CHAPTER – II

NAGUIB MAHFOUZ: LIFE AND WORKS

LIFE:

Egyptian writer, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988, and the first Arabic writer to be so honoured. Many in the Arab World saw the prize as somewhat ironic, not least because the work for which Mahfouz received the prize had been published at least three decades earlier. Inspite of million readers in the Arab world, the authors books are still unavailable in many middle eastern countries on account of his support for president Sadat's Camp David peace treaty with Israel in 1978. Mahfouz wrote some forty novels and short story collections, 30 screen plays and many plays.[1]

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION:

"Naguib Mahfouz was born in 1911 at *Gamaliya*, in the Muslim lower middle-class in Cairo. The family lived in two popular districts of the town, in al-Jamaliyyah, from where they moved in 1924 to al-Abbasiyya then a new Cairo suburb; both have provided the back drop for many of the author's writings. His father whom Mahfouz described as having been "old fashioned", was a civil servant, and Mahfouz eventually followed in his footsteps. His mother often took him to museum and Egyptian history later became a major theme in many of his books".[2]

The 1919 revolution in Egypt had a strong affect on Mahfouz, although he was at the window he often saw English soldiers at the demonstrators, men and women, "you could say," He proclaims that the

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[1]. Bamber Gascoigne, "A Cairo Story Teller" (article), amazon.com, Times Search for Books and Literature,

[2]. Ibid.

one thing which most shook the security of my childhood was the 1919 revolution;".[3]

The most aware Mahfouz from its childhood works attest, was to remain a child of that golden of the era of the national struggle and a spiritual follower of the liberal, democratic principles of the Wafd Party which inherited the revolution in the Cairo Trilogy, Mahfouz celebrated the 1919 revolution affectionately and recreated in a great manner. And in Fountain Tomb he remembers the 1919 revolution at some considerable length. Tales 12 – 16, 18 – 19 and 23 are entirely devoted to the same out of a total of 78 episodes in which the more salient memories and impressions of the novelist's early childhood are recollected. Mirror is another semi autobiographical work where extensively personal memories of the 1919 events are recalled, though less extensively then in *Fountain and Tomb*.

It may be depicted here that the events of 1919 have been shocked the security of his childhood. His childhood appears to confirm that he grew up in a secured and stable family environment nor did his immediate family seemed to be directly affected by the public dreams of 1919 in any calamitous way.

His childhood observations and experiences in Jamaliyya were not, however confined to the local seen, for in 1919 when the author was only 7 years old, the quarter with the rest of the country, was engulfed in a popular uprising against the British. It was in those days that the author probably first came to experience the meaning of nationalist feeling. The atmosphere around him was one which inspired the love of parents and

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[3]. Rashed al Enani, Naguib Mahfouz, The Pursuit of Meaning Routledge, London and New York, 1993, p. 4

family. The family was a basic, almost sacred, value of his childhood, he was not one of those who rebelled against their parents or rejected their authority. [4] The respect for the authority to his family, moderation and preference for gradual political and social reform, rather then outside revolution – all of with are values which clearly emerge from the totality of the political themes in his work. His childhood was normal, as he brought up in a solid cohesive family undisturbed by the various ills; he was associated with broken home. His parents ware happily married, whom he loved much. His father, who died in 1937, was a strict Muslim, who asserted him patriarchal authority, and the home's atmosphere was strongly religious. Yet this normal childhood was marred by a light and temporary attack of epilepsy, from which Mahfouz quickly recovered.[5]

The religious lifestyle was an important value in Mahfouz's family where culture was absent; 'you would not have thought' he tells an interviewer, 'that an artist would emerge from that family'. Mahfouz painfully fails to elaborate on what he calls 'the purely religious climate at home' [6] during his childhood. On what it was like and what his response to it was he leaves us totally in the dark. To answer these questions we have to go to Kamal in The Trilogy where gradual disenchantment with religion is described at great length. It is interesting to note here that, while the value of nationalism (in which were also embedded the values of liberalism and democracy) was not that he nurtured and upheld all his life, that of organized, prescribed religion was one which he was to question and finally reject as he reached intellectual maturity. His mother was of somewhat nervous temperament and that there was little that she shared with the character of Amina in The

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4. Naguib Mahfouz, Atahaddath Ilaykum, Beirut: Dar al- 'Awda, 1977, p. 80.
5. Jamal al-Ghitani, Naguib Mahfouz Yatadhakkar, 3rd edition, Cairo, Mu'assasat Akhbar al- Yawm, 1987, p. 45
6. ibid., p. 79.

Mahfouz's schooling was in state supported schools, and his good performance in them enabled him to be among the tiny minority who gained entry to the Egyptian University, where he studied philosophy, graduating in 1934 and even registered for Ph.D. to study Sufism in Islamic Philosophy, but he abandoned this academic endeavor and embarks on a career of literary creativity. Yet philosophical ideas and Sufi preoccupation purveyed his literary work.

While studying philosophy Naguib Mahfouz was attracted to literature and in an attempt to reconcile these two interests he considered writing a Master's thesis in Aesthetics, "the philosophy study closest to literature".[9] Driven by his interest in the arts he even enrolled at the Institute of Arabic Music and learned to play the *qanun.*[10] But this undecided state of mind was resolved when he decided to give up the study of philosophy and follow his literary impulse.

The youngest child in the family laments that he spent most of his childhood alone, deprived of the companionship of his two brothers and four sisters, who started career, married, and left home while he was growing up. Much younger than his siblings, he looked upon them as if any were his parents. He says that he never had the joy of playing with them, going with them for a walk, or confiding his secrets to them. This led Mahfouz to seek friends among the children of the neighborhood. He says he always liked to watch those of his friends who were brothers in order to see how they related and reacted to each other. Would they love each other, beat each other, or gang up against other children?[11]

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[9]. Fuad Dawwara: with Naguib Mahfouz on his Golden Jublee, al-Katib, No – 22, Jauary 1963, p. 11.

[10]. Dawwara, ibid., p. 9 (The qanun is a stringed musical instrument).

[11]. Abd al-Tawwab Abd al-Hayy, "Asir Hayati", 126-34.

The young Mahfouz heard much about Egyptian nationalism from his father, a patriot who revered the names of leaders like Mustafa Kamil, Muhammed Farid, and Sa'd Zaghlul, Mahfouz says that his father talked constantly and enthusiastically about these men, whom he regarded as heroes for defying the British authorities. Like many Egyptian men of his time, and the elder Mahfouz and took politics seriously and talked about different politicians as if they were personal enemies or friends.

As did many Muslim children Mahfouz began his formal education learning the recitation of the *Quran* by a certain Shaykh al-Buhairi. Afterward, he attended the *Hussainiyya* Elementary school and the Fuad-I High School. He was a diligent student, proficient in the Arabic language, history, and mathematics, but week in foreign languages. In order to gain proficiency in English, he undertook the translation of James Baikie's book Ancient Egypt into Arabic. The translation was published in 1932 under the title of *Misr al-Qadima* through the efforts of Salama Musa.[12]

Mahfouz was also active in sports, and Soccer was his favourate game. According to a friend from his youth, Adham Rajab, M.D., Mahfouz was a remarkable speedy Soccer player. He also had a tremendous sense of humor. In the later 1920s, says Rajab, Mahfouz went with some companions to the old Fishawi Coffeehouse, where men of humor exchanged jokes, some of which are off colour. Mahfouz overwhelmed them with his quick and extemporaneous will, making them appear ridiculous; sometimes he would confront latently of these joke tellers simultaneously and silence all of them. He was so adept at telling spontaneous jokes that his rivals could not help laughing at themselves. While in high school, Mahfouz founded a society for the protection of morality. Its objectives were to instill moral principles in the students and

[12] . Jamal al-Ghitani, *Naguib Mahfouz Yatadhakkar*, Cairo, Akbar al-Yawm, 1987, p. 9 and 14-15

combat the use of foul language. The society was short-lives, however, because Mahfouz found himself using foul language to fight those students who opposed him and his society.[13]

Coffeehouse, like al-Fishawi were part of Mahfouz's daily life, places were he could enjoy some relation by smoking water pie, drinking coffee, and reading newspapers and meet regularly with several intimate friends, one of whom, Ahmed Muzhir, named their group al-Harafish. This term used by the eighteenth century Egyptian historian Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, means "common people". These Harafish met weakly in different coffeehouses they continued to meet every Thursday evening, at Casino Qasr al-Nil. It is said that Mahfouz always brought a kilogram of kabab (grilled meat on skewers) to these gatherings. He always sat in the same chair, ever happy and full of laughter.[14] It was at these meetings that one of the groups, Salah Abu Sayf, discovered Mahfouz's ability to write screenplays. Thus, Mahfouz began writing scenarios for many movies, including those based on some of his novels. Mahfouz, who is known for his loyalty among his friends, has maintained ties with the group to the last period of his life.[15]

In his early teens, Mahfouz began reading western detective stories translated into Arabic. He also enjoyed watching adventure movies and was fascinated by the heroism of some of their characters. In the meantime, he read the sentimental writings and western adaptations of Mustafa Lutfi al-Monfaluti and Arabic translations of western historical novels.

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[13] . Adham Rajab, "Safahat Majhula min Hayat Naguib Mahfouz", pp. 92-99.
[14] . ibid. pp
[15] . Muhammad Afifi, "Naguib Mahfouz Rajul al-Sa'a", 1970, p. 137-41

BEGINNING OF HIS WORKS:

Before his graduation he began publishing articles on the history of Greek philosophy in the short-lived monthly magazine al-Ma'rifa, owned by 'abd al-Aziz al Istambuli. These articles are not distinguished by any intellectual insight or breadth of knowledge.[16] But they certainly show a fluent Arabic style and lucidity of expression. By 1936, having spent a year on an MA, he decided to become a professional writer; Mahfouz worked as a journalist at *al-Resala*. The major Egyptian influence on Mahfouz's thoughts of science and socialism in the 1930s was Salama Moosa the Fabian intellectual.[17]

Though Naguib Mahfouz began his writings in college life, but these first efforts were not publishable. Through the 'star' of his writing life, Salama Moosa, (who acted as a senior friend and advisor to the author) however, he eventually had several historical novels published[18] Mahfouz relates how this happened. During one of his visits to the office of the magazine *al-Majallah al-Jadidah*, Moosa asked him whether he thought that there was a chance for the novel to succeed in Egypt.

As Moosa believed that since most Egyptian fiction writers were influenced by western ideas and techniques, it would be difficult to produce a genuine Egyptian novel. Perhaps, he thought, a student from the *Azhar* could write an authentic Egyptian novel, because Azharite students were not influenced by western culture. Mahfouz responded that although the novel in Egypt was still in its infancy, he himself had

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[16]. Muhammad Afifi. ibid. p. 7.

[17]. Robert D. McF Adden, Naguib Mahfouz in 2002, published in 31st Aug 2006, www.amazonbooks.com

[18]. M.M. Badawi: A Short History of Arabic Literature, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, p.136.

ventured into the genre. Surprised Moosa asked him whether he really wrote novels; Mahfouz answered that he did. Had they been published? No, he replied, adding that he was not sure that they were worthy of publication. Moosa asked him to bring them along with him on the next visit. Mahfouz brought the three novels, one of which was entitled *Ahlam al-Qarya* (Village Dreams). After reading them Moosa opined that the novels were not worthy to publish. Mossa encouraged him to modify them and he did. He found his subject matter in the ancient history of Egypt, which he says, he aspired to recreate in fictional form as Sir Walter Scott had done with the history of his country. For that he projected forty themes, for historical grounds, he did not as he became more interested in social realism. When he presented the historical novel entitled *Hikmat Khufu* (The Wisdom of Cheops). Moosa suggested Mahfouz to change the title into *Abath al-Aqdar* (The Ironics/Mockary/Game of fates) and published it as a separate issue of *al-Mujallah al-Jadidah* in September 1939, followed Rhodopis (*Radobis*) 1943, and *Kifahu Theba* (The Thebe's Struggle, 1944).[19]

In the mid-thirties Mahfouz took part-time work with the university administration, ultimately dropped out of his degree program and embarked upon a career in the Egyptian bureaucracy. In 1939 he was transferred to the ministry of endowment estates, where he worked until 1959. In that year, already a writer of note, he was transferred to the Administration of Arts (*maslahat al-funun*) where he was concerned with book publication and film production. His last appointment which he held until his retirement was that of counselor to the Minister of Culture for Cinematic Affairs. He retired from government service in 1971,[20]

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[19]. Marcel Proust, Naguib Pasha Mahfouz: The Egyptian Novelist, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, http//:counterpunch.org/Mahfouz.html

[20]. *Sabbah al-Khayr*, al-Wusta, Sudan, August 31, 1972.

concluding 37 years of service as a government official. Looking forward to his retirement Naguib Mahfouz said that this would enable him to do what he had desired all his life to dedicate himself to his literary work.[21]

For most of his lengthy working career he served with the Ministry of Wakfs, the body overseeing the pious Muslim foundations, but in later years he held important positions with the institutions controlling film industry.

Considering the wealth of his literary production, many volumes to date, it seems that these official duties have not been much of an obstacle to Mahfouz's literary activities. But a note of dissatisfaction with his own works or with the situation of a life time, seems to be discernable when he says: "people call it (my work) Literature, but I call it 'literature of government official's," [22] it would be reasonable to guess that primarily because of financial considerations he spent his lifetime doing what he apparently would have preferred not to do, namely work for the government. He had faced financial and health troubles.[23]

The first of these two anxieties was removed with his last high ranking appointment in the Government. But the other, unfortunately, has been a more difficult problem and in 1954, after he married, he discovered that he was diabetic. Disappointing as this must have been to him.

For most of his adult life he dwelt with his mother who lived to be a centenarian, and at approximately the age of forty he married, apparently for the first and only time, a woman of poor and traditional

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[21] ibid., pp

[22] This term is used by Naguib Mahfouz publicly in a talk with *Yusuf al-Sharuni*, published in *al-Majallat al-Idha'a*, December 21, 1957

[23] Dawwara, ibid , p 23

background. His wife, however, is for some reason confined to obscurity. The very fact of their marriage was kept secret from the public for several years, and the identity of Mrs. Mahfouz is still undisclosed. The reason the author gave for not announcing the marriage is not only characteristics of the man but indicative of his cultural milieu, which maintains the sanctity of the *haram*. He said that he preferred his private life not to be the concern of the public. They have two daughters, whom he was proud to show in public, they have shared their parent's modest apartment in Cairo.

Mahfouz is a man of habit and discipline. He has demonstrated little desire for experience outside Egypt; he has traveled abroad only very briefly for trips to Yugoslavia, Yemen, both in the early sic tics on government sponsored missions and once to England for surgery.[24]

A Fruitful Life for the Arab World:

His fruitful span of life is not only a period of great change in the intellectual life of his country. It was not only a time of developing national pride but also of intellectual discovery. Many newspapers and journals were for the first time now available in Arabic, and these were for the expression of every kind of opinion and belief: they were also the medium through which English literary forms were beginning to find their way into his national culture, through the translation and imitation of prose fiction, both long and short.

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[24]. Article dated 31 August 2006 from The Independent: "Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz dies aged 94".

To Arab readers Mahfouz does in fact have a distinctive voice, which displays a remarkable mastery of language yet does not call attention to itself. I shall try to depict in what follows that has a decidedly Catholic and, in a way, overbearing view of his country, and, like an emperor surveying his realm, he feels capable of summing up, judging and shaping it long history and complex position as one of the worlds oldest, most fascinating and coveted prizes for conquerors like Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, as well as its own natives.

He has been characterized since he became a recognized world celebrity as either a social realist in the mode of Balzac, Galsworthy, and Zola or fabulist straight out of the Arabian Nights (as the view taken by M Coetzee in his disappointing characterization of Mahfouz).[25] It is closer to the truth to see him, as the Labanise novelist *Elias Khoury* has suggested, as providing in his novels a kind history of the novel form, from historical fiction to the romance, Saga and picaresque tale, followed by work in realist, modernist, naturalist, symbolist and modest.

Moreover, despite his transparent manner Mahfouz is dauntingly sophisticated not only as an Arabic stylist but as a brilliant student of social process and epistemology – that is the way people know their experiences without equal in his part of the world, and probably else where for that matter. The realistic novels, on which his fame rests, for from being only a dutiful sociological mirror of modern Egypt, are also very daring attempts to reveal the highly concrete way power is actually deployed. That power can derive from the divine, as in his parable Awladu Haratna of 1959.

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[25] . Bomber Casoigne, Naguib Mahfouz's Egypt, www. Times Search for Books and Literature.

According to a leading Egyptian critic, the uniqueness of Naguib Mahfouz lies in two features of his literary work. One is his complete dedication to pure literature; the second is the ever-changing style and form of his writing. Few Egyptian writers restrict themselves so meticulously to literary work, to the exclusion of any journalistic or contemplative writings. The writer in Egypt, by virtue of his skill, is more or less expected to participate in all these ancillary literary activities. Thus, Naguib Mahfouz's careful abstention is conspicuous. That of constant change in the form of his writings is of grater significance in terms of his literary contribution. Beginning with romantic historical novels he later turned to realistic writing, concerning himself with the immediate present and his immediate vicinity. It is through this writing that he has become well-known and admires in Arabic-speaking Lands. In his next phase he turned to what he called "new realistic writing." This is "a kind of realistic writing that has none of the distinctive marks of traditional realism, which aims at portraying a complete picture of life. New-realism leaves behind elaborate detailing and characterization. This is a development both of form and content." The motive for writing in this way, as defined by Naguib Mahfouz himself, is to give vent to "specific thoughts and emotions which turn to reality only to use it as a means of self expression; to give expression to ideational content through the use of a completely realistic phenomenon.[26]

Development of His Thought:

During 1925 -26 Mahfouz began to compose Arabic poetry, following, traditional meters and rhyme. But he discovered it was difficult to achieve perfect rhymes and decided to break away from the rigid traditional form. He began composing free verse and credits himself

[26] Yusuf al-Sharuni, Dirasat fi riwaya wa-al-qissa al-qasira, Cairo, 1967, p. 22.

with being the pioneer of the Arabic free verse movement.[27] But he never neglected to read major Arabic classics such as *al-Bayan wa al-Tabvin* (The Book of Eloquence and Exposition), by *al-Tahir*, and *al-Iqd al-Farid* (The Unique Necklace), by Ibn Abd Rabbih. In the 1930's Mahfouz began reading the works of prominent Egyptian writers like Taha Hussain, Tawfiq al-Hakim, Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad, Muhammed Hussain Hykal, and Ibrahim Abdul Qadir al-Mazini and lesser-known writers like Yahya Haqqi and Mahmud Timur. He must have been greatly impressed by Hussain's autobiographical novel *al-Ayyam* (The Stream of Days), which he calls "my story written according to Taha Hussain's manner."[28] But more than any other Egyptian book, two works by al-Hakim, *Awdat al-Ruh* (The Return of the Spirit) and *Yawmiyyat Na'ib fi al-Aryaf* (The Diaries of an Inspector in the country), left an indelible imprint on his mind. Their influence especially in arousing the ancient Egyptian spirit, which at Hakim thought had been resurrected in the revolution of 1919, and be seen in Mahfouz's historical novels.[29]

It would be interesting to know Mahfouz's thoughts in later years about his early reading and its impact on his writing interviewed by Sabri Hafiz in 1973, Mahfouz mentioned the western writers who had most influenced him. To him Shakespeare, whom he loved dearly, was like a dear friend talking to him in the coffeehouse. His majestic ideas and humor were so blended with Mahfouz's soul that he could say, "I felt that Shakespeare was the son of my own country, not of another." After Shakespeare he liked Ibsen and Strindberg, but he was unenthusiastic abut the theatrical works of Chekhov, which he found sluggish and being.

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[27] . Matti, Moosa, The Early Novels of Naguib Mahfouz: Images of Modern Egypt, Gainesville, Florida University Press of Florida, 1989, p. 4.

[28] Sabri Hafiz,"Naguib Mahfouz: Masadir wa Mukawwinat Tajribatih al-Ibda'iyya", in the anthology *Naguib Mahfouz Atahaddath Ilaykum*, 78-82, first published in *al-Adab*, 1973, p 34-44

[29] Sabri Hafiz, ibid. pp

He was fascinated by Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, whose broad and comprehensive outlook on life affected his late novels. He also liked Proust and Kafka but claims he found Joyce unpalatable, considering his ideas and style on experiment that requires meticulous exploration. "what crazy man." Mahfouz comments, "is able to read Ulysses? It is an awful novel. Nevertheless, it has created a trend. It is like the one who points to love, but asks those desire to attain it to use their own way".[30] Mahfouz serves most of his praise for Melville's Moby Dick, which he considers perhaps the greatest novel in the world. Although Hemingway and Dos Passos were fine writers, he says, their work could not reach its level. Mahfouz notes that he did not like Faulkner, considering him unnecessary complex.

In sum, Mahfouz says that in one way or another he was influenced by these western and their works. In writing his novels, he used such diverse techniques as internal monologue, naturalism, and realism, but with modifications.[31] Realism was not his favorite technique, and he chose it courageously after some deliberation. Mahfouz notes that Virginia Wood had attacked the realistic technique, saying European novels were overstated with it. But realism was not known in Egypt or the Arab world, and Mahfouz felt eager to use it. If he had not done so, he would have been merely one among many writers who followed what he calls "modern" technique.[32] In many of his novels, he uses situations and characters drawn from real life. In *Khan al-Khalili*, for instance, the character Ahmed Akif is based on a real person of that name. The protagonist of *al-Sarab, Kamil Ruba Laz*, is actually Hussayn Badr al-

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[30] Mahmud Barakat, "*Hawla masrah Najib Mahfuz*," (On the Theatrical Works of Najib Mahfuz), *al-Hilal*, February 1970, p.202.

[31] Sasson Somekh, *The Changing Rhythm A Study of Naguib Mahfouz's Novels*, Leiden: E J Brill, 1973, p. 42

[32] Hashim al-Nahhas, Najib Mahfus ala al-shasha, Cairo, 1975, p 184

Din, a law school graduate. The central figure of *al-Liss wa al-Kilab* (The Thief and the Dogs), Said Mihran, symbolizes the notorious thief Mahmud Sulayman, who was sought by the police for his crimes. And Mahmud states that *Bidaya wa Nihaya* (The beginning and the End) is based on the actual story of a family he had known. The story of this family had happy outcome, says Mahfouz, but he preferred to end it with a tragedy in order to arouse the sentiments of the readers. Likewise, his vignette "*Hannan Mustafa*" is said to be based on the true story of his first love for the young woman of that name. We can thus readily understood why Mahfouz did not like Faulkner and Joyce; they did not suit his taste for realism because Faulkner was a myth maker and Joyce was a symbolist. He felt more comfortable with Galsworthy, Dos Passos, and Thomas Mann.

Mahfouz began his literary career while still a high school student, writing essays on different subjects in philosophy and literature. He also wrote short stories. He seemed to favour writing about philosophy, but he never neglected writing short stories. His interest in philosophy led him to seek a government scholarship to further his study in France. Mahfouz's inclination towards philosophy was the dissertation he chose for his master's degree, entitled "*Mafhum al-Jamal fi al-Falsafa al-Islamiyya*" (The Concept of Aesthetics in Islamic Philosophy), under the Islamologist *al-Shaykh Mustafa Abd al-Raziq*. He collected the necessary sources to write this dissertation for two years, but he did not complete the project.[33]

For many years Mahfouz experienced a mordant conflict over the choice between philosophy and literature until finally he opted for

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[33] . Matti Moosa, The Early Novels of Naguib Mahfouz: Images of Modern Egypt, Gainesvill Florida, University Press of Florida, 1994, p. 7.

literature, specifically the writing of fiction. That he chose philosophy first and then switched to fiction shows not only the perplexed state of mind of a young man trying to make his way through a literary world dominated by towering writers like al-Manfaluti, Hussayn, al-Aqqad, al-Mazini and others, but also the whole intellectual ambience of Egypt in the 1930s, when Mahfouz began writing.

In several interviews Mahfouz has revealed his reasons for choosing at first to write on philosophical topics. Studying, philosophy for several years, he says, had encouraged his affinity for it. He also had concluded that philosophy was more important than literary genres like fiction because it had a definite and concrete objective, the quest for truth, while fiction was meant only to and entertain. In other words, young Mahfouz was seeking a pragmatic objective to which he would devote his life and pen. To him, writing fiction was for idealist and dreamers, not for practical men who strove not only to transform society but to make a descent living as well. He also realized that his countrymen were more inclined toward politics than toward literature, including fiction. They held fiction writing in law esteem; some of them considered such activity a mater of shame, not pride. Mahfouz admits that when some of his early short stories appeared in periodicals like *al-Resala* and *al-Riwaya*, he denied authorship in order to escape the ridicule of his friends.[34]

Another reason for Mahfouz's vacillation between philosophy and literature is, he says, that many of his early short stories were rejected, while his articles on philosophical themes were accepted for publication. This convinced his that the reading public was more interested in serious subjects than in fiction. The conflict between philosophy and literature continued to obsess him until he finally reached a point where he has to

[34]. Interview with Juri Tarabishi in Anwal, 31 March 1989, pp. 15, 21.

choose between them. He decided in favour of fiction after his short stories began to be unreservedly accepted for publication, a fact that convinced him the reading public had become more appreciative of fiction.[35]

But when did Mahfouz discovered that he had a literary talent, and whom first alerted him to it, he was his closed friend Adham Rajab, himself a voracious reader, who introduced him to modern English literature and gave his free access to his own substantial library. Two years after his graduation from college in 1934, Mahfouz decided that he was a writer and devoted himself to that calling.[36]

Although he eventually opted for fiction, he spend the years from 1930 to 1945 writing mostly essays, and his first short story Anthology, *Hams al-Junun* (The Whisper of Madness), did not appear until 1938. But his various articles on philosophy are worth nothing, because traces of philosophical concepts can be detected in many of his novels and short stories.

According to the critics the first Mahfouz's philosophical articles was "*Ihtidar Mu'taqadat wa Tawallud Mutaqadat*" (The Death and Birth of Doctrines) which Salama Musa published in October 1930 in his periodical *al-Mujallah al-Jadiah*. In it he states that life is subject to constant change and evolution, and such change is inevitable and in itself a necessary evil. Given the choice between change and permanence, he would definitely choose permanence, which is conductive to the tranquility of the soul and clearly preferable to the frightful results of change that a fact life and civilization. Nonetheless, we should not lament

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[35] . Matti Moosa, The Early Novels of Naguib Mahfouz: Images of Modern Egypt, Gainesvill Florida, University Press of Florida, 1994, p.8.

[36] . ibid. pp.

that constant change spells the end of time-honoured concepts but accept it as the natural result of human civilization, the true criterion of the evolution and progress of the intellect.

SOME OF HIS SELECTIVE WORKS:

After Thebe's Struggle, Naguib Mahfouz's next work is *Khan al-Khalili* (1994) began a series of eight novels in which he emerged as the master par excellence of the Egyptian realistic novel, the chronicler of twentieth-century Egypt, and it's most vocal social and political conscience. With titles taken from the names of streets of old Cairo, the novels offer a panoramic vista of the Egyptian lower and lower-middle classes, with the minute details of their daily lives vividly and lovingly portrayed. Unlike Lawrence Durrel's Alexandria, Mahfouz's Cairo has more than mere romantic imaginative vividly: it is a recognizable physical presence. Its powerful impact upon the lives of characters is as memorable as that of Dickens's London, Dostoevsky's St Petersburg, or Zola's *Paris*.

His earlier novels ***Khan al-Khalili*** (1945), *al-Qahira al-Jadida* (New Cairo, 1946), *Zuqaq al-Midaqq* (published in 1947 and translated into English as Midaq Alley), and *Bidaya wa Nihaya* (1951, translated as The Beginning and the End) deal in the main with the pressures and drama of life in Egypt shortly before and during the second World War. *Khan al Kahlili* is a sensitive of a middle-class family, whose hopes of happiness slowly fade away, ending in death and sorrow, thus rendering utterly pointless the enormous sacrifices made by the pathetic middle-aged breadwinner Ahmed Akif. *New Cairo* traces the fortunes of three philosophy graduates of Cairo university: Ali Taha, a secular who believes in science and socialism, Mamun Ridwan, a devote Muslim, and Mahjub Abd al-Dayim, a self-centered nihilist. The novel concentrates on Mahjub, who is driven by poverty to accept employment in return for agreeing to many the mistress of his boss, who continues his relationship with her. Although at first the future looks rosy and he obtains a

promotion, they both soon come to end when their arrangement is uncovered in a scandal. *New Cairo* paints a new gloomy picture of a changing society suffering from moral political corruption and desperately searching for values.[37]

His another novel, ***Midaq Alley***, (published in 1947), takes us back to the streets and folk of old Cairo that he introduced us to earlier in *Khan al-Khalili*. The country is still in the grip of World War II, though at more developed stage than that shown in *Khan al-Khalili*. Textual evidence suggests late 1944 or early 1945. The War actually ends during the course of the action of the novel. *Midaq Alley* is in a sense the inversation of the metaphor created by *Khan al-Khalili* .The latter showed us the vanity of seeking refuge in the past from the threat of the new. *Midaq Aley*, in contrast, reveals to us the horrors attendant of both is shown to be calamitous. Torn between past and present, the modern Egyptian seems to stand paralyzed without a future, and the pessimism expressed in *Khan al-Khalili* is enlarged to the point of desperation in *Midaq Alley*.[38]

In ***Mirrage*** (*Al-Sarab*, 1948) Mahfouz takes a momentary break from old Cairo with its seedy streets to pay a visit to *al-Manyal*, a decent middle-class area in the south-west of the capital. With the change of habit there comes naturally a change in the inhabitants: none of he poor company of *Midaq Alley* here, but a wealthy family of *Turish* decent. Unlike in *Khan al-Khalili* and *Midaq Alley,* the war has no part here to play and we are back at some undefined point in the 1930s.[39] But above all our attention diverted from society to psyche – Mahfouz here appears to be concerned with the representation of psychological rather than physical or naturalistic reality. In the process of doing so he vacates his

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[37] . A Short History of Mdern Arabic Literature, *M.M.Badawi*, Clerendon Press, Oxford, 1993, p. 138.
[38] . Interview in Majallat al-Katib al-Arabi, July 1970, p.36: quoted in A.T. Badr, p. 152.
[39] . ibid. p. 369 - 71

hitherto habitual position of omniscient narrator and hands us over to his protagonist Kamil Ru'ba La'z, total his own story and to reveal to us other characters from his solitary point of view.

Another incredible work of Naguib Mahfouz is **The Beginning and the End** (*Bidaya wa Nihaya,* 1949) is set in the Cairo of the mid 1930s, and more particularly in the poor parts of the old suburb of Shubra.[40] The novel brings a depth of vision and a mastery of technique, hitherto lacking in the work of Mahfouz to concerns already familiar from his four previous novels. Fate, whose supreme role in the world of Mahfouz has been established, if some hot crudely, in his first novel, *The Game of Fates*, and whose deadly blows have afflicted Rushdi Akif in *Khan al-Khalili and Abbas al-Hulw* in *Midaq Alley,* is here crowned as unrivalled lord over the life and aspirations of mankind, a force which, in the words of one character, "grinds and devours" its victims. The whimsical acts of fate start just before the beginning of the action by snatching away the life of the head of the lower-middle class family whose fortunes constitute the subject-matter of the book.

Mahfouz's central work and realistic art which reached him its pinnacle of success it is ***al-Thulathia*** (Trilogy, published in 1956 - 57). Its an immense monumental work of 1,500 pages, which the author completed before the July Revolution. The novels were titled with the street names *Palace Walk*, *Palace of Desire*, and *Sugar Street*. Mahfouz set the story in the parts of Cairo where he grew up. They depict the life of the patriarch al-Sayyid Ahmed Abd al – Jawwad and his family over three generations in Cairo from World War I to 1950s, when king Farouk I was overthrown. With its rich variety of characters and psychological understanding, the work connected Mahfouz to such authors a Balzac,

[40]. ibid p. 52, 275.

Dickens, Tolstoy and Galsworthy. Mahfouz caused to write for some years after finishing the trilogy. Disappointed in the Nasser regime, which had overthrown the monarchy in 1952, he started publishing again in 1959, now prolifically pouring out novels, short stories journalism, memories, essays, and screenplays.

The Trilogy (*Al-Thulathiyya*) is a powerful embodiment of Mahfouz's concept of time expounded above. At the end of the 28 – year period spanned by the novel, the members of the Abd al-Jawwad family are in a poor state indeed, their fortunes ranging from shattered hopes (Kamal) and death-in-life (Aisha) to actual death (Fahmi). Conversely, the society to which these victims of time belong is seen at the end to be in much better shape than it was at the beginning: Egypt has survived two world wars partly fought on its soil and a revolution brutally put down by a great colonial power, has gained partial independence, and the national struggle which in Fahmi's generation had been limited to the issues of independence and constitutional government has been widened in Ahmad Shawkat's generation to include the issue of social justice as well. Thus while Fahmi, who was killed in the revolution, has been decaying in his grave for twenty-six years, Egypt has been steadily progressing on the course he and many other individuals died for.

Mahfouz allocates the first forty-seven chapter of ***Palace Walk (Bayn al-Qasrayn)***, roughly two-thirds of the book, to a description of the homely and the quotidian. We get to know all the members of the Abd al-Jawwad family in no inconsiderable detail as we become familiar with the routine of their daily life. We see all the morning rituals: walking up, baking the bread, breakfast, the men going out to work or school and the women doing housework. We are also taken to the afternoon coffee gathering shared by all the family except the father. We see Fahmi on the

roof processing his love to their next door neighbour, Maryam; the father in his shop and in his rowdy gatherings at night with his friends and their singing mistresses; Yasin in his obsessive pursuit of Zannuba; the little adventures of the young Kamal on his way back from school; the weddings of Aisha, Yasin and Khadija in succession. All this we see and much more. And it is this descriptive quality that gives the book, among other things, its documentary value. There is no other source, literary or otherwise, that records with such detail and liveliness the habits, sentiments and living environment of Cairane Egyptians at the beginning of the century. Without the novelists loving and observant eye much about that period that no longer exists would have gone unrecorded forever.[41]

When the British authorities exile Sa'd Zaghlul, having refused him permission to travel to Paris to air the nation's demand for independence at Versailles in 1919, the revolution erupts and martial law that of the whole nation, is never the same again. The novel reveals to us action is stepped up, the inevitable convergence of public and private reaches its tragic conclusion. The afternoon coffee gathering among brother and sisters in now dominated by talk of politics and accounts of demonstrations and violent confrontations with soldiers, everyone has something to tell whether it is the 10-year-old schoolboy Kamal, or the 19-year-old university student Fahmi, who is actively involved in distributing handbills and organizing demonstrations and strikes. Even the nightly pleasure gathering of the father and his friends is affected. On the night when Zaghlul was exiled we are told that for the first time in twenty-five years their gathering 'was mirthless and reigned over by silence' (p. 403). As the revolution escalates, the British decide to occupy

[41] . Fawzi al-Antabli, 'al-Mujatan al-Misri Kama Tusawwiruh Riwayat Bayn al-Qasrayn', Al-Majalla, March 1958, pp. 99 – 106.

the old quarter of al-Hussain where the family lives. They camp right outside the family house. The household is thrown into confusion and for some time the family impose house arrest on themselves because they do not know the intention of the occupying force. Abd al Jawwad's family is thus made to embody the condition of the entire nation and historical danger is seen to be as close to the individual as the front door of his own house. The consequences of such menacing proximity materialize without delay when we se the fearsome and much-respected patriarch, Abd al-Jawwad, arrested at gunpoint on his way home one night and forced most ignominiously to take part in refilling a trench dug earlier by rebels.

We all live through time, cataclysmic or ordinary, labouring under the illusion that its afflictions are things which befall others and not ourselves. Thus when the father learns of Fahmi's involvement in the revolution, he is shaken to the foundation. Fahmi may die as an individual and his death may bring infinite grief to his father and mother, causing the first to relinquish for five years his night life of pleasure and the latter to age beyond her years, but this is not his end. Not quite, according Mahfouz's philosophy of time. When a person has exhausted his units of individual time, he must depart from the scene and allow his inexhaustible stock of social or collective time to be used on his behalf in absentia. Thus Fahmi dies, but the national struggle does not cease and society benefits from his death and that of other individuals. The novelist underlines this meaning by resurrecting Fahmi in the image of another revolutionary in the next generation of the family, namely Ahmed Shawkat, his nephew, born years after his death of Fahmi, his incarnation is sent to prison on account of his socialist views and active involvement in spreading them. Collective time has obviously carried the national struggle a step forward: the issue now is no longer just political freedom,

but also justice, and Ahmed Shawkat, like his old incarnation, is prepared to pay out of his individual time for the public cause. This is a moralistic view of the relationship between man and time and is at the very heart of Mahfouz's vision. There is no doubt that on the existential level he sees time as man's worst enemy and as such the battle against it becomes his first moral duty.[42] The battle, however, is bound to be lost on the individual level since is ineluctable. Our only hope in victory, then, is social or collective. Ahmed Shawkat sums it up neatly: 'the common duty of humanity is perpetual revolution which consists in the persistent endeavour to realize the will of life as represented in its evolution towards the highest ideal'.[43]

Time, however, does not need to call up revolutions, wars or any other form of historical cataclysm in order to inflict death and destruction on the lives of individuals; Cataclysmic time is only a heightened form of quotidian time, which is equally destructive. Cataclysmic time sees to those individuals who die in violent demonstrations, warlike actions, earthquakes, floods, etc., whereas quotidian illness, accidents or for no comprehensible reason at all. Death however, is only time's final and, ironically, merciful blow. What is really tragic is the time process in its daily unfolding as it leads up to death, i.e. the consciousness of the changing self and circumstances in time – ultimately, the consciousness that life is but death in progress. Ahmed Jawwad is a good example.

Unlike cataclysmic time, which has no pattern and can kill someone like Fahmi at the age of 19 without overtaxing human comprehension,[44] quotidian time seems to work according to some sort of

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[42]. Matittyahu Pedel, Religion My Own: the Literary Works of Najib Mahfouz, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983, pp. 109 – 18.
[43]. Sugar Street, p. 393.
[44]. Jamal al-Ghitani, *Naguib Mahfouz Yatadhakkar*, Cairo, 3rd edition, 1987, p. 141.

pattern, or so embattled humans imagine. People usually expect, despite their awareness of the inevitable end, a reasonable allowance of time in which to grow up, mature and fulfill themselves in life up to a point, within their means and circumstances before the laws of mutation and decay claim them. But time does not always oblige. A pattern it may have, but patterns have exception, and time patterns are no exception. Thus 'Aysha loses her youthful husband and her two young sons at one stroke. Typhoid does it. A few years later she loses her remaining daughter, who dies in child birth within one year of her marriage. Aysha's sanity, which barely withstood the first breach of the pattern, collapses at the second. Grief grows at her heart, and, still in her thirties, she becomes the living remnants of what not too long ago was an image of beauty and the love of life.

In real life death can seem quite accidental and totally without meaning except for the mundane affirmation of the fragility and transience of human existence. In Mahfouz, however, and contrary to received critical opinion, death is really so.[45]

Mahfouz views time as representing the evolutionary spirit of man' and perpetuating human experience. This of course is time only as conceived by collective of social man. On the social level Mahfouz has demonstrated to us how the death of the individual Fahmi was redeemed in time through the evolution of the social cause he had died for. It would appear then that collectively we are able to steal from time the victory we are deprived of as individuals. On closer inspection, it would appear also that Mahfouz thinks a measure of victory, that is. Now much has been

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[45]. Ali Jad, *Form and Technique in the Egyptian Novel*, London: Ithaca Press, 1983, p. 152.

said about the influence of naturalism on the work of Mahfouz from *Khan al Khaili* and *Palace of Desire*.[46]

The second volume of *The Trilogy*, i.e. **Palace of Desire *(Qasr al-Shawq)***, is devoted to an account of his suffering. Some of the most profound soul-searching ever rendering in Arabic prose is contained in this volume. And it is written with such intensity and immediacy and with a poetic quality that must be drawn from the admitted autobiographical link between Kamal and his creator. As Mahfouz has often repeated, Kamal's spiritual crisis was that of an entire generation, by which he meant his own generation. The crisis, as we have seen, consists in the now classic Mahfouzian conflict between old and new or pas and present, that conflict which is a natural corollary inherent in the fluid state of time. Kamal's dilemma results from his exposure to an influence that his parents' generation did not experience. This was mainly the influence of modern Western thought disseminated through the modernization of the educational system which had already taken root in the 1920s and 1930s when Kamal was growing up. The gap between two generations is probably best dramatized in the book in the famous scene in which Kamal is taken to task by his awesome father for having published a newspaper article in which he expounded Darwin's theory of evolution. For the father the issue was crystal-clear: the **Quran** says that 'God made Adam of clay and that Adam was the father of mankind', and to publicize any views to the contrary was an act of denial of the faith. Kamal, however, was well part of all that. Outwardly apologetic to his father, his inner thoughts ran like this: 'I will not open my heart again to myth and superstition.... Adam, my father! I have no father. Let my father be a

[46]. Naguib Mahfouz, *Atahaddath Ilaykum*, Beirut: Dar al-Awda, 1977, p. 157.

monkey if Truth so wills'.[47]. Apart from scenes like the above, conservations with intellectual friends like Riayad Qaldas and an endless stream of internal monologues, Kamal's dilemma is delineated through two central relationships heightened by being endowed with a symbolic dimension. The first is his relationship with his parents, which we have already examined; the second is his unrequited love for Ayda Saddad. As we have seen his relationship with his parents ends in hi rejection of their symbolic value, i.e. as exponents of the past, even though he continues to love and respect them as parents. *Ayda*, on the other hand, represents the alternative value system and life style that he craves but can not quite attain. She is the illusive present which he can not reach far enough to embrace, and her rejection of him is as symbolic as his of his parents.

Critics have tended to regard both Kamal's infatuation with Ayda and her rejection of him in terms of social class. This is undeniably one level on which the relationship can be perceived. Kamal is a commoner, the son of a small merchant who lives in the old popular area of Jamaliyya, whereas Ayda is the daughter of Abd al-Hamid Shaddad, wealthy aristocrat and the friend of exiled ex-Khedive of Egypt, who lives in a great mansion in the new Cairo suburb of *Abbasiya* the unwritten social code would permit Kamal to become Husayn Shaddad's (Ayda's brother) best friend, but marriage and the union of the families was a different matter altogether. Another level on upgrading of the class level is the cultural one. Ayda, both personally and as a member of her class, does not belong to the traditional value system that Kamal and his class live in accordance with. She and her class are, or at least so appear to the bewildered and infatuated eyes of Kamal, emancipated from the

[47]. Palace of Desire, p. 372.

past. To him she means modernity, Western Modernity with the full plethora of associations that the term brings.

Ayda is idolized by Kamal. He places her on a pedestal and worships her unconditionally and without hope of response. In his fervid monologues he refers to her as al-Mabud, and often alludes to her in words and phrases imbued with religious associations.[48]

Kamal's infatuation with Ayda in his early youth is not unrelated on the symbolic level to his infatuation with English soldiers as a child of some 10 years. When the soldiers are stationed outside the family house during the revolution, Kamal is lured by their beauty: their blue eyes, gold hair white skin'.[49] He becomes friends with them and every day on his way back from school, he would stop at their camp to have tea and to chat and sing with them. When the revolution is over and the soldiers evacuated the area, the child feels sorry for the end of the 'friendship which tied him to those superior masters who stood in his belief high above the rest of mankind'.[50] This obviously is an early manifestation of fascination with the other that in Kamal's maturing days will take the form of admiration for the beauty of the culture of those soldiers rather than their good looks. It is, however, a love-hate relationship. During an anti-British demonstration that he is caught in maturing years, Kamal is puzzled by his own attitude: 'In the morning my heart is inflamed with rebellion against the English, while at night the common spirit of human fellowship in pain calls for co-operation in the face of the riddle of man's destiny'.[51] What he is referring to is his nightly readings in Western

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[48] Marius Deeb, '*Naguib Mahfouz's Midaque Alley* a Socio-cultural Analysis'. British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin, vol 10, no. 2, 1983, p 128

[49] William M Hutchins and Olive E Kenny, Palace Walk, London Doubleday, 1990. p 462

[50] ibid. p 559

[51] William Maynard Hutchins, Lorne M Kenny and Olive E Kenny, Sugar Street, London, Doubleday, 1992, p 44.

thought. When in his middle age, Kamal walks in the funeral of Ayda without knowing, it seems a most cynical ending to a very romantic episode, all the more so because the goddess of the past dies the second wife of an older man, having earlier been divorced by her aristocratic husband as well as made a pauper by her family's loss of fortune.[52] What did Mahfouz want to say by that? Is it a tacit pronouncement on the sham of the old infatuation, on the depth of the chasm between inner illusion and outer reality? Or is it again just a lament over the vanity of human passion and the final mockery that Time has in store for the unwitting individual?

Kamal's parents lived during the glorious unassailable days of the past. By contrast, Kamal's time was one of tension between past and present, a tension which paralyzed him and served to consume his energy in contemplating life rather then living and changing it. Hence his futile celibacy, his bewilderment, his endless hesitations and doubts and his Hamlet-like inaction. The third generation, as represented by Kamal's Ahmed, on the other hand, sees the solution in the abandonment of old values and the adoption of science and socialism: he is the present. Both brothers are political activists taking risks for their separate cause and ending up in prison.[53] It is Ahmed, however, who has the sympathy of Kamal (and indeed the implicit sympathy of the novelist). Ahmed is also an improved version of Kamal; he is what Kamal could have been had he succeeded in freeing himself more radically from the past and from his romantic fixations. To prove the point, Mahfouz places Ahmed in a similar relationship to that which Kamal has with Ayda. His love too is directed towards the upper class, but his approach, unlike his uncle's, is daring and self-confident and when he meets with rejection, life does not

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[52]. Fatima Musa, Fi al-Riwaya al-Arabiyya al-Muasira, al- Katib, p. 43.
[53]. Abd al-Muhsin Taha Badr, Naguib Mahfouz al-Ramziyya, Beirut: Dar al-Talia, 1980, p. 369

stand still. His frustration is redirected towards a higher cause and is soon transcended.[54]

There Only Remains an Hour *(Al-Baqi min al-Zaman Sa'a)*: *The Trilogy*, as we have see, begins in 1917 and stops near the end of World War II, having been completed in 1952 shortly before Naseer's revolution. After the period of silence which occupied the best part of the 1950s, Mahfouz spend most of the following two decades criticizing the 1952 revolution and the new society it created – in much the same way as the novels of the 1940s had been dedicated to criticism of the old society. In 1982, however, twelve years after the death of Naseer, one year after *Sadat*'s and thirty years into the life of a revolution that had long spent its force, it occurred to Mahfouz, perhaps feeling the additional weight of years and the national frustration which came with them, to review and update, through another *roman fleuve*, Egypt's relationship with time and to examine again the sorrows inflicted by the public on the private. There Only Remains an Hour documents the political history of twentieth-century Egypt from the time of the nationalist uprising against the British in 1919 dawn to the Camp David Accords and the Peace Treaty with Israel in 1979. It stops just short of the assassination of Sadat in 1981,[55] which is dealt with in a later novel (The Day the Leader Was Killed, 1985). Thus it can be argued that the novel is in a sense both a condensation and an updating of *The Trilogy*. Like *The Trilogy*, it is a saga novel (though without the length associated with this type of novel), with the youngest generation reaching maturity during the Nasser era.[56]

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[54] 'Thaman al-Da'f' (The Price of weakness), a very early short story y Mahfouz, first published in Al-Majalla al-Jadida, 3rd August 1934

[55] Nabil Raghib, Qadiyyat al-shakl al-Fanni ind Naguib Mahfouz, Cairo Dar al-Katib al-Arabi, 1967, introduction

[56] Abd al-Muhsin Taha Badr, Naguib Mahfouz al-Ramziyya, Beirut Dar al-Talia, 1980, p 376

The novel is written in simplistic symbolism, each of the characters standing for one or other of the political ideas or forces rife in Egypt during the last three-quarters of a century.[57]

The Day the Leader was Killed (*Yawm Qutil al-Za'im*): *Before the Throne*, discussed elsewhere in this work, appeared one year after There Only Remains an Hour and showed Mahfouz still preoccupied with the fortunes of Egypt in time. Here, in a desperate attempt at understanding his country's hapless present, he is not content to trace it back to his usual starting point, i.e. the 1919 revolution, but goes back all the way to the beginnings of Egypt in time and retraces his steps up to the assassination of *Sadat* in 1981. It is seen that, *Before the Throne* is a work more concerned with the general then the particular, with the effect of politics on the public rather then the individual level. Its speaks of pharaohs and kings and presidents, of conquests and defeats and revolutions, but seldom mentions the people who are the fodder for all these cataclysms – in other words it is about collective, historical time and not its quotidian, individual manifestations.

This extensive historical investigation seems, however, to have done little to set Mahfouz mind at ease and so he sets off again on another journey in time: *The Day the Leader was Killed* (1985). Here Mahfouz is back within the confine of his usual period of investigation, i.e. from 1919 to the present day, the period to which he has been an eye-witness. The book is a novella of some ninety pages. The day of the title is six October 1981 and the leader killed is, needless to say, Anwar Sadat.[58]

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[57] . Abd al-Muhsin Taha Badr, ibid, p. 154.
[58] . Ghali Shukri, *"Naguib Mahfou; min al-Jamaliyya ila Nobel"*, p. 56.

Qushtumur *(Qushtumur):* Unlike the three novels already depicted earlier, *Qushtumur* (1988) is not a *roman fleuve* in the technical sense: there is no observation of change through the generations of a family here. This technicality excluded, much remains which binds this novel to the three. It too is about the changes in Egyptian society and their effects on individuals over a considerable stretch of time. But rather then approach his subject through the generations of one family, Mahfouz chooses to do it here through a quick review of the life times of a group of friends, representing among them a cross-section of Egyptian urban society.

In *Qushtumur* Mahfouz's obsession with time seems to have reached phenomenal dimensions. His output in the 1980s can perhaps be labeled, with few exceptions, as a portrait of the artist battling against time. This probably has something to do with the fact that the 1980s were also the eighth decade of the novelist's life. The process of reviewing his life and times which began in the 1970s with works like *Mirrors* and *Fountain and Tomb* is accelerated in the 1980s to reach a feverish, obsessive and highly personalized pace towards the end of the decade. The author appears to be labouring under a growing awareness of the approaching end and is no longer able to write about man's old foe with the detachment he evinced in works like *The Trilogy* and *Respected Sir*. There is now a desperate attempt at the remembrance of things past, at rummaging in the memory for times lost as actual time runs out, and there is a permeating nostalgia for places, events and persons whose existence now is purely in the memory. The three works published in rapid succession over a two-year period (1987-8), namely Tales of Morning and Evenings *(Hadith al-Sabah wa al-Masa)*, Good Morning to You and *Qushtumur*, are all set between *Jamaliyya* and *Abbasiyya*, the two parts of

Cairo that witnessed Mahfouz's childhood and early youth. They all have a strong reminiscent tone in which the novelist's own voice can often be discerned, and characters and events appear to be largely drown from his personal recollections of the period.[59] Together they are homage to the past – a farewell gesture from a consciousness preparing for the final oblivion.

In *The Thief and the Dogs (Al-Liss wa al-Kilab)* (1961) he depicted the fate a Marxist thief, who has been released from prison and plans revenge. Ultimately he is murdered in a cemetery.[60] This is the author's first link in the chain dealing directly with the shortcomings of the 1952 revolution, is about betrayal, mainly the betrayal of revolutionary ideals once power, with the privileges that come with it, is achieved. Thus the relationship between Said *Mahran*, the protagonist of the novel and the one betrayed, and *Rauf Alwan*, his fallen idol on whom he seeks to be avenged, is Mahfouz's Metaphor for the rapid dissipation of revolutionary ideal and his indictment of the newly emerged establishment which inherited all too soon the privileges and complacency of the ancient regime. Said Mahran, however, fails in achieving his objective. His bullets go astray, killing innocent people instead of heroic symbol for the masses of the people, is hounded down by the entire apparatus of the State – the 'dogs' of the title. Said's failure is not of course without significance. The apparent moral is that true revolutionary action cannot originate in personal vendetta, nor is it a task for individuals on their own: organized action is essential.[61]

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[59] . Ghali Shukri, Al-Muntami: Dirasa fi Adab Naguib Mahfouz, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, p. 425.
[60] . ibid .pp.
[61] . Fawzi al-Antabli, 'al-Mujtama al-Misri Kama Tusawwiruh Riwayat ayn al-Qasrayn' Al-Majalla.. March 1958, pp. 99 – 106

The Thief and the Dogs is not, however, a simple political parable – indeed none of the novels of the 1960s decade can be seen as just that. In all of them Mahfouz succeeds in transforming his probing of the predicament of the individual in his confrontation with authority into a consideration of such issues as the meaning of life, the value of human action, and the alienation of the modern individual from both society and God – themes which led critics to associate the novelist's work during that period with the existentialist movement in Europe, particularly Camus and Sartre.[62] Thus Said's isolation and desperate loneliness are metaphor for the alienation of the nonconformist wherever he may be. Nor is his alienation only social, for in his obsession with setting right worldly reality he is unable to draw comfort from thoughts of the hereafter. This theme of modern man's alienation from God is introduced in the novel through the juxtaposition of Said's character with that of the old *sufi* (mystic) Ali al-Junaydi. Homeless and hounded, with his soul devoured by the desire to avenge himself on those who wronged him, Said takes refuge momentarily in the house of Shaykh Junaydi, whom he has known since his childhood when he used to visit him in his father's company. They are the emblems of two worlds that cannot meet: the mystic has achieved peace with the world by completely withdrawing from its harsh reality and creating an inner invisible one for himself, while Said is too enmeshed in the ugliness of reality to be able to see or seek a way to deal with it other than by self-condemning confrontation. The incompatibility of the two worlds and the irrelevance of transcendental escapism are shown through masterful pieces of dialogue at cross-purposes, worthy of the best traditions of the Theatre of Absurd between Said and the holy man.

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[62] . Raja, al- Naqqash, *Udaba Muasirun*, Cairo, Dar al-Hilal, 1971, pp. 153-242.

In Mahfouz character is not fate – not altogether anyway, nor is society. Although temperamental flaws, and flaws in the structure of society contribute in a major way to the defeat of his character, his work often seems to point at something else that is wrong, something that lies at the very nature of things in the world – a contributory force that is indefinable and incomprehensible, but whose workings in our lives are undeniable.[63] Otherwise how can Said's stray bullets be explained? It happens twice: the first time when he tries to kill Alish Sidra and the second when he tries to kill Rauf Alwan, his erstwhile political mentor who betrays their revolutionary ideals. On both occasions his bullets kill innocent victims.

The Search *(Al-Tariq)*: The Search is another metaphor of aborted dreams. Its protagonist's search for 'freedom, dignity and security'[64] is no different from the national quest of modern Egyptians, and therefore his failure must be seen as another pessimistic view, however indirectly expressed, of the state of affairs in Mahfouz's country. But one must be careful not to read too much politics into this novel.[65] In fact, of all the 1960s novels, this is the one with the least direct bearing on the political reality of the day. And while the quest of its protagonist, Sabir, for 'freedom, dignity and security' may seem essentially no different from that of his predecessors (Said and Isa in The Thief and the Dogs and Autumn Qail, respectively), it is only in The Search that this quest is transplanted from its habitual socio-political context to a metaphysical one.[66]

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[63] Luwis Awad. (in two articles); 'Kayfa Taqra' Naguib Mahfouz' and Bayn al-Qasrayn' Naqd wa al-Adab, Cairo, p. 355.
[64] Luwis Awad. 'al-Muha kama al-Naqisa', Al-Ahram
[65] F. Dawwara, pp 105-130
[66] Jurj Tarabishi, Allah fi Rihlat Naguib Mahfouz al-Ramziyya, Beirut Dar al-Talia, 1973, pp. 42-52

The Beggar *(Al-Shahhadh)*: the metaphysical search is carried on into the author's next novel, The Beggar (1965). The protagonist, Umar al-Hamzawi, a wealthy and successful lawyer and family man, is suddenly struck by existential *angst*. His work and family cease to mean anything to him and so does the rest of the universe. He is engulfed in a sense of the ultimate absurdity of all things. It all began when one he teased a client of his on whose behalf he was fighting a case the ownership of a plot of land: 'What if you were to win the case today and take possession of the land only for the government to come and seize it tomorrow?' one of the character, Umar asks. 'Don't we live our life knowing full well that it is going to be taken away by God?' comes the dismissive answer of the client (p. 45). But it was an answer that Umar himself was never able to dismiss from his mind. As he himself puts it, 'The very foundations of existence collapsed as a result of a few questions' (p. 89).

Mahfouz's output from this, is the ultimate truth, then, is in the reality of the world and not somewhere outside or beyond it, and the only thoroughfare to the metaphysical is a physical one, along which travelers should be committed to the well-being of each other and the maintenance of the road. Over and again Mahfouz has expressed his firm rejection of any form of transcendental escapism. As Buhayna's combination in her characters the values both of poetry and science, Mahfouz adds a third value by marrying her off to Uthman, the indefatigable fighter for social justice. As he is rearrested, we learn that Buthayna is already bearing the fruit of the union. This is Mahfouz's hope for human society: a holy trinity of science, poetry and justice.[67]

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[67]. Poetry here must of course be apprehended in a broad sense as an epithet to describe man's spiritual longings, which stem from the basic view of existence as a mystery.

Chatter on the Nile *(Tharthara fawq al-Nil,* 1966): is one of his most popular novels. It was later made into a film featuring a cast of top actors during the time of President *Anwar al Sadat.* The film/story criticizes the decadence of Egyptian society during the era of Gamal Abdel Naseer. It was banned by *Sadat* to prevent provocation of Egyptian who still loved former president Naseer. Copies were hard to find prior to the late 1990s. Mahfouz' prose is characterized by the blunt expression of his ideas. He has written works covering a broad range of topics, including socialism, homosexuality, and God. Writing about some of the subjects was prohibited in Egypt.

Miramar (*Miramar*): In the 1960s and 1970s Mahfouz started to construct his novels more freely and use interior monologue. In **Miramar** (1967) he developed a form of multiple first-person narration. Four narrators, among them a Socialist and a Nasserite opportunist, represent different political views. In the center of the story is an attractive servant girl.

As if exhausted by the metaphysical search which spanned the last three novels, Mahfouz drops it altogether in Miramar (1967). The socio-political concern which infiltered at a steadily increasing rate all three metaphysical novels swells up in Miramar to shut out every other concern. The novel was also technically innovative within the framework of Mahfouz's output up to that point. The events of the story are told in the first person by four of the main characters, readers thereby are made privy to each character's judgment of the others instead of being limited to the view point of only one character as has been the case seems The Thief and the Dogs. It was not Mahfouz, however, who pioneered this

technique in the Egyptian novel,[68] nor did it prove a favourate with him. Rather then marking a turning-point in technique, *Miramar* actually marked a shift of interest from completing the human condition in its timeless and universal aspects to a more mundane contemplation of the immediate manifestations of this condition in Egyptian socio-political reality. This new phase was to maintain its grip on the author until the mid 1970s.

Miramar is the last cry against the aberrations of the 1952 revolution before the 1967 debacle. As in Chatter on the Nile, it puts together a group of different people in a confined space and allows the frictions arising from conflicts of temperaments and interests to escalate to a tragic climax. Each of the patrons of the pension represents a section of the contemporary society of Egypt with Zehra the peasant maid-servant standing for Egypt.[69] Significantly, the most sympathetically portrayed male character is that of the old *Wafdist* journalist, Amir Wajdi, who, in a manner reminiscent of the hero of Autumn Qail, is shown to have been mercilessly swept aside by the new regime despite his old nationalist role. The most abhorrently depicted, on the other hand, is Sharhan al-Buhairi, the representative of the lower middle class, the class empowered by the revolution to inherit the office and authority of the ousted aristocracy and upper middle class.

Most interesting perhaps of Mahfouz's creations in this novel is the character of Mansur Bahi, the socialist renegade. He is totally unlike any of the author's socialists in the pre-revolutionary novels. As we have seen in those novels, the socialist types figured as strong young men full of vigor, zeal, belief in their ideals and boundless hope in the future; they

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68. Stewart, Desmond; (article) 'The Man Who Lost his Shadow', Heinemann, London, 1966.
69. Enani El-Rasheed, 'The Novelist as Political Eye-witness', (article) Journal of Arabic Literature, vol. 21, 1990, pp. 72-86.

were, as the novelist portrayed them, Egypt's promise to social salvation. But there is none of this in Miramar; the socialist type here is distorted out of recognition. Mansur Bahi is an indecisive weakling who betrays his cause rather than resists pressure or go to prison. He hates himself for it and is shown as a wreck of a man, unable to enjoy life or love and verging on insanity – he is Mahfouz's elegy to the emasculation through persecution of Egypt's socialist intellectuals. Amidst all this, Zehra has fend for herself all the time against the sexual advances of all the patrons with the exception of the old Wafdist and the psychologically unbalanced socialist, who both show concern and affection for her, through practically unable to help her. The girl, however, proves more than a match for all her attackers put together. Thus Egypt[70] emerges as strong as self reliant; as poor but dignified, but with none of her sons sufficiently free from self interest to do anything for her. The only flicker of hope in this deeply gloomy work is sounded by the old Wafdist when he whispers to Zehra, who has had her hopes shattered and who has a doubtful future to confront alone, armed only with her belief in herself: 'He who has known what is not good for him, will also know, in a magical kind of way, what is progress by exclusion – that was the extent of Mahfouz's hope for his country on the eve of June 1967.

It was in 1972 that Mirrors, his first novel since Miramar, was published, followed in rapid succession by ***Love in the Rain*** (*Hubb taht al-Matar*, 1973) ***and The Karnak*** (*Al-Karnak*, 1974). Issues like the torture of political prisoners, the increasing best youth, and the gradual collapse of moral ideals were briefly touched upon here, to be picked up again and elaborated in Love in the Rain and The Karnak. The sense of

[70]. Interview in Al-Musawwar, 21 October 1988, p.71

depression experiences earlier in Miramar reaches the point of suffocation in these two novels.

Love in the Rain *(Hubb that al-Matar):* is set in Cairo during the years 1967-70, dubbed at the time 'the war of attrition', referring to the continued hostilities between Egyptian and Israeli forces across the Suez Canal until Nasser accepted a temporary ceasefire shortly before his death in September 1970. The novel depicts a demoralized society with city people sunk in a bottomless pit of apathy, hardly aware of the war going on at the front,[71] with young people seeking refuge from the harsh reality by planning emigration and indulgence in sex and empty pastimes – the mood and lifestyle of the '*awwama*' clique in Chatter on the Nile is shown to have engulfed the whole country here.

Throughout the novel we have lovers betraying each other at the first temptation, characters committing murder at the slightest provocation, sex willingly offered by respectable but needy young women in return for consumer goods – it is as if the entire fabric of society has collapsed.

Also set in Cairo, *The Karnak* extends the period covered by Love in the Rain by about two more years into the past, the spanning the period 1965 – 70[72] by placing the Karnak's starting point during the apogee of Nasser's era, Mahfouz's evident intention was to examine with the benefit of hindsight the seeds of decay in the regime, which caused it to disintegrate on its first real test. The novel concentrate on an issue likely touched upon in the previous one, namely that of the depressive

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[71] Shukri, Ghali, Naguib Mahfouz min al-Jamaliyya ila Nobel, p 53

[72] Saad El-Gabalawy, trans with introduction, Three Contemporary Egyptian Novels, Fredericton, N B York Press, 1979, pp 19,37.99

techniques of the police state and their destructive effect on the dignity of the individual and hence the nation as a whole.

The novel is written in the first person and the narrator, who puts the pieces of the action together from encounters with the main characters over a period of some five years at the Karnak café (which gives the novel its title), is himself a writer from an older generation. Thus it is not difficult to see him as a mouthpiece for the novelist. The Karnak is essentially a refutation of the classic argument often used by repressive regimes to justify their excesses and which consists in the so called sacrifice of the individual for the good of the nation as a whole.[73]

The Heart of the Night *(Qalb al-Layl):* After three novels and many more short stories which dealt partly or wholly, directly, with both the germination and the aftermath of 1967 and after a long Diaspora in modern Cairo and in Alexandria, apparently too weary and too nostalgic, Mahfouz gave in again unconditionally to the combined charms of his old Jamaliyya and metaphysics. The homecoming was marked by Fountain and Tomb and Heart of the night. (both 1975).

The author's lifelong metaphysical anguish, suppressed under immense socio-political pressure since *Chatter on the Nile*, is allowed to breathe again here. For heart of the night is nothing but a condensed allegory of the spiritual evolution of mankind. Since this was well-trodden grounds for Mahfouz, it is no surprise that he found it convenient to borrow some of the symbols he had already used in his earlier allegory on the same subject, i.e. *Children of Jabelawi.* [74] In Mahfouz's work, as

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[73] . T. Le Gassik, Critical Perspective on Naguib Mahfouz, Washington D. C.: Three Continents Press, 1991, pp.151-62.

[74] . Ruzalyusif, 2 February, 1976, p. 87.

we have seen time and again, politics is always at a stone's throw from metaphysics – and Heart of the Night is no exception.

Mirrors (Al-Maraya): Mirrors (1972) consists of fifty five character sketches ranging from five to fifteen pages each sketches carries as its title the name of the character it portrays. The portraits are presented by the narrator, who is admittedly a persona for the author. The narrator is namely an observer recollecting in writing the lives and times of people he knew at one time or another in his life. Sometimes, however, he is an active participant in the situations delineated. He knows all the characters, though they don't necessarily know each other. He is therefore the main source of unity of the book, a gravitational center without which all fifty five satellites would shoot off in every direction. The sketches are arranged alphabetically, which makes cross reference possible when a character or a related incident is mentioned in the account of another. This of course is another unifying factor though the unsuspecting first time reader is not usually aware of the alphabetical order and the possibilities it offers. Nor is such a reader aware that the episodes are encountered more then once when the characters involved in them tell them from their own point of view. This again helps to tie some of the many strands of the book together.

When Mirrors was first published, Mahfouz described it as "a work of special nature more akin to biography",[75] by which he was referring to the fact that the portraits of which the work is made up are artistic disguises of real persons he came in contact with at various stages of his life.[76] Later, however, he changed his position and called the work 'a novel' and stressed the fact that it had 'design and structure'. He also

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[75]. Naguib Mahfouz, *Atahaddath Ilaykum*, Beirut: Dar al-Awda, 1977, p. 122.
[76]. ibid, p. 34.

pointed out that while the work might not have a central figure, he viewed 'time' as its 'protagonist' and 'central nerve'.[77] Elsewhere he indicates that his original intention in writing Mirrors was to document an age. He goes on to add that as the work evolved he was obliged to feel in the gaps created by failures of memory, with supplies from invention.[78] What Mahfouz does not say is that with public figures he had to alter facts and circumstances where a mare fictitious name for the character would not have been sufficient to disguise the real-life identity. Whether or not it fits academic definitions of the work, we will have to accept Mirrors as a 'novel', all the more so because it proved to be the herald of a long trial of similarly structured works.

Fountain and Tomb *(Hikayat Haratina):* The last episode of Mirrors could have been the first of *Fountain and Tomb* (1975): in both style and content it belongs there. Published three years after Mirrors, it proved to doubters at the time that the new episodic form was there to stay. It too is made up of seventy-eight episodes. Each is called a *hıkaya* (i.e. tale) and given a serial number. *Hikaya* is a term associated with popular traditional narrative forms in Arabic, all of which are also episodic in structure. Fountain and Tomb carries on from where Mirrors broke off; that is to say, the journey into the narrator's childhood continues.[79] It can thus be seen as a sequel to its precursor though in reverse order. As in Mirrors, the episodes are held together by the participant narrator. Unlike Mirrors, however, it enjoys the additional unity of place, as scene and characters are confined to the author's favorite *Jamaliyya*.

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[77] ibid. pp. 122-3.
[78] . ibid. p 83.
[79] . Donald M Reid. '*The Sleeping Philosopher of Naguib Mahfouz's Mirrors*', *The Muslim World*, vol 74, no. 1, 1984, pp 1 -11

Tales of Mornings and Evenings *(Hadith al-Sabah wa al-Masa):*

The work (1987) represents a return to the technique of alphabetically arranged characters sketches first used some fifteen years earlier in *Mirrors*. It contains sixty-seven sketches of characters drawn mainly from three families whose members are all related either through blood or intermarriage. Though of moderate length (217 pages), it is to date Mahfouz's most ambitious *roman fluve*, tracing the lives of three whole families across five generations and a period of 200 years.

Good Morning to You *(Sabah al-Ward)*: is referred to in the author's list of publications as a *majmua* (collection), the word usually used to indicate collection of short stories. It comprises three pieces of varying lengths, and while they are structurally sufficiently independent of each other to justify calling them a 'collection', there is something about them that makes them a homogeneous, rather than haphazard, collection.[80] All three are acts of recollection and all three are wistful contemplations of the devastating work of time in the life of individual.

Epic of the Harafish *(Malhamat al-Harafish):* separated from it by some eighteen years and written in the novelist's new-found, postmodernist episodic form, *Harafish* (1977) nevertheless recalls powerfully to the mind Children of Gebelawi. The locality is the same (*hara*); the power structure is the same (a pact between the well-off and *futwwat*[81] to plunder the rights of *Gebelawi*'s children, i.e. the *harafish*); attempts to break the power structure are also the same (strong, good individuals establish short-lived justice before the old evil pattern is restored). *Harafish* is thus in essence *Gebelawi*'s *hara* re-visited it is a

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[80]. Ghali Shukri. 'Sabah al-Ward Ya Naguib Mahfouz', Al-Hilal, November 1988, pp. 104-9.
[81]. Atahaddath Ilaykum p. 71.

fresh attempt by the author to answer in the broadest possible terms the agonizing question: why does social evil exist and how can it be eradicated? To this newer attempt Mahfouz has brought the wealth of technical and stylistic expertise accumulated since the earlier one. The result is a much more mature work.

Nights of the Thousand Nights *(Layali Alf Layla)*: Nights (1982) will probably be remembered as Mahfouz's last major novel. Together with *Harafish*, it represents the peak of his episodic period. Rather than create his own myth to portray his vision of the human condition as he did in *Harafish*, here he chooses to adapt for the same purposes one of the most imaginative products of the human mind, namely The Arabian Nights. The author chooses some thirteen unconnected tales from The Arabian Nights and renders them afresh through the techniques of modernism.[82] Tales originally independent of each other are so manipulated that they join up in a narrative continuum. Characters continue to operate across, while completely new characters and events are invented and incorporated in the book to serve the novelist's goals. All these technical, unity-forging factors are further strengthened by the work's thematic cohesion, as another Mahfouzian probing of the problems of social evil, time, and the human relationship with the absolute. *Harafish*, as we have seen, was placed in Mahfouz's own timeless mythical setting of the *hara*. Nights too is set in the historical mythical setting of the Arabian Nights. The effect here, as there, is a widening of the scope of the author's vision beyond historical and geographic borders. Myth, in addition, probably works better on the reader's subconscious than a realistic representation of reality.

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[82]. Nedal Al-Mousa, 'The Nature and Uses of the Fantastic in the Fictional World of Naguib Mahfouz', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol. 23, 1992, pp. 36-48.

The Travels of Ibn Fatuma *(Rihlat Ibn Fattuma):* Published in 1983, Travels constitutes Mahfouz's last panoramic review of human history. Although a short novel of some 160 pages, the broadness of its scope puts it on a footing with works like Children of *Gebelawi* and *Harafish*. Like them, it is episodic in form, and like them too, its episodes represent progress in time. Time here, however, is not only that of the novel's action, but rather mankind's time from the dawn of organized society to he present day. For the 'travels' of the novel, as we can see are, on the allegorical level, made through time rather than space. In essence, the book is nothing but a conducted tour in social history.

Travels evokes the atmosphere and format of medieval Arabic *riha* or travel literature, particularly the journeys of *Ibn Battuha*, the illustrious fourteenth-century Arab traveler, as recorded in his famous book *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*. Now *Ibn Batuta*'s name is one that every Arab school-leaver would be familiar with, while *Fattuma* is a pet name for Fatima, fairly common in Egypt and not without a humorous connotation. It would thus appear that by giving his novel the title *Rihlat Ibn Fattuma*, as it is called in Arabic,[83] Mahfouz aimed at making the immediate association in the mind of the reader between his novel and the historic book, since *Ibn Battuta* are of the same constant-vowel pattern. It would also appear that the modern title is somewhat deliberately irrelevant towards the classical work it invokes. From the title-page, then, we are in a frame of mind to conceive of *Rihlat Ibn Fattuma* as a parody of *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*. The novel is given a further pretence to historical verisimilitude by a prefatory note saying that the text is 'reproduced from the manuscript written by the hand of *Qindil Muhammad al-Annabi*, known as *Ibn Fattuma*'. [84]

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[83] *Rihlat Ibn Battuta, Beirut, Dar Sadir*, 1964, p. 4.
[84] Hussain Munis, *Ibn Battuta wa Rihlatuhu*, Cairo, *Dar al-Ma'asir*, 1980, p 26

The travels have both its strength and weakness in its attempt at fusing the entire social experience of humanity in so short a space. Over-simplification is the almost inevitable result of such ambition. That said, the novel is still interesting, if only for the new experiment in form that it demonstrates and its successful parody of *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*, a parody which consists in two elements; first, that the novel is a *riha* in historical time rather than geographical space, and second, that Dar al-Islam, which is idealized in *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*, contrary to historical evidence.[85]

HIS DEATH:

Like many Egyptian writers and intellectuals, Mahfouz was on a "death list" by Islamic fundamentalists. He defended Salman Rushdie after the Iranian spiritual leader Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini condemned him to death, but later he criticized *Rushdie*'s Satanic Verses as "insulting" to Islam. This comment lead many to believe that he spoke against barbarian-like attitude towards Rushdie, though he personally believed the book didn't give the right image about Islam.

In 1989, after Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini's *fatwa* calling for Salman Rushdie and his publishers to be killed, Mahfouz called Khomeini a terrorist. Shortly after Mahfouz joined 80 other Arab intellectuals in declaring that "no blasphemy harms Islam and Muslims so much as the call for murdering a writer." The Rushdie incident also provoked fundamentalist Muslims to regret not having made an example of Mahfouz, one telling a journalist. If only we had behaved in the proper Islamic manner with Naguib Mahfouz, we would not have been assailed by the appearance of Salman Rushdie. Had we killed Naguib Mahfouz, Salman Rushdie would not appear.

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[85] . H.A.R. Gibb, Travells in Asia and Africa, London, George Roultage & Sons, 1929, p. 4.

Death threats against Mahfouz followed, including one from the "blind *Shaikh*," Egyptian theologian Omar Abdul-Rahman. Like Rushdie, Mahfouz was given police protection, but in 1994 Islamic extremists almost succeeded in assassinating the 82 year-old novelist by stabbing him in the neck outside his Cairo home. He survived, permanently affected by damage to nerves in his right hand. Subsequently, he lived under constant bodyguard protection. Finally, in the beginning of 2006, the novel was published in Egypt with a preface written by Ahmed Kamal Abdul-Magd.

Prior to his death, Mahfouz was the oldest living Nobel Literature laureate and the third oldest of all time, trailing only Bertrand Russell and Halldor Laxness. At the time of his death, he was the only Arabic-language writer to have won the Nobel Prize for Literature.[86]

In July 2006, Mahfouz sustained an injury to his head as a result of fall. He remained ill until his death on August 30, 2006 in a Cairo hospital. Mahfouz was accorded a state funeral with full military honours on August 31, 2006 in Cairo. His funeral took place in the *Al-Rashdan Mosque* in *Nasr* City on the outskirts of Cairo.

Mahfouz once dreamed that all the social classes of Egypt, including the very poor, would join his funeral procession. However, attendance was tightly restricted by the Egyptian government amid protest by mourners.[87]

In his old age Mahfouz became nearly blind, and though he continued to write, had difficulties in holding a pen or pencil. He also had

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[86] . Rene Daumal: As my love for Naguib Mahfouz, http://shunshine-jones.com/naguib-mahfouz-the-death-of-a-master

[87] .Associated Press Report dated 31 August 2006 on Naguib Mahfouz's funeral, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naguib Mahfouz/funeral., PDF

to abandon his daily habit of meeting his friends at coffeehouses. Prior to his death, he suffered from a bleeding ulcer, kidney problems, and cardiac failure.[88]

[88]. Saeed al-Hamid, "Najib Pasha Mahfouz", published on 31st August, 2006, www.laborpakistan.org/articles/intl/mahfouz.htm