes as the government didn't provide social security for them. Those people feel they are not the response of any one and they have to take care of themselves; In this line, Essam comments: "prostitution is an underdeveloped human activity... when the hungry woman stands to cut a part of her body giving it to you for money...that is what is happening here" (126). Moreover, in an introduction to her book *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition*, Barbra Hobson emphasizes "Prostitution will always lead into a moral quagmire in democratic societies with capitalist economies...A society's response to prostitution goes to the core of how it

chooses between the rights of some persons and the protection of others.” (3). As the novel vividly portrays, the society has no rights for Nawal and her equivalents as humans who must be cared and live properly; it only gives rights to those who are looking for sexual pleasure to use Nawal’s body and harass poor people for few pennies they pay. This criminal society is interested in the rights of some people while neglecting the rights of others.

The third strategy that is used to control citizens is bureaucracy. The term bureaucracy has many explanations, but it mainly refers “an organizational structure that is characterized by many rules, standardized procedures and requirements, number of desks, meticulous division of labor and responsibility, clear hierarchies and professional, almost impersonal interactions between employees” (Mulder 1). Approving sterile legislations and captivating regulations pushes citizens to look for illegal ways to achieve their missions and get their dues. In his book *Critique of Hegel’s philosophy of Right*, the great Russian philosopher Karl Marx explains what bureaucracy does in societies and how it works:

The mind of the bureaucracy is the formal mind of the state. It therefore makes the formal mind of the state, or the real mindlessness of the state, a categorical imperative. The bureaucracy asserts itself to be the final end of the state. Because the bureaucracy makes its formal aims its content, it comes into conflict everywhere with the real aims... The bureaucracy is a circle from which no one can escape. Its hierarchy is a hierarchy of knowledge. The highest point entrusts the understanding of particulars to the lower echelons, whereas these, on the other hand, credit the highest with an understanding in regard to the universal; and thus, they deceive one another (44)

The natural result of such procedures is social and political corruption, citizen becomes in a close circle of bribery and illegal ways to finish his papers or get a job or even find a place to live in. Hence, bureaucracy is the whirl used by the regime to get citizens involved into an endless daily life struggle to guarantee their submission. To these regards, Towfik presents the character of Hussein as a young man with a small bag which contains some Chinese goods to sell. Hussein has no stable job and his main dream is to find a suitable flat to live in; he applied for a vacant flat by the government and paid the down payment waiting for customization, however he is faced with endless bureaucracy:

Three years...he paid the money...God knows how he got it... he borrowed from many people and hardly paid back...the governorate said that delivering flats has been stopped due to incomplete infrastructure...the governorate won 5000 requests with 4000 pounds down payment for each...it is strange in Egypt to struggle to get a home like the lizard looking for a crack in the wall to stay, and inside the crack you struggle to get what cats can get easier than you, marriage (70-71)

Not only was he deceived by the government, but also, he was deceived by the saleswoman while buying his food; the woman gave him a big chicken injected with water to make it heavier and to get more money. The woman's speech is so powerful and summarizing the whole situation in Egypt:

Shut up...Don't say a word...let me deceive someone else, please. Don't scream, all of us are deceived...I see in your eyes that they deceived you in the governorate, deceived you in your work, and deceived you in every place you were at...life itself is a big deception... the government deceives you all the time... You don't have service or medical care, you don't have the right to get home or to marry or to be cured...and after that you come screaming for an injected hen with water?! (74)

The strong words tempted Hussien to feel bitter frustration and he thought about the goal of his life, what was achieved so far and what he is waiting for to achieve; he burst into anger saying:

The hen is injected by water, you won't get a home, no commission at advertising company, Electricity bill is high, water counter is broken down and you pay large amounts of money, you didn't sell anything...transportations are on you... the Chinese lights are broken down...security company rejected you...you know what will you do...you'll kill (75)

Hussein's decision to kill someone as the only way to solve his problems is a serious indicator to violence in society. However, Frantz Fanon explains that sometimes violence may be positive to some people as it "frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect" (94).

Hussein decided to kill one of the officials, "he will avenge them and torture them...all of them deceive me... it is time to kill them all or even one of them to make the rest piss in their pants out of fear." (76) He accuses officials of being responsible for all his miseries and he has to get rid of them. Killing officials is nothing but an expression to the case of depression and hopelessness they caused to youth following their sterile bureaucratic rules.

As we can see, the author takes another turn explaining the disturbed relationship between people and police. Hussein continues describing the brutality of his crime and the expected savage reaction of policemen against him:

It will be strongly violent crime, shocking crime...policemen will empty their guns out of shock, rancor, and fear, and then they will get around me and kick me to death; my face will be smashed. (122)

This emphasizes that bureaucracy leads to violence that leads to police compliance on the other side. People and police are confronting each other instead of protecting each other.

Another aspect of dystopian society is explored in the novel through drug dealing activities undertaken by Abbas who is selling different kinds of drugs and gaining a fortune out of it. As Towfik states:

Like all addicts, Abbas believed that the only job in the world that can secure him much money to get more drugs is drug dealing...he was looking at the whole world throughout drugs and he swore that if he was the president, he would establish the ministry of drugs (89-90)

The world of drugs supplies citizens with whatever they can't find in their reality. Through addiction they create the utopian world they want to live in and this world continues till the effect of drug is eliminated. The drugged person lives in the kingdom of justice, happiness, tolerance and fulfilled dreams; once the effect of drugs is eliminated, he/she is ready to do anything and pay any price to get a new dose to stay in the other virtual world created for him/her by drugs.

Generally speaking, in dystopian societies people don't have independent thoughts or freedom to express themselves. Journalists are not allowed to write about everything and discuss problems of their societies. Police use all legal and illegal means to prevent information from being published. This provoked in Murad, one of Essam's friends, to assure: "there is a coming revolution...There is no doubt... anger is everywhere" (105) this is a clear prediction that restriction, surveillance and corruption lead to violence that is going to spread and the natural result is a revolution.

The author also points at class system through the character of Ibrahim. He is one of those aristocrats who had a daily repeated nightmare of living in Alshinawi District and suffering like its people. Ibrahim was suffering from Hepatitis and he died by the end of the novel despite his financial ability to pay. Ibrahim got his fortune by illegal ways and his dreams symbolize his fear from the burst of poor people whom he and his colleagues stole their money through the system of capitalism that allows rich people to be richer and poor people to be destitute. When the revolution burst out, Ibrahim was afraid of being jailed or killed by the protests, but he was lucky to die before something happened to him. The nightmare of Ibrahim carried him messages from poor class about violence and destruction: "Don't forget to fight with Attiat's husband" (111), his wife in the nightmare said. The word "fight" here refers to social violence that is spread due to the case of poverty and destitution; everyone finds in violence a way to relief himself. Towfik emphasizes: "rancor, poverty and destitution are everywhere...they are like the volcano, and the volcano must explode one day." (Ibid) the nightmare is a notification that poverty crashes people and they can't find even their life basics; people could not afford food, housing or education and without those basics, they are like the flames of volcano that burst to fire people who are dozen kilometers away.

People of both law class and middle class were against what was happening. Only few people were managing the whole country and they were leading everything; economy and political power were in their hands and they paid attention only for their own benefits, their private business, and their trade. Egyptian society was split into upper class with complete authority and law and middle class with no power at all, hence the result was a case of anger that led to the revolution.

Another character depicted is Mustafa (the Barber) who was described by the author as a religious man who seems fanatic sometimes, but due to his contradictory nature, whenever he sees a beautiful girl he forgets about religion and just admires her beauty. Mustafa loves funerals and he is always seeking their attendance; he is always nervous and believes only in his views rejecting other people's views, "Mustafa the barber fought with Gamal Alfeky. The reason? No one remembers the reason. Mustafa is a nervous man always, fighting all the time. Then, he trembles nervously and drops saliva from his mouth" (150). The author created the character of Mustafa to refer to some religious movements in Egypt represented in Muslim Brotherhood whose members believe only in their ideas and deny all opposed ideas. I have to emphasize here that Muslim Brotherhood and Sufists as well have different understanding for religion and reject any kind of discussion or analysis different from their own. Those movements use religion as opium of poor people to direct and control them.

Almost in the final third of the novel, the author declared "The Revolution exploded" (203), yet he did not speak about its details as the whole world witnessed lively what was happening in Egypt at this time. People were protesting and shouting, "People want to overthrow the regime" (205), an explosion against dystopian society of poverty, destitution, injustice, regime control, governmental negligence, corruption, bureaucracy, exploitation, suffering, religious fanaticism, and dark future. The explosion was stronger than any resistance "the paste is out of the tube, and when it is out it never comes back again even if the regime and its men pretended that it is still inside the tube" (208).

Tahrir square became a magnet to everyone expressing their anger and dictating their legal demands. There was no leader to this revolution, but all people were leaders and followers at the same time. Capturing this sense of breaking through, everyone was seeking to get rid of dystopia and change society into better one "for the first time in decades, government's spies and security guards fled...their carriage overturn and burn." (206) People decided to avenge the police as the regime tool used to control them. Those who suffered from jailing, torturing and suppression find in the revolution a relief to their pains and a compensation to what happened to them; they were prisoners of conscience and different views. The regime uses the police as the only solution to stop protests rather than listening to other opinions and try to find political solution.

Afaf was acclaiming against all obstacles destroyed her life " Afaf is poor, Afaf lives with no hope, Afaf needs house and husband, Afaf has no one to knock her door, Afaf doesn't want life" (208) The only one cares for her spiritually not sexually is Hussein and she has something inside herself that keeps Hussein different and distinguished from others.

Unfortunately, few days later the revolution took another turn and the regime insisted on restoring its power using brutal force. The police started to summon vandals and thugs to spread horror among protests pushing them to return home again. Hussein was killed by the knife of one of thugs when he decided to return to Tahrir Square again. Here is the main role of Hamasa, the gang chief, who is drawn by the author as an emperor among his followers; he has his own empire of killing, drug dealing, and breaking all laws "here is a special kind of law...it is the law of jungles that prevail such areas and it is stronger than any law in the world" (227) Hamasa and his men found the way opened through total anarchy to do their jobs properly; they only care for their work and they found a suitable atmosphere to spread their drugs and gain more money.

Afaf's hopes to achieve her goals and live in a better society evaporated with one of Hamasa's men who violated her to "The Serga", the place where Hamasa and his men assaulted her violently and sent her away. Assault here is not because they like Afaf sexually or they are looking for enjoyment, but rather it was a message to Afaf that it is a punishment against your desire to change the regime; it is a violation of her desires to have better life and society:

Afaf is done...the only thing she knew it was able to change her life was taken violently from her and spoiled...definitely rabbits meat are not able to fix her defect...there is no weight she can use to destroy Hamasa's head... she knew that she will die...she won't bear the sun of another day on her skin...but first she has to leave her final vague message (249)

The final message of Afaf is "The Knife"; it is a message to the reader that her dreams were slaughtered by the knife and the revolution failed to fulfill her goals. Hussein died, Nawal continued her prostitution, Hamasa and his men spread more drugs, and Essam realized that it is a repeated story like that one in the 70s were Egyptian people protested against President Sadat who raised prices of rice and sugar.

3. Conclusion

The above paper sheds light on the dystopian Egyptian society before 25th Jan. 2011 revolution. To do so, the author focuses on social, economic and political problems that society faced for decades before the revolution. Those problems are presented by depicting different characters which represent various sectors in the class system. As we have seen, Towfik created

the character of Afaf, the honored girl who has nothing to keep but her virgin body; but nevertheless, loses her honor by the end of the novel because of the revolution. Before committing suicide, Afaf writes with black spray on the wall the word "The Kife". The significance of this word has been explored to convey various messages to the readers and audience: first, it is the knife by which Hussien, the young guy suffering from bureaucracy and the only man who loved Afaf spiritually, was killed with. Secondly, it may be the knife by which Afaf was violated into Hamasa's zone (The Serga) to be assaulted by him and his men and to lose the only weapon she was keeping for years. The multilayered approach to the meanings of the word knife here has been intended to showcase to violence of the regime against citizens to return home and forget about their revolution. Third, the knife may refer to the weapon used by Abbas and other drug dealers to terrorize the whole district and guarantee submission. Also, the knife could be that of religious fanatics who are strict to their ideas and cannot accept the other ones. Finally, the strongest knife is that of poverty, destitution, injustice, robbery, violence, media control, and horror used by the government and the regime to guarantee their dominance over the whole society with the intention to manipulate it.

Hence, this paper aims at clarifying the case of dystopian Egyptian society before 25th Revolution and the reasons why people decided to explode against the regime. Throughout a small district that symbolizes Egyptian society at large, Towfik discusses the problems of dystopian society in Egypt emphasizing that resistance or revolution is an inevitable result in those underlying circumstances.

Aswan University, Egypt

Notes

¹ My own translation as there is no available translated version to the novel.

Works Cited

- Brevik, Marit Katrine. (2017) *The Mother, The Virgin, and The Witch- Nature and the Metaphysical Romance in Margaret Atwood's Speculative Fiction*. Published M.A. Thesis. Norway: NTNU.
<https://ntnuopen.ntnu.no/ntnu-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2459244/Masteroppgave%20Marit%20Brevik.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

- "Dystopia." *Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia*. Web. 21 Jul. 2018
- "Dystopias: Defenition and Characteristics." www.readwritethink.org 07/07/2019
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson926/DefinitionCharacteristics.Pdf
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Farrington, C.C. Translation. New York: Grove Press
- Freud, Sigmund (1961). *Civilization and Its Discontents*. In James Strachey (Ed.) New York: w.w. Norton& Company Inco.
- Harvey, D. (2000). *Spaces of Hope (Vol. 7)*. Edições Loyola.
- Hobson, Barbara M. (1990). *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and The American Reform Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marson, Gary Soul (1981). *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky's "Diary of a writer" and the traditions of literary Utopia*. Austin: Uni. of Texas.
- Marx, karl (1970). *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Translated by: Joseph O'Malley. London: Oxford Uni. Press.
- Mulder, P. (2017) *Bureaucratic Theory by Max Weber*. 22 Oct. 2018
<https://www.toolshero.com/management/bureaucratic-theory-weber/>
- Orwell, George (1984). *E-text by Roderick da Rat*.
- The Gazillionth, Popo (2017). "Anthem Types of Dystopian Control" www.prezi.com 02/02/2019
<https://prezi.com/yq-xogv97z-g/anthem-types-of-dystopian-control/>
- Towfik, Ahmed Kh. (2013). *The Knife*. Bloomsbury: Qatar Foundation Publishing www.rewayat2.com
- Vieira, F. (2010). "The concept of utopia". In G. Claeys (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature (Cambridge Companions to Literature)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.doi:10.1017/CCOL9780521886659.001. pp. 3-27
- Yaqoob, Tahira (2018). "Ahmed khaled towfik: the pioneer of Arabic Sci-fi". *The National*.
<https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/books/ahmed-khaled-towfik-the-pioneer-of-arabic-sci-fi-1.718834>. April 4, 2018. Retrieved 20 Oct. 2018