Chapter- 3

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Critical Study on *The Trilogy*

The Trilogy is the most mature work of Nobel Laureate Najib Mahfouz (1911-2006) published in 1956-1957. It describes the story of a Cairene Muslim family of the merchant class over three generations during Britain's occupation of Egypt between the two world wars. In fact, this very novel deal with the 20th centuries burning social issues of Egyptians' society like- hypocrisy, patriarchy, polygamy, adultery, drunkenness, poverty, disease, sufferings, hunger, tensions and pretensions, caste politics, inter-racial relations, tradition and modernity, and changing values of the modern civilization. Mahfouz's international fame was spread out because of his *The Trilogy.* This novel is applauded for its realism, and as Edward Said put it for being "a dutiful sociological mirror of modern Egypt."[1] *The Trilogy* depicts life in Cairo in intense detail, which earned Mahfouz his reputation as the "scribe of this teeming metropolis."[2] It is a record of the history of the emergence of modern ideological and other related national trends,[3] and a landmark in the 'evolution' of the Arabic novel.[4] According to Hamdi Sakkut, it can be ranked as the most significant work in the history of the Arabic novel.

The Trilogy contains 1,500 pages or so is considered as powerful embodiments of Mahfouz's concept of time. It is divided into three books – *Bain al- Qasrain* (Palace walk), *Qasr al- Shawq* (Palace of Desire), and *al-Sukkariyya* (Sugar Street) - covers the period from 1917 to 1944. This very novel is written on the grand scale associated with this type of novel, as established by such European masters as Balzac, Zola and Mann. It is a three-part family saga centered around the patriarchal figure of al-Sayyid Ahmad Abd

[1] Edward Said, "Cruelty of Memory", in Al-Ahram Weekly Online, 13-19 December 2001, Issue No.564.
[2] Sabry Hafiz, "Introduction", in *The Cairo Trilogy*, p.viii.
[3] Ghālī Shukrī, *Al-Muntamī, Dirāsah fī 'Adab Najīb Mahfouz*, Cairo: 1969, pp. 15-70.
[4] Taha Husayn, *Min 'adabina al-muâsir* (From our Contemporary Literature), Cairo: n.d., pp. 80-87.

al-Jawad and his family - his wife Amina, his children (three sons - Yasin, Fahmy and Kamal - and two daughters, Khadeejah and Ayshah), and eventually his grandchildren. However, it is *The Trilogy* which three parts begin and end with familial situations which involve Kamal. Mahfouz starts his *Trilogy* by presenting the milieu in which Kamal lives--its characters, places, acts and abstracts. Kamal's attitudes towards these components are gradually revealed and defined. In the beginning the social circle in which Kamal moves is confined within the household. The circle expands and multiplies progressively to involve other members of the growing 'family' which develops into a lineage. The second and third parts of the novel deal with situations created by this expansion. Most of the chapters of *Trilogy* however are related from Kamal's perspective.

It is a well-known fact that a preoccupation with time is at the centre of Mahfouz's work. This novel is about time and man and the myriad nameless things that such a story would entail. There are many lists of individual characters, individual acts, individual "folk" scenes and utterances[1] are provided. In fact, the three parts of *The Trilogy* portray the various stages of human life of a Cairene family which are- childhood period, adolescence period and adulthood or manhood period etc. Each character in the novel is perceived in a variety of roles and sets of relationships. Ahmad Abd al- Jawad, for example, is presented through his roles of father, husband, friend, playboy, etc. Amina appears as mother, wife, mother-in-law, etc. Kamal plays the roles of youngest child, son to the father, son to the mother, a brother to male siblings, a brother to female siblings, a friend, an enamoured person, a member of a social class, a maternal uncle, a brother-in-law, a thinker and so forth. A critical study of these various roles and relationships are discussed as below-

[1] Somekh, *The Changing Rhythm*, pp. 133-136.

3.1. Father, Mother and Children:-

At the outset of the novel the readers are introduced with the introduction of mother, Amina who is forty years old, of medium height and slender build. Wisp of chestnut-coloured hair escape her brown kerchief. Her tan longish face is graced with small but beautiful eyes, a fine flared nose, and a round chin, which makes her attractive despite a pitch-black mole in one cheek. She loves and is loved by her children. She respects and fears the father (her husband) whom she always addresses as "my lord" with great respect and reverence. She often acts as a go-between the children and their fearful father. Kamal is sympathetic to her especially with reference to his father's harsh and loveless treatment of her. However, Kamal is occasionally reminded of his mother's role as a representative of the terrorizing father especially when she has to resort to the father to discipline her children.[1]

The relationship between Kamal and his father is one based on respect, awe, fear and 'love'. This 'love' between father and son seems to be more of a culture value than an actual sentiment based on affectionate interaction, This type of love was subdued to stronger negative sentiments. Mahfouz describes this complex situation: As for love, every member of the household loved the father to the extent of worship, thus love for him seeped into the heart of the youngster [i.e., Kamal] due to the influence of the environment; it however, remained a gem hidden in a closed container of fear and terror.[2]

A number of detail stresses, the sentiments of fear and respect which Kamal and all his brother and sisters felt towards the father, especially concerning the father's rights to impose bodily harm. In situations where Kamal expected some reward for the cleanliness of his hands, the father instead

[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 58- 59.
[2] Ibid., 60.

repeatedly threatened to cut them off.[1] A more serious threat to Kamal's ego was his father's threat to have him gelded. The young boy took the matter seriously: "even circumcision itself [the father] used it as a tool for terrorizing him to the extent that the boy thought that it was actually possible for them to add what remained for him to what was removed."[2]

Kamal and all his brother and sisters always kept them away from the father and were pleased when they smelled his perfume in the air for it declared his departure. Kamal's actions followed in the direction of his sentiments. He moved, both physically and socially, away from his father.

3.2. Man and Their Partner:-

The description of man and their partner are revealed in the form of husband and wife throughout the novel. A marriage based on love between husband and wife was rarely noticed. Kamal's parents, Ahmad Abd al- Jawad and Amina exemplify this type of traditional relationship. The husband is the supreme and his actions are undeniable regardless of their nature.[3] For example, in *The Trilogy* it is Amina who was confined to the house by her husband. She was not allowed to counsel her husband on any issue. She kept herself busy from morning to midnight. At night she caught only few hours of sleep and woke up at mid night to wait her husband's return from his evening entertainment and served him until he went to sleep. Amina gets worried by this regular habit and one night she ventured a polite objection to her husband's coming home late. As a result of it he seized her and said authoritatively with a loud voice- 'I am a man, the absolute master, I do not accept any comment on

[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 25- 26.
[2] Ibid., 59.
[3] Ibid., 58.

my actions. You have only to obey; be careful not to make me obliged to discipline you.'[1]

Another situation arises in which Mahfouz identifies the attitudes of a husband towards his wife. Yasin, Kamal's half-brother, had an arranged marriage with Zaynab. Yasin's disappointment in marriage caused him to occasionally find towards her a revenge-like desire and on other occasions a sort of intermittent hatred.[2] Other statements reveal the less importance of a wife in husband's family. For example, Yasin thinks: "A wife is like a shoe which a man can cast off any time,"[3] Khadeejah, Kamal's elder sister, even after having given birth to two sons, still considered [her husband's family] 'strangers' to some extent. She did not "exclude even her husband,"[4] Similarly, Ayshah, the younger sister of Kamal, calls in anguish at her deceased loved ones. She names only her father and her two sons and daughter.[5]

3.3. Brother and Sister:-

Kamal had four siblings who included two brothers--Yasin, a half-brother from the father, and Fahmy, a full brother and two sisters- Khadeejah and Ayshah. The siblings were first introduced in this order according to their sex, then their age, Priority is always given to the male over the female and to the elder over the younger- a social observance in Kamal's family. As a general rule Mahfouz maintained this sequence. On a number of occasions however, the younger is mentioned before the older or the female before the male. Such cases are always indicative of the speakers own preference to one person over the other. In situations which indicated a desirable asset. Ayshah is always cited before Khadeejah.

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 8- 9.
[2] Ibid., 382.
[3] Ibid., 470.
[4] Najib Mahfouz, *Qasr al- Shawq*, 189- 90.
[5] Najib Mahfouz, *al- sukkariyya*, 266.

Kamal's siblings were sketchily introduced at the outset of events, their diverse personalities and roles are developed in a cumulative manner. Initially the brothers receive little attention. It is learnt that Yasin who held a minor job, was massively fleshy while Fahmy, the law student and the pride of the family, was of towering height and of lean body. Fahmy also except for his slenderness was an image of his father."[1] In contrast to the initial casual description of the two brothers, the two sisters, Ayshah in particular, are given a more scrutinizing description, especially with regard to their physical appearance, Khadeejah was dark and her facial features were saliently contradictory. Mahfouz continues: She was in the twentieth year of her age was strong and stout. As for her face, it had derived from the parents' features in a disharmonious manner.[2]

From the outset, Kamal's preference for Ayshah is evident. His partiality for her over Khadeejah is manifested overtly through assigning to her desirable characteristics, and covertly through the use of certain words which reveal this preference semantically. Ayshah was "gold haired," "radiating a halo of beauty and comeliness," She was "in the sixteenth of her spring, an image of exquisite beauty; she was of slender body and stature. She had a full moon face adorned by a fair complexion adorned by a reddish [i.e. rose] colour, a pair of blue eyes which she cleverly selected from the father along with the mother's tiny nose."[3] Khadeejah had influenced over her brothers due to services she rendered to them. Meanwhile for the brothers, Ayshah "seemed ... like a beautiful symbol in her comeliness, attractiveness and uselessness."[4]

The attitude of Kamal's two elder brothers towards Ayshah was similar to that of Kamal. However the relationship between each of the elder brothers and the beautiful sister does not receive the same type of attention from the author as

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 23.
[2] Ibid., 23.
[3] *Ibid.*, 34.
[4] Ibid., 24.

the relationship between her and Kamal. This emphasis on Kamal's sentiments is understandable since the novel is related from Kamal's viewpoint. Thus Mahfouz registers Kamal's awareness of the fact that "indeed Yasin talks love at her openly and whenever Fahmy speaks to her about one matter or another, he does not lack stares of admiration for her."[1] Meanwhile Khadeejah was the butt for the brother's teasing and jocular ridicule.[2]

The differences between Khadeedjah and Ayshah, as the brothers perceived and reacted to them, partly determined the type of relationship between the sisters. Mahfouz observed naturally that Khadeejah did not comprehend the differences which set her apart from her sister. On the whole, she sensed towards her feelings of jealousy. This led the beautiful young lady i.e. Ayshah to be annoyed with her most often.[3] Since Khadeejah was still unmarried, suitors for Ayshahs were turned down; this act contributed to the fostering of resentment between the two sisters. Hostility between the sisters was only briefly interrupted when Ayshah moved to her husband's home at the Shawkats. It was resumed, however, as soon as Khadeejah joined the Shawkat family through marriage to the older brother of Ayshah's husband, within the Shawkats' household the rivalry between the two sisters, always generated by Khadeejah, continued.

The relationships between the two sisters represent a set of attitudes. Khadeejah's negative attitude towards the more favoured sister, which was openly detailed, corresponds to Kamal's attitudes toward his elder brothers, which was less explicitly delineated. The influence of the two brothers on Kamal was largely negative. Kamal's perception of his brothers influenced his perception of his own physical appearance and consequently of himself in

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain* ,156.
[2] Ibid., 24.
[3] Ibid., 34.

general. He contrasts his looks to theirs and experiences a sense of physical inadequacy which was later reinforced by his school mates.

The context in which Kamal expresses this sense of physical inferiority of his two brothers is extremely important. This expression occurs as an integral part of his expressions of his love and attachment to his favoured sister. Kamal used to daydream about Ayshah. A cigarette advertisement poster served as a secondary stimulus for his fantasies about his beloved sister and himself. On his daily trip home from school, little Kamal used to pass by a cigarette shop. "He ... stopped under its billboard combing his little eyes up and down the colour poster which depicted a woman reclining on a divan, a cigarette between her crimson lips. He privately called her Ayshah because of similarities between the two of them as represented in the golden hair and the blue eyes. Although he was about ten, his admiration for the lady in the picture exceeded every estimate ... how many a time did he fantasize himself sharing her lavish life with her, [enjoying] a luxurious room ... or sitting near that beauteous girl with aspiring glances to her dreamy eyes. However, he was not as handsome as his two brothers. He was the closest in looks to his sister Khadeejah."[1]

Kamal's love and emotional attachment to Ayshah were deep. His love for his mother more importantly, for the elder sister Kahdeejah, is qualitatively different from his love for Ayshah. Thus Mahfouz states, "This mother he loves more than anything else in the world. Here is Khadeejah who is playing the role of another mother in his life ... And here is Ayshah who loved him greatly. He responded to her love with love to the extent that he would not drink a swallow of water out of the water pot without inviting her to drink ahead of him so that he would place his lips on the spot which had been wetted by the moisture of her mouth."[2] Kamal's attitude towards Ayshah and towards her characteristics is

[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 57.
[2] Ibid., 75.

very pervasive. It diffused and influenced his perceptions of numerous other persons and many aspects of his life. He, cognitively or non-cognitively, identified with Ayshah, in one measure or another, all of his romantic love experiences. Later on, he also identified his own lot in life with hers. Contrary to all other members of his family, little Kamal even liked the oppressive British soldiers because they had fair complexions, with blonde hair and blue eyes, just like Ayshah.[1]

Kamal had aspirations. During a visit to a saint, he solicits the saint's aid in achieving his goals in life. These goals are given as follows: to have freedom to play, "that Ayshah and Khadeejah remain unmarried at home forever", that the character of the father be changed, that the mother may live infinitely, that he may get enough allowance, and that all "enter Paradise without trial."[2] Kamal's aspirations did not involve his two brothers. Considering the intensity of Kamal's love for Ayshah and his desire to be close to her on one hand, and that the two elder brothers expressed similar sentiments of affection towards the same sister on the other, the development of a competitive feeling between Kamal and his two elder brothers was unavoidable. The expression of the sentiments underlying this competition is mostly achieved indirectly.

3.4. Brother's Bride and Sister's Groom:-

The mutual affection among the brother and sister represents a stable set of two relationships. The introduction of a third party who may compete with the brother or the sister for the affection of the beloved sibling creates a sense of enmity towards the intruder. For example, when Fahmy expresses interest in Maryam, the daughter of a neighbour as his future wife, Khadeejah (the sister who is closer to Fahmy in age) objects. Mahfouz observes that although Khadeejah and Maryam were friends, Khadeejah easily turned against her

[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain* , 462.
[2] Ibid., 193.

friend's heart refused to accept her as a wife for her brother."[1] Similarly, when Zaynab, Yasin's first wife, joined the household, Khadeejah viewed her with "irony and distrust, seeking defects and shortcomings in her [she] received her joining the household and winning her brother in marriage with nothing but covert distress."[2]

Likewise, the relationship between a brother and his sister's husband is largely negative. The brief, but explicit, picture which Mahfouz presents of the sister's negative attitudes towards the wife of a brother is a counterpart of the detailed and recurrent picture of the negative attitudes between Kamal and his sisters' husbands, especially Ayshah's. The marriage of Ayshah generates in Kamal feelings of 'loss, and having been betrayed. At the beginning Kamal enjoyed the festive atmosphere of the wedding which made him feel as if he were the groom of that night and because he saw Ayshah fully made up with cosmetics to a degree that he had not dreamed of before.[3] However he was particularly alarmed; "he kept on pulling his mother's hand and pointing at the bride and groom ... as if arousing her enmity and fighting spirit to ward off a horrible evil."[4] Kamal was disturbed because of Ayshah's move to that house which they have begun to call hers; this move was made in spite of him. This is also so because no one could convince him of the logic or usefulness of the move nor assure him as to when Ayshah would return to us.[5] Kamal felt that his family tricked him; thus he bitterly declares: "You have deceived me!"[6]

One experience in particular seems to have been unpleasant for Kamal. On Ayshah's wedding night Kamal informed his mother that he had spied through the keyhole on Ayshah and her groom, Khalil. In a compulsion-like

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 144.
[2] Ibid., 345- 46.
[3] Ibid., 291.
[4] Ibid., 290- 91.
[5] Ibid., 313.
[6] Ibid., 314.

manner he proceeded to relate to her: "I saw ... Ayshah and Mr. Khalil sit on the sofa while ... he kept holding her chin between his hands and he was kissing her." In spite of the painful punch that his mother dealt him, he still inquired, "Mother, why is he kissing her?" Kamal stopped his inquiry only when his mother stated, "you bring up this subject again, I will tell your father." She had advised him earlier, "If your father were to hear you, he would kill you."[1] Kamal ceased to ask about the incident, but what he experienced on the night of the wedding of his beloved sister never ceased to haunt him for the rest of his life.[2]

Kamal's traumatic experience was not limited to Ayshah's marriage and moving away. His relationship with her suffered drastic changes when she became a married woman. This change reinforced Kamal's hostile attitude towards Khalil whom he considered to be responsible for his having been deprived of Ayshah. During his first visit to his sister after her marriage, Kamal wondered aloud, "Aren't you coming back to us?" The answer came from her husband who had just entered the room, "Mr. Kamal, she will not return to your home." Kamal's reaction was that "He felt towards him rejection, avoidance and strong hatred which were about to become entrenched in his heart."[3] Kamal insisted on seeing Ayshah alone. The details of this event reveal Kamal's desire to possess his sister in a way similar to his daydream. "She thought he would be satisfied with sitting with her in the hall, but he pulled her by her hands to the bedroom and slammed the door after them to the extent that it shook violently." Once they were alone in the bedroom he scrutinized the bedding and interrogated her about where she sleeps and where her husband sleeps. He was "suspicious" and "ashamed" to ask about what he saw through the keyhole on her wedding night.[4]

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 314.
[2] Ibid., 336.
[3] Ibid., 334.
[4] *Ibid.*, 336.

Kamal's following visits to Ayshah were disappointing for during his frequent visits he was not rewarded with his old Ayshah in her stead he would find another who is made up with cosmetics. In addition, no sooner would he be alone with her than her husband--who does not leave the house--would catch up with them."[1] Considering that Kamal once was deeply gratified with Ayshah's being made up with cosmetics,[2] his new resentment of her being 'made up' may be due to her being beautified for someone other than himself. The same type of hostile feelings prevailed in a later encounter between Kamal and Ayshah's husband. Ayshah was about to give birth to her first child and Kamal was anxious. He wanted to see the child "... as it came out." Yasin advised him, "Wait until the baby is your own baby boy."[3] Little Kamal spent his day at school as "a body without a soul, his soul had wandered to Al-Sukkariyya [where his sister lived]." There Kamal sees his father and becomes "guilt-ridden".[4] The sister's husband "just as it has been customary" received him coolly. Kamal agonized over his sister's painful condition, "he, again, imagined her body folding and unfolding ..." Finally Ayshah's husband orders Kamal: "Go downstairs, kid, and play." Kamal was humiliated. "He retreated dragging his feet and embarrassed; it was too hard for him to receive this cheap reward for the agony of his waiting."[5]

Kamal was very eager for his sisters to visit their home. Mahfouz observed that Truly, Kamal was the happiest of all with his two sisters' visit whenever it came. During the visit he enjoyed profound happiness clouded only by his worrying about its anticipated end."[6] Kamal blamed his two brothers-in-law for making his happiness short-lived. The separation of Kamal from his

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 363.
[2] Ibid., 291.
[3] Ibid., 546.
[4] Ibid., 546.
[5] Ibid., 548.
[6] Ibid., 522.

mother at the end of early childhood, though he viewed it as an injustice[1] resulted in no such lasting painful experience. Kamal also would have preferred to see society rule that his brother Yasin move out of the house when he got married, but not his sister.[2] He also blamed his father and mother "for remissing in Ayshah to the extent of giving her up to others."[3]

It is significant that Mahfouz brings Kamal's childhood stage to a close with little Kamal singing:

> "Visit me [even] once a year;
>
> It is sinful [i.e. terrible injustice] to desert me completely.'

Kamal's yearning for the visit (presumably his sister's) takes place as his father comes home with the news that Fahmy, Kamal's brother, died a martyr at the hands of the British.

3.5. Adolescence Period:-

The late adolescence period of Kamal has been presented in *Qasr al-Shawq*. Kamal's social circle is somewhat larger, his world is expanded and its components are relatively diverse. Yet, the sentiments and attitudes outlined in his earlier life stage remain basically constant. Also, the structure of these components of Kamal's personality is unaltered. Kamal, now seventeen years of age and doing well in his final years in high school, is somewhat sophisticated. Against his father's wish he opts to study philosophy and become a teacher. Kamal tempers his childhood sentiments with philosophical, sometimes academic views. These views often affect the intensity but not the type of his feelings vis-à-vis the components of his world.

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain* , 79.
[2] Ibid., 328.
[3] Ibid., 294.
[4] Ibd., 498.

The patterns of interaction between Kamal and his father remain basically the same. Both Kamal and Yasin maintained airs of politeness and submission, but their hearts were free or almost free of fear."[1] Later on, however, Kamal becomes slightly rebellious; he declares: "My father is ignorant crudeness [personified], and you [mother] is ignorant tenderness. As long as I live I will remain the victim of these two opposites."[2] Kamal is determined to desert the father's home, but such a move never materializes.

Yasin receives a considerable amount of attention not only through the presentation of his sexually immoral adventures and scandalous conduct, but also through Kamal's abstract judgements of him. Kamal's feelings for his half-brother were indecisive and seemed to be a mystery for Kamal himself. He held for him true brotherly love and could not resist feeling that he was facing a tame beautiful animal. He could not avoid finding towards him a feeling of despise, tempered with sympathy and friendliness. However this feeling sometimes was not free of a sense of admiration or rather envy."[3] At this stage Kamal expresses a merely less hostile attitude towards his two brothers-in-law. For him, their manners, interests in life and their sluggish looks were truly laughable and despicable. However he balances these negative feelings with mild positive considerations; he explains: "... luckily, despise does not preclude kindness, wishing for them good fortune, and friendliness."[4] Notably love is not one of his sentiments towards these two in-laws. In another context, Kamal finds them naive and ignorant. He wonders: "How can knowledge have a value in itself for such two happy oxen?"[5]

Meanwhile, Kamal's love for his two sisters, especially Ayshah, is maintained. In their new milieu the antagonism between the two sisters

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Qasr al- Shawq*, 24.
[2] Ibid., 413.
[3] Ibid., 26.
[4] Ibid., 34- 35.
[5] Ibid., 47.

continues. Khadeejah, as she did before, persistently generates friction between herself and her sister. She even goes as far as accusing Ayshah of treachery against their mother. A strong new component is introduced into Kamal's personal life when he meets Aydah Shaddad, the sister of his friend Husayn Shaddad. Aydah is a slender, tan complexioned, French taught aristocrat. She lives with her parents, her brother and younger sister, Bodour, in a villa at the outskirts of Abbasiyyah Desert. Kamal socializes with his upper class friends including little Bodour. He falls in love with Aydah. However, she seems to have been only friendly towards him without sharing his love. She marries Hasan Saleem who is closer to her in social rank. The extent to which Ayshah has influenced Kamal's life becomes evident when Aydah's physical characteristics are always correlated in Kamal's mind with those of his sister Ayshah and far less frequently with those of the older sister Khadeejah.[1]

During a family chat, Ayshah, feeling "somewhat jealous" of Khadeejah's plumpness, states, "... slenderness is nowadays ... fashionable." The words evoke in Kamal's mind a reminiscent trend, thus Kamal's heart throbbed when the word 'slenderness' reached his ears. He scanned with his dreamy vision the faces with which he has been in love from the beginning, especially the fair complicated face from the trace of whose lips he had for a long time been infatuated with drinking water. Kamal senses the impropriety of such an act especially at his age, he recalled this memory bashfully.[2] Kamal's feelings and experiences with Aydah are also constantly measured to contrasted and often identified with his feelings and experiences with his sister Ayshah. While he was once in the garden of the Shaddads' villa waiting for his friends Husayn and Aydah, an idea which for a long time promised him happiness in such a situation as this one, occurred to him to fill a glass with water and drink it hoping that he might touch

[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Qasr al- Shawq*, 49.
[2] Ibid., 49.

with his lips a spot which her i.e. Aydah's lips might have once touched as she drank."[1]

On the night of Aydah's wedding, Kamal recalls the traumatic experience which he suffered during the night of Ayshah's wedding. He roams around Aydah's villa and converses with himself: "... do you remember that which you saw through the keyhole? Alas over the deities who roll themselves in the dust."[2] Kamal has a compulsion to go through his earlier experience. He would contently surrender what remains of his life for one glance through this window! It is not a trivial matter to see the worshipped-one during the privacy of her wedding night.[3] Just as Kamal during his childhood refused to think of his sister as a sex object, he viewed Aydah in the same manner; for him both girls were deities. The fair, plump body of a prostitute leads him to wonder how Aydah's body frequently she appears in his memory as if she had no body. Even what he can recall of her slenderness, tan complexion, and elegance rests in his soul like abstract meanings."[4] He considered her to be above marriage.[5]

Events leading to the fulfilment of Kamal's childhood desire to keep Ayshah to him forever were set in motion with Fahmy's death. They were accelerated during the latter portion of this stage of his life. He does not marry. Meanwhile Ayshah's family falls seriously ill. This leads Kamal to think. As a child how hard did he wish that Ayshah would return to her old home? Now how much does he fear that she would return disabled and broken hearted.[6] As is the case with the first and the third, Kamal's second stage in life is brought to a close with a twofold situation. Ayshah's husband and two sons die; only her already ailing beautiful daughter survives. As Kamal and Yasin receive the news

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Qasr al- Shawq*, 168.
[2] Ibid , 342
[3] Ibid , 356
[4] Najib Mahfouz, *al- Sukkariyya*, 134.
[5] Ibid., 371
[6] Najib Mahfouz, *Qasr al- Shawq*, 460

of their deaths, they also learn that Sa'd Zaghlul died. Meanwhile Yasin must go home to his wife Zannoubah who is about to give birth.

3.6. Manhood:-

The stage of manhood in Kamal's life is portrayed in *al-Sukkariyya.* The household, presented at its outset, is now composed of the two aged and often ailing parents, Kamal, Ayshah and her only child Na'ima. The old servant woman Um-Hanafi--herself a divorcee plays a secondary role. The sentiments characteristic of Kamal's behaviour founded during childhood and tempered and channelled during early youth persist through his manhood. During this phase of his life Kamal is more reflective. Even as an intellectual Kamal's philosophical readings are geared to his own personal needs and his affection for Ayshah. He reads to escape from loneliness to reconciliation himself by participating in reading about victory over desire to lessen his feelings of Ayshah's misery or to quench his heart's thirst for love[1]

Kamal's attitudes towards his three nephews and one niece are consistent with his attitudes towards his sisters and brother. His role as an affectionate maternal uncle becomes prominent, while his role as a paternal uncle is negligible. The strong attachment between Kamal and the children of his sisters began as an idea in his childhood and continued throughout the course of his life. The affectionate relationship between brother and sister produces a strong positive bond between the brother and the children of the sister. Kamal is affectionate towards his sisters' children and is flattered when the children's mother or family friends repeatedly instruct them to model after their maternal uncle i.e. Kamal himself.[2]

Karmal's exceptional feelings of love and admiration for Ayshah are extended to Na'ima, her only child. Na'ima has her mother's looks. Mahfouz

[1] Najib Mahfouz, *al- Sukkariyya*, 17- 18.
[2] Ibid , 149.

states: "Kamal's admiration for the beauteous young lady was the same as his admiration for her mother earlier."[1] Even at this mature stage Kamal regards Na'ima- as he did Ayshah and Aydah before- romantically, as an asexual being. For him she was a fistful of light and he wonders, "How can animosity have any role to play in this meek creature?"[2] He is uneasy about the idea of Na'ima's marriage to Abdul Munim. She is too dear to Kamal for any creature to get tired of her.[3] Similarly, his attitude towards Khadeejah's two sons is admiration combined with wishing to have their good qualities.[4] They are close to his heart and he continued to love them in spite of the fact that the political and philosophical inclinations of each of the two differed radically from his own.

Kamal's ambivalent feelings towards Yasin are extended to his son, Ridwan, a beautiful, conceited homosexual.[5] Ridwan studied law, and through his opportunism and homosexuality turned out to be a power broker. Contrary to his close and affectionate ties with his sister's children, Kamal viewed Ridwan in competitive terms, particularly with reference to women. Thus Kamal sorrowfully wonders about Ridwan as compared to himself during youthful time. Aydah had seen him she would have been enamoured with him. And if he were to cast a casual glance at Bodour, Aydah's sister, he would have preoccupied her with being in love with him.[6]

During this stage the relationship between Kamal and Khadeejah's husband receives less attention. With the death of Ayshah's husband, Kamal's antagonism towards his brothers-in-law is subdued. Residuals of past antagonism still linger however, Ibrahim, Khadeejah's husband, assumes Kamal is still antagonistic towards him and his deceased brother, thus he reminds

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *al- Sukkariyya*, 16.
[2] Ibid., 147.
[3] Ibid., 152.
[4] Ibid., 154.
[5] Ibid., 358- 60.
[6] Ibid., 334- 35.

Kamal: "... you used to accuse us of having stolen your two sisters and never forgave us for that."[1] Similarly, Ibrahim's casual remark about the success of Kamal's childhood friend is taken by Kamal as a bitter criticism aimed at himself personally.[2] Even when Ibrahim seriously compliments Kamal, Kamal holds the view of his brother-in-law to be ridiculous and thinks even mules occasionally pass judgement.[3]

Kamal continues to avoid his father. At the age of sixty-seven the father is ailing and must remain at home. He is totally subdued and dependent on others. He needs both his cane as well as Kamal for his weekly outing to the mosque. The father complains Kamal keeps me company in a snatching manner, just like a guest.[4] The emotional foundations underlying Kamal's attitudes towards his sister Ayshah and his sweetheart Aydah are expressed anew via another female figure- Bodour Shaddad, the younger sister of Aydah. Through these expressions the emotional continuum which links Ayshah to Aydah to Bodour is established. An associative process specifies the link among the three women in Kamal's mind. Without knowing her identity, Kamal accidentally meets Bodour. By now the Shaddads had suddenly lost their wealth and consequently the head of the family had died. The remaining members of the Shaddads now had to live simply. In spite of the non-aristocratic context in which Bodour lived she reminded him of Aydah then he found himself thinking of Ayshah[5]

Bodour is receptive to Kamal's restrained attempts to court her. In a manner typical of the middle class Egyptian youth, she arranges to accidentally run across him on the street. Kamal is convinced that Bodour marriage can be arranged with him if he were only to ask. He refuses, however, to take the decisive steps. Typically, he wishes that she would marry someone else so that

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *al- Sukkariyya* ,152.
[2] Ibid., 31.
[3] Ibid., 153.
[4] Ibid., 203.
[5] Ibid., 326.

he would be freed from his agony.[1] He finally sees her walking hand in hand with a young man in downtown Cairo. For Kamal, her companion seemed to be neither a brother of hers nor a lover.[2] He concluded that he was her husband. At their sight Kamal regresses. A toy shop which evoked in memories of his childhood functions as a secondary stimulus and a series of mental images serve here as a means by which Kamal's emotional crises is directly externalized. The contents and sequence of Kamal's regressive thoughts over his childhood are highly indicative of the cause-effect relationships between specific negative childhood experiences and his present situation. In his childhood he was not given the chance to enjoy this paradise, thus he grew up harbouring an instinct which was not satisfied and the proper time for satisfying it has elapsed.[3] Kamal senses the impropriety of that unsatisfied instinct.

The present dilemma in Kamal's life is, at least partly, a product of his traumatic experience during Ayshah's wedding and his sense of having been deceived by his parents when he lost his beloved sister. He must think twice about that agony which is lined with a mysterious pleasure. Isn't it that agony which he had tasted in Abbasiyya's Desert while gazing at the light coming through the window of Aydah's wedding chamber. Was his hesitation towards Bodour a device to push himself into a similar situation so that he may retrieve old feelings and get drunk on both their agony and pleasure together.[4] It is only natural for us to conclude here that the memory of Aydah's wedding night is associated in Kamal's mind with that of Ayshah's and Kamal himself has outlined this connection before.[5]

Kamal's lingering resentment for his father also emerges in the same regressive situation. He fantasizes himself a child again, but at the same time

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[1] Najib Mahfouz, *al- Sukkariyya* , 337.
[2] Ibid., 336.
[3] Ibid., 338.
[4] Najib Mahfouz,*Qasr al- Shawq*, 342.
[5] Najib Mahfouz, *al- Sukkariyya*, 338.

with his grown up mind. This daydreaming takes him back to his own home. He would go back to play in the house-top garden with a heart full of Aydah's or Ayshah's memories, or to go to Abbasiyya in 1914 to see Aydah playing in the garden or to address his father with a lisp and tell him that the war is going to break out in 1939 and that he the father will die after one of its air raids.

Kamal kept his sexual activities with prostitutes and his romantic love feelings completely separate. For him marriage was associated with industry and work, while love is in no way linked to marriage. The emotional continuum which leads Kamal to identify Bodour with Aydah, and Aydah with Ayshah generates this sense of guilt. He is in love but he also experiences aversive feelings at the very idea of marriage to the girl he loves. This anxiety-generating conflict is summed up in Kamal's words about Bodour, "I do love her but I hate marriage." He also more specifically senses his aversion towards marrying her; he could not resist seeing her nor could he deny his love for her nor ignore his unfair and joyful of the idea of marrying her.[1] Mahfouz also recognizes the abnormality of this situation; Kamal's intellectual friend, Riyad Quldus, diagnosed Kamal's state by telling him, "You are sick and refuse to get well."

Kamal's third stage in life is brought to a close with the scene of the mother's inevitable death within three days. Yasin and Kamal must prepare for different events. Yasin needs to shop for his expecting daughter, while Kamal needs to buy a new black tie to mourn his mother. Yasin will return to his own home while Kamal will return to the family home. Implicitly, Kamal will be returning to a home where only he and Ayshah will remain. This was his childhood dream. Both the brother and the sister have undergone drastic experiences which make their staying together socially acceptable. Kamal is aware that she lost her offspring while he lost his hopes. She amounted to

[1] Najib Mahfouz, *al- Sukkariyya* , 332.

nothing just as he amounted to nothing. Whereas her children were flesh and blood, his hopes were lies and illusions.[1]

Thus, in its entirety, the novel dealt with a situation in which a little boy loved one of his two sisters, and he competed with his elder brothers for her affection. The boy suffered from the parental and societal blocking of his want to be with his favourite sister. In spite of social and cultural changes, a stable pattern of sentiments is expressed as follows: brother-sister mutual love; sister-sister rivalry; brother-brother rivalry; child-parent(s) hostility; husband-wife hostility (or lack of love and affection); brother-sister's husband hostility; sister-brother's wife rivalry; and brother-sister's child affection.

The novel reorganizes the social situation so that the brother and sister attain a reunion under socially acceptable conditions. The plot eliminates the brother's competitors for the love of the sister. Fahmy dies a martyr; Yasin must leave home because of his scandalous conduct; the sister's husband and children die. The father and the mother die. The other sister and brother continue to live away from the original home. No situation develops which may force Kamal's two surviving siblings to return to the old home. Meanwhile Kamal fails, or refuses, to add a new member into the family's home by marriage. Finally Kamal and Ayshah end up together in their old home.

Critics have attributed numerous aspects of Mahfouz's work to foreign literary and philosophical influences. Some attribute much of the contents of *The Trilogy* to Zola's naturalist school; meanwhile others argue that the unfulfilled love which dominates the work may be an "overripe nineteenth century European romanticism."[2]

In this way, Najib Mahfouz has described the various stages of human life of a Cairene family. It can be rightly said here that Mahfouz has achieved all the

[1] Najib Mahfouz, *Bain al- Qasrain*, 328.
[2] Paz, "*The Novels* ...," 136.

perfection to portray different stages of human life along with different roles and relationship played by the family members of Ahmad Abd al- Jawad in a proper manner.

Chapter- 4