Siblings and Only Children in Naguib Mahfouz: Psychoanalysis And the State

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Abstract

Sibling relationships are worthy of study in both the fields of psychoanalysis and literature, particularly in an Egyptian context, where family bonds are sacred. On the other hand, many psychoanalysts have neglected sibling relationships in studying the formation of the individuals. Egyptian literature has the same problem in terms of global recognition. My research focuses on ten works of Naguib Mahfouz, an Egyptian Nobel Laureate novelist, whose work was described by the Swedish Academy of Letters as '*an Arabic narrative art that applies to all mankind'.* Mahfouz emphasizes the significance of sibling relationships in many of his works drawing on his own relationship with his brothers and sisters, as examined by this dissertation with respect not only to Mahfouz's writings but to Egyptian society more widely. This dissertation examines the strength of the sibling bond in the Egyptian society through the works of Naguib Mahfouz. I'm focusing on eleven of Mahfouz's works including a feature film. To introduce the significance of the sibling bond, I draw on the work of Melanie Klein and Anna Freud in that they present various theories about the sibling relations, dissimilar to many of the psychoanalysts who studied the formation of the individual through parent and child relationships. Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* and Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* highlight the socio-political meaning of the brotherly love and the dissertation correspondingly explores how colonized societies tend to unite as brothers to fight the colonizers. To explore the question of the importance of sibling relationships in Egypt, the research is divided into three chapters: altruistic relationships, sibling rivalry and the only child case. A study of these topics extends to a comprehensive reflection on the Egyptian society culturally and socially at different historical junctures in keeping with the preoccupations of Naguib Mahfouz.

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Introduction

Since his first publication in the 1930s, Naguib Mahfouz's works have stirred immense global controversy and criticism around his literary themes which mirror his religious beliefs, social values, political views, to name but a few. As an erudite novelist with solid knowledge of Egypt's history and culture, Mahfouz is celebrated for his daring writings that have gained international fame. Egypt has had a strong influence on Mahfouz, because, for him, it is not merely a country of birth and residence but rather a dogma of life. While previous studies of Mahfouz attend to philosophical and religious themes in his works, this thesis posits an analysis of sibling relations that may have a paradigmatic significance. Insufficient attention has been given to the novelist's treatment of sibling bond and rivalry in his literature. In this context, psychoanalysis is necessary to investigate Mahfouz's accentuation of the critical role of sibling bonds, which is one of the core concerns of Mahfouz's work, as well as his portrayal of the infrastructure of the Egyptian society. The thesis highlights the link between the psychoanalytical family structure and political liberation, and the proposition that the sibling bond can serve as a metaphor for the collective concept of brotherhood. It discusses the extent to which the presented sibling bonds vividly parallel the Egyptian heritage, history and politics in modern times. It also engages with less mainstream theories that displace the Freudian emphasis on parent-child relations along with the reinforcement of sibling bonds. In addition, it aims to emphasize the significance of the sibling bond on not only the individual and the society, but also on Mahfouz's works. For both, Mahfouz and the Egyptian society, the formation of an individual is directly proportional to his/her relation to the brothers/sisters. Hence, the idea of evil and righteousness are defined in terms of this bond.

Accordingly, many writers have far neglected the importance of sibling relationships in spite of the latter's prevalence in the form of paradigms in several works by Mahfouz. In fact, sibling bonds are not confined to Mahfouz's novels; they are also highlighted in his autobiographies. However, sibling relations are not given due attention despite the fact that happy parent-child relationships in childhood are connected 'with more supportive sibling ties'.[1] Given that it is generally accepted that Egyptian society values sibling bonds, it may be conjectured that most scholars have overlooked this subject due to the assumption that there is no need to state the obvious (i.e. the importance of sibling bonds in the society). As a result of this misconception, family dynamics in Mahfouz's works are implicated in the public dimensions of Egyptian history. In this thesis, cultural and religious aspects will be examined to define the importance of such bond.

Naguib Mahfouz 'is not only a Hugo and a Dickens, but also a Galsworthy, a Mann, a Zola and a Jules Romains' (Edward Said).[2] As a particularly influential Egyptian writer, Mahfouz has been comprehensively studied by scholars and critics who address both his literature and identity. As a case in point, in his recent book *In the Presence of Mahfouz*, Mohamed Salmawy (2011), an Egyptian writer and President of the Egyptian Writers Union, tackles Mahfouz's relationships with other writers, researchers, politicians and world leaders.[3] Salmawy's book is an essential reading for introducing the social dimension of Mahfouz's life; it presents a new, different angle of scholarship, which invites readers to consider Mahfouz as an iconic figure in the context of world literature. The book also records conversations and unravels friendships between Mahfouz and other influential figures who admire him as a writer, such as Paulo Coelho and Nadine Gordimer. For instance, in addition to

[1] Susan Scarf Merrell. *The Accidental Bond: The Power of Sibling Relationships*. (New York: Times Books, 1995) p. 65.
[2] Edward Said. "Goodbye to Mahfouz." London Review of Books, Vol.10, no.22, Dec.1988, p.10-11 www.lrb.co.uk/v10/n22/edward-said/goodbye-to-Mahfouz.
[3] Mohamed Salmway, *In the Presence of Naguib Mahfouz* (Cairo: Dar El Masrya El Labnanya, 2012).

exchanging books, Gordimer and Mahfouz have discussed the influence of old age on the ability to write.

Other scholars address the Sufi side of Mahfouz's writings, and one of them is Ziad Elmarsafy (2012). In his book *Sufism in the Contemporary Arabic Novel*, Elmarsafy (2012) devotes a chapter to Mahfouz's perception of Sufism as a language that underscores self-creativity.[4] He examines the significance of Sufism with regard to six writers: Naguib Mahfouz, Tayeb Salih, Mahmoud El Masa'di, Gamal El Ghitani, Ibrahim Al Koni and Taher Outter. Elmarsafy explains the role of Sufism in the narratives of the Arab world. Mahfouz's idea of a typical Sufi stems from his own definition of Sufism (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three of this dissertation). Moreover, in *Naguib Mahfouz: From Regional Fame to Global Recognition*, Michael Beard and Adnan Hydar present a collection of twelve articles about Mahfouz's works.[5] Four of the articles examine the Western perception of Arabic literature, and they discuss the impact of Mahfouz's Nobel award on such perception.

Chapter One addresses the role of culture in defining the bond between siblings in general and altruism in particular. Although the thesis does not introduce a comparison between the East and the West regarding the definition of the sibling bond, some Western sources are referred in an attempt to highlight the role of culture in Mahfouz's works. It is worth noting that the Egyptian culture has shaped Mahfouz's perception of this bond; in other words, the prevalence of sibling bonds in Mahfouz's writing entails acts of sacrifice and caregiving that can be seen to reflect social values and conditioning.

[4] Ziad El Marsafy, *Sufism in the Contemporary Arabic Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).
[5] Michael Beard and Adnan Haydar, *Naguib Mahfouz: From Regional Fame to Global Recognition (Contemporary Issues in the Middle East)* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993).

The chapter is dedicated to pinpointing those aspects through analysing Mahfouz's two novels *The Beginning and the End* and *Khan El Khalili.* The two texts are selected for consideration because the altruistic characters in them choose to be so in a society that expects siblings to sacrifice themselves. Later, works by Mahfouz focus on siblings who play noble roles in their families. Written in the mid-forties when Egypt was under British rule, *The Beginning and the End* (1949) unravels Mahfouz's idealistic notions of the society. For example, Nefissa, in *The Beginning and the End*, plays the role of a second parent to her siblings, including her older brother. Her brothers rely on her even more than on their mother. The characters seem lost and are doomed to fail except for Hussein (i.e. the idealist). As for *Khan El Khalili* (1945), it presents the relationship between old and new traditions, and the relationship between science and religion. The novel explores the question of whether science and religion are interwoven and the possibility of one replacing the other. In *Khan El Khalili*, Ahmed, who only has one younger brother, plays the role of the father, which is similar to Nefissa's adoption of the parental role. Ahmed rejects the replacement of science by religion, and prefers to abide by old traditions, where sibling bond is respected and rewarded. In addition, he feels safer following such traditions because he perceives new scientific theories are intimidating. His sense of narcissism rejects anything he does not comprehend. Although their parents live with them, the father is not a suitable role model. He withdraws from family issues and isolates himself in a room to contemplate his own life. The father's unsuccessful work life leads him to passing on his role to Ahmed.

Moreover, altruism is discussed in this chapter with reference to not only religion and culture but also suicide. Although the protagonists of each novel under consideration undergo journeys of difficulty and remorse, they never regret being altruistic figures in their families. The reasons for their sadness are not directly related to the choice of being altruistic. As a case in point, Nefissa chooses to commit suicide to prevent her family from possible disgrace. Furthermore, Mahfouz defines the loving

type of sibling relationship as a strong and positive one. This is a typical type of sibling relationship which Mahfouz prefers to discuss with regard to political and religious influences.

Chapter One aims to answer the following questions: how is the sibling bond perceived in the works of Mahfouz? Why does Mahfouz expect siblings to be companions and not rivals? Does oppression encourage solidarity? Is psychoanalysis applicable to the altruistic type of sibling relationships? The chapter refers to Mostafa Safouan's (1990) work on the Oedipus complex, which is a local adaptation of the theory and investigates the cultural variations of Freud's theory in revolving the question of its presumed universality. In addition, the chapter explores Anna Freud's theories on the Ego and self-defence on the one hand, and Freud's theory on the castration complex in relation to the case of Little Hans on the other hand. In raising the question of the nature of the sibling bond in a colonised society, Walter Rodney's *Groundings with my Brothers* has been sourced. All the previously mentioned theories are similar to Mahfouz's understanding of sibling relationships; they all highlight the importance of this bond on the individual.

Chapter Two examines sibling rivalry. It is not common to find sibling rivalry in Mahfouz's works as he believes that sibling relationships are sacred, and rivalry is a manifestation of evil. An example of rivalry lies between Kadri and Hammam (an allegory of Abel and Cain). Mahfouz has chosen to refer to the first crime in humanity, namely murder, which is mentioned in the three divine books; Kadri kills Hammam because they both love the same girl. In addition, the chapter studies Mahfouz's controversial allegorical novel, *Children of the Alley*, in which he indirectly addresses the leaders of the Arab region, particularly Egypt's, through the deployment of religion on a symbolic level. He focuses on the oppression of the leaders through portraying the rival siblings and the good ones; for example, Idris, the devil, is the rival brother and a thug, whereas Adham, the good one, is a

personification of a prophet. Thereby, Mahfouz gives the leaders two paths to follow: either the thugs' or the prophets'.

The novel provides advice from Mahfouz to Arab leaders, particularly Abdel Nasser, to choose either the prophets' route or the thugs. *Children of the Alley* has stirred heated debates upon its publication for being misinterpreted by many scholars and readers as a religious text. The characters symbolise the prophets, starting with the story of Adam and Eve. When the novel was first published in 1959 in the form of weekly episodes in *Al Ahram* newspaper, readers were shocked at this allegory; as a result, some parts of the stories were censored by Mahfouz to avoid further contention.

The second piece of work that is discussed in Chapter Two is a feature film, *The Choice*, which is co-written by Naguib Mahfouz and Youssef Chahine. It is about the identical twins Mahmoud and Sayed whose characters are noticeably different. While Mahmoud is a hideous flamboyant person who lives in an outlawed society, Sayed is a famous writer and a well-educated conventional character that is widely accepted by the society. The film focuses on Sayed's success despite lacking Mahmoud's courage, yet the former is the one who is jealous of the latter. The brothers fight over a woman as in the story of Cain and Abel. The ending is rather dark because of Mahmoud's murder by the hands of Sayed. It is essential to note that the main reason behind writing this film is political; it represents a translation of the impact of the 1967 defeat on Mahfouz and Chahine.

Finally, Chapter Two highlights the definition of sibling rivalry in relation to Mahfouz. It investigates the reasons why Mahfouz emphasises the aspects of the Egyptian society that are opposed to sibling rivalry even though he links such rivalry to political crises. Melanie Klein's theories on love, guilt and reparation, as well as the psychological studies on schizophrenia, are referred to in an attempt to understand Mahfouz's rationale behind his character sketches and themes.

As for Chapter Three, it analyses the only-child phenomenon. It argues that Mahfouz's novels possibly indicate that this phenomenon is a misfortune to avoid; it is linked to the role of the individual in the society. For Mahfouz, the only-child experience is arguably limited since he has been an isolated soul with limited interactions within his family. Mahfouz associates this social isolation with certain perceptions of Sufism that are detached from the socio-political sphere. However, Sufism has some social significance on a grassroots level, which emerged in recent readings of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.

Among Mahfouz's novellas and novels which tackle the phenomenon of the only child and question social insolation are *The Mirage* (1948), *The Search* (1964), *Heart of the Night* (1975), *The Travels of Ibn Fattouma* (1983) and *Respected Sir* (1975). In each novel, the only-child character is doomed to fail and feels lost on his/her own. For example, in *The Mirage*, Kamel is the typical shy child who is totally reliant on his overprotective mother who prevents him from living a balanced life. In this novel, Mahfouz introduces a new definition of the Oedipus complex, which is more related to culture than to science (as discussed in detail in Chapter Three). In *The Search*, Saber (the protagonist), meets the same fate as Kamel in *The Mirage* even though they are both very different. Saber is a spoilt son, an only child of a rich belly dancer. Since his childhood, he has been led to believe that his father is deceased. When he learns the truth that his father is alive, Saber decides to search for him, in order to rely on the latter after his mother's death. In *Heart of the Night* and *The Travels of Ibn Fattouma*, both only children undergo a spiritual journey towards the unknown. In *Heart of the Night*, Jaafar is an orphan who has been raised by his grandfather, a mystical figure in the alley. He has the same destiny as Saber and Kamel in the previous novels; however, there is more hope for the only child characters in both *The Travels of Ibn Fattouma* and *Respected, Sir*. Both Ibn Fattouma in *The Travels* and Othman in *Respected Sir* experience success and gratification in

interacting with people; in addition, both of them are ambitious characters despite their different fields. While Ibn Fattouma seeks a true spiritual path, Othman seeks professional success and prestige. Accordingly, the idea of community in Mahfouz's works is strong because, for him, a stable society is only built on collaborative effort. According to Mahfouz, the only child undergoes a complicated spiritual journey that usually fails. The company of siblings contributes to the development of a more stable personality.

Chapter Three exhibits the nature of Mahfouz's message to society through his only-child characters that the colonised society needs guidance, and the only child symbolises the Egyptian society under a certain political oppressive regime. Moreover, the novels that are investigated in this chapter which have the only-child phenomenon combine psycho-social and socio-political depth as in the following selections.

In *The Mirage*, Mahfouz writes about a wealthy family. According to the suggestions of many critics, the focus of the novel is psychological rather than political; nevertheless, this chapter highlights the hidden political message in this literary work. In addition, the protagonist/narrator is on a long journey to express his fear of living. Kamel, a shy character, struggles to rely on himself to confront the society but his efforts are usually in vain. *The Search* is a novel that has multiple dimensions: political, psychological and spiritual. Saber, the protagonist, seeks 'freedom, dignity and security', which are the same demands of the Egyptians in the sixties under Abdel Nasser's regime.[6] *Respected, Sir* is a novel about Othman who dreams of climbing the social ladder. He concentrates on his studies and exerts effort to become a respected employee in an attempt to compensate for coming from a poor family. Othman's cravings never stop; he desires prestige through promotions. When he succeeds in

[6] Mamdouh El Naby, 'Waiting for Godot (ālṣādq) w tʿdd ālrwy fy ālsrāb (dwryh Naguib Mahfouz, 2010).

achieving these promotions, he craves for more. Othman is also a spiritual character; he seeks God's help and thinks about Him all the time.

Heart of the Night is another spiritual journey that is doomed to fail because of the protagonist's constant hesitation and lack of satisfaction with life in general. Jaafar's rejection of his grandfather, as well as his choice to be independent, leads to his failure and further reliance on his grandfather's assets. In this sense, the only child is prone to falling into a vicious cycle; he/she tends to fail on his/her own, which results in their reliance on others. This suggests that the only child has no choice but to fail, not because life is unfair but because he/she does not depend on others as much as he/she attempts to. In *The Travels of Ibn Fattouma*, the protagonist undergoes a journey to six countries in search of the ideal life led by people who implement their faith in God and His teachings at a place where His justice rules. All of the novels focus on the spiritual journey that the only children undergo, where some of them are lost souls and others find hope in interaction with people.

In order to understand the wider context of Mahfouz's interest in sibling relationships, it is necessary to present the significance of the works of Mahfouz in terms of their regional commitments and their wider-ranging impacts. In the next section, the role of Mahfouz in Egyptian literature and the "unmistakably colonial" nature of his works are explored in detail.[7] While Mahfouz treats the psychological dimensions of family relations, the family also tends to act as a microcosm of national concerns in many of his works.

[7] Wail Hassan and Susan Muaddi Darraj, *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Naguib Mahfouz*, Modern Language Association of America, 2012, p. 33.

The Significance of Mahfouz as a Writer in Egypt and the Arab World

It is affirmed that Naguib Mahfouz, the Egyptian Nobel Laureate novelist, is a writer whose brilliance and talent have enabled him to play a pivotal role in the Arab world. Being the author of thirty-three novels and sixteen collections of short stories, he is one of the most influential writers in Egypt, possibly across the Middle East region. According to Tahar Ben Jelloun, the Moroccan writer, 'you cannot understand Egypt without Mahfouz, without his characters, with whom every reader, Arab or not, can identify'.[8] That is to say, Mahfouz mirrors the Egyptian identity, struggle, ambitions, disappointments, to name but a few.

Born on 11 December, 1911, Naguib Mahfouz has portrayed his place of birth (i.e. Jamaliyya) in many of his novels including the *Cairo Trilogy* (1956). He focuses on the alley, or quarter (*hara*), in a large number of his works. This represents a common denominator between Mahfouz and many prominent writers, such as Orhan Pamuk's interest in Istanbul, especially the Bosporus, in many of his works. The 'hara' world is one of Mahfouz's main sources of inspiration. He states the importance of feeling attached to a certain place, because it appears to him that '(a man of letters) must have a tie with a certain place or a certain object to form a point of departure for his emotions'. Mahfouz also argues: 'what really moves me is the *hara* world, it is my favourite world'.[9] The *hara* has its own spirit and its own people, featuring the *futuwwa* (i.e. chivalrous figure) who is a man of strength and protection. He is more of a guard or a hero that most of the *hara* residents rely on; however, this figure turns into an oppressor rather than a protector. He is an essential element of Mahfouz's works. In *The Harafish* (discussed in detail in Chapter One), the main characters are linked to this notion. Mahfouz describes one of the real futuwwas he has met as follows: '…he had an awesome appearance; he

[8] Denys-Johnson Davies, ed. *The Naguib Mahfouz Reader* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2016), p.5.
[9] Rasheed El Enany, *Naguib Mahfouz: His Life and Times* (Cairo, Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007), p. 2.

resembled a party leader or a big general. He was quite a character! Very gallant and possessing an attractive personality! A true knight'.[10] Despite the *futuwwa* representing a popular type of chivalry in Egypt, few studies have analysed this character. One of the scholars is Sawsan El-Mesirri in her book *Ibn Al Balad* (1978) (another word for a good *futuwwa*); she states that a *futuwwa* 'learns from life: he learns from interacting with different kinds of people. He learns from life itself'.[11] Mahfouz also discussed *futuwwas* in a feature film (*Al Futuwwa*, 1957) the script of which is written by Mahfouz himself and directed by Salah Abou-Seif. In this film, the character of the *futuwwa* is on the thin line between the good *futuwwa* and the greedy one. The film discusses the 'vegetables king', Zayadan, who oppresses the people and abuses the market for himself. Haridi, a gullible youth from the countryside, tries to fight against Zayadan. When the former wins, he turns into a tyrant. It is a cycle that the modern *futuwwa*s go through, unlike the classical figure of the *futuwwa* in Mahfouz's works.[12] Being drawn to the figure of the *futuwwa* yet interested in placing him within his family situation is indicative of Mahfouz's social realist approach.

It is noteworthy that Egyptian and Arab readers perceive and value Mahfouz not only as a prominent, prolific writer but as 'the conscience of nation' as well.[13] His works record Egypt on the historical, political and social levels. According to Gaber Asfour (an Egyptian professor and a former Minister of Culture in 2011), Mahfouz discusses humanity issues that touch humans' souls worldwide. In his book *Naguib Mahfouz: ālrmz w ālqymh* (The Symbol and the Value), Asfour (2010) presents stories about the value and significance of Mahfouz's works. One of the stories is about his doctor in the US who admires Mahfouz's works. When asked why, he states: 'Mahfouz makes me know more about your

[10] El Enany, *Mahfouz His Life and Times*, p. 3.
[11] Sawsan El Messiri, *Ibn Al Balad: A Concept of Egyptian Identity* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1978), p. 29.
[12] Robert Irwin, "Futuwwa: Chivalry and Gangsterism in Medieval Cairo." *Muqarnas*, Vol. 21, Issue 1, 2004, p. 162.
[13] Richard Jacquemond, *Conscience of the Nation: Writers, State, and Society in Modern E*gypt (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2008) , p.1.

country, Egypt, and about Arabs; at the same time, he makes me know myself more' (my translation).[14]

While Mahfouz is considered to be of universal relevance, his works stem from, and panoramically reflect, Egypt's history and culture. In his early works, such as *Khufu's Wisdom*, Mahfouz examines the influence of authority and wisdom in modern Egypt, using the setting and timing of ancient Egypt as symbols. The questions of freedom, equality and liberation are raised in many of his novels, including *Karnak*, *The Beginning and the End* and *The Thief and the Dogs*. In those novels, Mahfouz presents an analytical study of human nature through his characters.

He was a source of inspiration to many writers, including Louis Awad, an Egyptian intellectual and writer, who describes Mahfouz's works as respected and accepted by many layers of the society.[15] In fact, Mahfouz's interest in philosophy as a university student has had an impact on him as a writer. In his collection of articles, Mahfouz expresses his opinion on philosophy as follows: 'there is no doubt that philosophy has an impact on my being, on my ideas and on my upbringing in general. I am interested in many philosophers' visions; however, I do not belong to any of them. I love many philosophers, including Descartes, Kant, Schopenhauer, Sartre and Camus' (my translation).[16] Mahfouz has written about philosophy in many of his articles, with special analysis of Socrates, and he has reflected on its significance to target not only other philosophers but also the public.

In *Naguib Mahfouz w fn ṣnāʿh ālʿbqryh* (Mahfouz and the Art of Genesis), Masry Hanoura, Chair of the Psychology Department at Minia University, explains the reasons behind Mahfouz's special writing talent. He states that, 'Mahfouz is a giver; he has a high sense of goodwill and virtue, which is

[14] Gaber Asfour, *Naguib Mahfouz: ālrmz w ālqymh* (Cairo: dār ālmṣryh āllbnānyh, 2010).
[15] Ghali Shukri, Naguib Mahfouz: min al-jammaliya ila nubil, Cairo: al Hay'a al-Amma li-l-Isti'lamat, 1988, p. 103.
[16] Asfour p. 47.

close to idealism. He confessed to his friends that he prefers to be different and deep' (my translation).[17] In his analysis of Mahfouz's talent, Hanoura introduces thirteen factors, the first of which is his creative direction. Creative direction – as well as his exploration and admiration of ancient and modern Egyptian arts – has been instilled in Mahfouz since his upbringing at an early age while visiting museums, temples, churches and mosques. According to Hanoura, writing, for Mahfouz, is an adventure that he enjoys immensely.[18]

In fact, Mahfouz is also a skilful historian. He is capable of restoring and appreciating the heritage of Egypt, particularly Old Cairo's. For El Ghitani, Mahfouz is the icon of humanity in literature; countless intellectuals and the readers see Mahfouz as an icon that reminds them of the Egyptian heritage and culture. A large number of readers define his literature as a history text, because he presents many aspects of Egyptian history in his novels ranging from ancient to modern Egypt. Elias Khoury's suggestion that Mahfouz's oeuvre is a type of 'history of the novel form, from historical fiction to romance, saga, and picaresque tale, followed by work in realist, modernist, naturalist, symbolist, and absurdist modes.'[19]

Moreover, Mahfouz challenges his readers to engage with social and ethical responsibilities. For instance, in *Children of the Alley*, Mahfouz's story concerns the history of humanity as it sends a message to readers in general and to Arab ones in particular. He also warns his readers of their leaders, giving them an opportunity to evaluate the latter believing that it is Mahfouz's own duty to help the laymen think before choosing a leader in order to avoid dictators. He does not want them to be slaves or blind followers of such leaders, even if the latter are nationalists like Abdel Nasser. Therefore, Mahfouz can be perceived as a revolutionary writer, historian and leader. The significance of Mahfouz

[17] Masry Hanoura, *Naguib Mahfouz w fn ṣnāʿh ālʿbqryh* (Cairo: dār ālšrwq, 2008) , p. 29.
[18] Hanoura, pp. 29-30.
[19] Davies, p. 7.

lies in his choice of topics, descriptions of his characters, and the political and social foregrounding of his stories.

Mahfouz mirrors socio-political imbalances in his works. Every work of his captures a certain significant political incident. For instance, his first three novels, which take place in ancient Egypt, present the life of the Egyptians under British colonisation. Other important examples are the novels published between the fifties and the sixties in which Abdel Nasser and his followers are portrayed as dictators and the people as lost souls.[20]

Edward Said describes Mahfouz as someone with an 'overbearing view of his country'. Said adds: 'as an emperor surveying his realm, he feels capable of summing up, judging, and shaping its long history and complex position as one of the world's oldest, most fascinating and coveted prizes for conquers like Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon, as well as its own natives'.[21] *Thebes at War*, for instance, is a symbolic work of the life of Egyptians under British colonisation. In *The Beginning and the End*, the oppression of colonisation is seen subtly in the dialogues and the isolation the characters feel. As Wail Hassan notes 'Mahfouz's career encapsulates the history not so much of the European novel as of postcolonial literary consciousness'.[22] As a postcolonial writer, Mahfouz presents the image of the coloniser both symbolically in some novels and directly in others. *The Trilogy* is not only about the relationships with men and women, as it may seem. It tackles many issues, as a historical, political and social novel. This comprehensive text includes a variety of Egyptian views: leftist, Marxist, Islamist, Wafdist, nationalist, and others. The family of the protagonist, El Sayed Ahmed Abdel Gawad, represents multiple social strata. They once unite as a family but often fight as rivals.

[20] Rasheed El Enany. *Naguib Mahfouz: His Life and Times*. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007).
[21] Edward Said. 'The Cruelty of Memory: Akhenaten: Dweller in Truth.' The New York Review. Nov.2000, pp. 46-50 p. 46.
[22] Wail Hassan. *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Naguib Mahfouz* p. 33.

In *The Trilogy*, Abdel Gawad, leads a double life: a typical patriarch in the morning and a hideous one at night. His oppressive nature is typical of the colonisers'; he practices his power over his family in the same manner of the colonisers with the colonised. There are multiple incidents that focus on the cruelty of colonisation. *The Trilogy* is set between 1917 and 1945. In *Palace Walk* (the first part of *The Trilogy*), Abdel Gawad is at gunpoint on his way back home, and is forced to refill a trench dug. This example is one among others that underscore the humiliation of the colonisation. Gawad comments 'I would rather die than be humiliated like that.'[23] Generally, the description of the colonisers in *The Trilogy* as villains is common. As a case in point, Aisha (Abdel Gawad's youngest daughter) comments, 'what criminals they are…God's curse on those dogs, the bastards'.[24] Fahmy plays the role of the patriot in the family, whereas the rest are passive and subdued. They are submissive to the father, which implies being submissive to the colonisers as well. Yassin (the eldest son) states: 'nobody lives like us.'[25] This shows that they live a humiliated life.

Another area of concern in *The Trilogy* is related to women's rights. Mahfouz describes Amina, who got married at the age of fourteen, as gullible. Throughout the novel, she is a miserable submissive character, demonstrating Mahfouz's criticism of marriage at an early age. On the other hand, Amina's daughters get married at a later stage including Khadiga whose character is strong.

Interestingly, Mahfouz presents more than one version of womanhood, and various versions of manhood. For example, Abdel Gawad's masculinity is based on his love of drinking and interest in women; Yassin, walks in his father's footsteps; and Fahmy, the middle child, behaves differently because he proves his manhood through his love for his country by fighting British colonisation.

[23] Naguib Mahfouz. *Palace Walk*. Trans. William M. Hutchins and Olive E Kenny. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1994. p. 419.
[24] Ibid p. 454.
[25] *Palace Walk*, p. 175.

Regarding family lessons, Abdel Gawad fails to be a good father as he is a fearful figure that relies on power more than love and friendship. He believes leniency and love are weaknesses even though they provide convenient cover for his disreputable double life.

In the *Beginning and the End*, Mahfouz presents the negative impact of colonisation through the desperation of the lives of the characters. Nefissa, suffers from oppression and the rigid circumstances beyond her control, which signifies the humiliation of the entire society under colonisation. Another example is that of Hassanien, a narcissist character, who feels the need to rebel against the oppression he experiences in *The Beginning and the End*. He struggles to achieve his dreams because he is a symbol of an 'oppressed nation'.[26]

Furthermore, Mahfouz was deeply concerned with presenting political issues and incidents in many of his works. The 1919 Revolution has haunted Mahfouz both as a person and as a writer despite seven years old at that time. It contributes to Mahfouz's initial understanding of nationalism. He describes it as follows: 'I saw the futuwwat with my own eyes when they sacked and occupies the Gamaliya police station. As I told you, there was a room on the roof, and it had a window that looked out over the square. From that window, when I was a child, I saw all the demonstrations that passed in front of Bayt al-Qadi.[27] The young Mahfouz, who has witnessed the revolution, is portrayed in *Two Palaces* of *The Trilogy*. He ended the first part of *The Trilogy* with the death of Fahmy during the 1919 Revolution. This Revolution is introduced in more than one novel, including *Fountain and Tomb*.

Furthermore, there are four versions of Mahfouz's autobiography: *Fountain and Tomb* (1975), *Echoes of an Autobiography* (1994), *Pages from Mahfouz's Diaries* (2011), and *The Dreams* (2004).

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[26] Naguib Mahfouz, *The Beginning and the End*. Trans. Ramsis Awad (New York: Anchor Books Double Day, 1989) , p. 199

[27] Gamal al-Ghitani. *Mahfouz's Dialogs*. Trans. Humphrey Davies. (Cairo: AUC Press, 2007), p. 68.

In *The Trilogy*, there is a semi-autobiographical character (i.e. Kamal), whereas, in the other autobiographies, Mahfouz introduces his wisdom and philosophy of life more than recounting his detailed personal experiences. In other words, Mahfouz never presents a conventional autobiography. His writings about himself are distributed among his writings to prevent having a conventional autobiography. Since Mahfouz is not only the 'conscience of the nation' (according to Jacquemond) who plays a vital role in Egyptian society but also an icon for writers, he is an educator whose outputs act as the *Bildungsroman* in the Arab world.[28] In his works, Mahfouz presents the socio-political struggles of the Egyptians, particularly during the anti-colonial resistance movement when sibling bond culminates and serves as a symbol of collective brotherhood.

Despite growing out of cultural forms of anti-colonial resistance and decolonisation movements, postcolonial studies have quite different strands. While some postcolonial intellectuals, such as Homi Bhabha, are concerned with the assimilation of the previously- colonised into the West, Mahfouz's works are more comparable to liberationists who seek democratic national self-determination. Equally, his predicament is not one of the 'epistemic violence' analysed by Gayatri Spivak that draw on Egyptian cultural and intellectual resources and legacies. Rather, his post-colonial slant concerns mirroring the conditions of an inclusive society that opposes elitism and sectarian divisions. Another Egyptian writer Ahdaf Soueif articulates well that we might associate with Mahfouz. In an interview that appears in *The Edinburgh Companion to the Postcolonial Middle East*, Soueif comments: 'I grew up believing in Egypt's liberationist role in the region…It was back in England, and with the blossoming of anti-Islamic sentiments after the Khomeini revolution, that I started to see that the divide was not over; that even if colonialism in its traditional forms was receding, it very much had the

[28] Jacquemond, p. 1

energy and the desire to reinvent itself.'[29] While Soueif's focus here is a global one, Mahfouz attends to the way that colonialism re-invents itself internally in neo-colonial forms; that is to say, the struggle for liberation and social justice is an on-going one that repeats itself over the years as in 1919, 1952 and 2011.

In another interview in *The Edinburgh Companion to the Postcolonial Middle East*, Sinan Antoon comments: 'Every category has its limitations to be sure. But the critical insights and tools bequeathed by critics and writers who belong to postcolonial theory have been of great value to me as a reader, writer and scholar. The decolonisation of knowledge and the critique of colonial modernity is integral to understanding the power dynamics of the world today.' He adds that, 'there are colonised minds aplenty, but there are also critical activists, scholars and writers in the region who are deconstructing colonial narratives and courageously confronting the mutations of the postcolonial.'[30] In other words, Arab writers understand the importance of an anti-colonial stance even if their situation differs from the classic settler colonial one. For both Soueif and Antoon, it is a case of tackling the mutations of colonial power, thus forms of neo-colonialism. For Mahfouz, in contrast, colonisation reinvents itself with every patriarchal leader. An in-depth review of the ill effects of the behaviour of an oppressive leader on the people is provided in Chapter Two *Rivalry.*

As noted earlier, the familial relations in Mahfouz's works act as a metaphor of the collective brotherhood in the nation. It is worth referring to Sophocles' Antigone and her liberation struggle to bury her brother. Nelson Mandala comments on her bravery by saying: 'It was Antigone who symbolised our struggle; she was in her own way, a freedom fighter, for she defied the law on the

[29] Anna Ball, Interview with Ahdaf Soueif. *The Edinburgh Companion to the Postcolonial Middle East*. Edinburgh Companions to Literature and the Humanities, pp. 57-66, p. 63
[30] Karim Mattar, Interview with Sinan Antoon. *The Edinburgh Companion to the Postcolonial Middle East*, pp. 67-82, p. 79.

grounds that was unjust.'[31] In fact, Jacques Lacan is one of the few male psychoanalysts who has brought sibling love and sacrifice to attention. Antigone, the daughter of Jocasta and Oedipus, is embroiled in a story about the love of siblings. Antigone is the devoted sister who wishes to bury her brother despite the circumstances. She describes her love for her brother as follows:

> A husband dead, there might have been another.
>
> A child by another too, if I had lost the first.
>
> But mother and father both lost in the halls of Death,
>
> No brother could ever spring to light again.
>
> For this law alone I held you first in honor.
>
> For this, Creon, the king, judges me a criminal
>
> Guilty of dreadful outrage, my dear brother![32]

Antigone's transgression has to do with thinking about burying her brother, Polyneices. Her uncle, King Creon, prohibits her from such an act. The feud begins when both Antigone's brothers Eteocles and Polyneices fight against each other for the control of Thebes, while Eteocles fights with King Creon, Polyneices is the rival for both. King Creon does not accept such infidelity; in revenge, he decides to leave the body 'unburied' as an act of shame and disgrace. Antigone attempts to bury her brother twice. Seen by the guards, she has to confront the King and admit her act. Hence, Antigone is an exemplar of political leaders (as discussed in detail in Chapter One: *Altruism among Siblings*.

[31] Nelson Mandala. *Long Walk to Freedom*. London: Abacus, 1997 p. 541.
[32] Sophocles. *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus.* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p.106.

Nevertheless, it is essential to tackle the effects of politics on sibling relationships in Egypt first because critical political incidents enable the collective brotherhood to flourish.

Political and Colonial Impact on the Sibling Bond in Egypt

In modern times, Egypt has faced several serious crises and incidents during the time of colonisation. These types of incidents enhance the sense of brotherhood and leaders encourage their people to gather to fight for one cause. It is worth noting that Abdel Nasser's way of addressing Egyptians in his speeches: 'my brothers and sisters', 'we are one family' and 'hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder we shall resist'.[33] In his popular speech celebrating his decision for the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, Abdel Nasser ends his speech to the workers of the Suez Canal Company as follows: 'let us go forward brothers, marching to prove the pillars of freedom and independence, to prove God Almighty'.[34]

I will start presenting the crises and incidents chronologically, where people bonded as brothers. The first relevant incident is the 1919 Revolution, which Mahfouz highlights in *Palace Walk*. In 1919, the situation in Egypt was intense, and Egyptians lost patience and hope. The Egyptian patriot Saad Zaghloul was arrested and the next day the Revolution started. Many workers, drivers and peasants boycotted work as a sign of objection; they asked for the release of Zaghloul and added their own personal demands. Moreover, the English forces were attacked in Assiut and other cities. Even though the Revolution was successful in returning Zaghloul, the recognition of Egypt as a state was not successful. The English also rejected pleas to withdraw from the Suez Canal. The reason why the English agreed to return Zaghloul was the fact that the Egyptians bonded in their resistance.[35] In her

[33] Samir Abbas, 'Gamal Abdel ,Nasser's note in celebrating the new constitution in 1956.' *YouTube*, 27 Apr. 2013. YouTube, 04 July 2013 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoswHOcCDr0 [accessed 10 Jan 2017]

[34] Savannah Benes. 'The Suez Crisis of 1956: Redefining Diplomacy in the Middle East and the Wider World.' *YouTube*, 8 Jun. 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBnirYU5G3M [accessed 21 Jan 2018]

[35] Ziad Fahmy, *Ordinary Egyptian: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture* (California: Stanford University Press, 2011).

paper *Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution: From Feminist Awakening to Nationalist Political Activism,* Nabila Ramdani, an award-winning French–Algerian journalist and columnist, argues the role of women was shaped in this Revolution. They have united in resistance for a common cause. Ramdani states that 'this period is referred to as "the women's awakening" by Egyptian scholars such as Beth Baron who has pointed to the manner in which women have been able to announce their demands. While the better educated have found their voice through the words, others have participated in public political action'.[36]According to Césaire and Fanon, the colonial practice of designating the colonised as primitive induces a sense of inferiority, which can lead to resistance. To draw a comparison between the importance of sibling relationships and post-colonialism initially seems complicated; however, applying both Césaire and Fanon's theories on colonisation clarifies this bond.

In his book *The Wretched of the Earth (1961),* Fanon introduces the darkest side of colonisation. In the last part, he introduces the horrifying causes and stories of the sufferers of colonisation in Algeria; however, these cases may still apply to Egypt and some colonised countries. One of the psychological crimes that the colonised suffers from during and after colonisation is the hesitation. The colonised ones confront themselves with regard to their self-identity, asking questions like 'Who am I?' [37] In the struggle to find oneself, the sense of community plays a pivotal role. The sense of hesitation is clear in the only children characters, as discussed in Chapter Three, who suffer from identity crises, and struggle to be on their own. For example, in *The Mirage*, Kamel is a lost soul that is oppressed by his mother. He fails to be himself even after her death. However, the novel ends hopefully when Kamel finally finds supportive company.

[36] Nabila Ramadani, 'Women in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution: From Feminist Awakening to Nationalist Political Activism', *Journal of Women's Studies*, 2013, p. 39.
[37] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Richard Philcox (Grove: Atlantic Inc, 2007), p. 250.

Both theorists build a world for the colonised to resist the coloniser. The key factor in their theories is creating a bond or a community. Firstly, Césaire (1950) defines the colonised as a person 'who wants to move forward', whereas the coloniser is the one 'who holds things back'.[38] In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon urges the readers to resist the coloniser, 'come, brothers, we have far too much work to do for us to play the game of rear guard. Europe has done what she set out to do and on the whole, she has done it well; let us stop blaming her but let us say to her firmly that she should not make such a song and dance about it. We have no more to fear; so, let us stop envying her'.[39] Both Fanon and Césaire address their readers/the colonised as 'brothers'. In *Frantz Fanon and the African Revolution*, Grohs argues that Fanon and Césaire agree on many aspects concerning black liberation and the independence of the colonised, yet Fanon disagrees with Césaire on the significance of studying history. Grohs states that Fanon 'thinks it is useless to study the African past and to romanticize it. He does not believe that this helps to solve present-day problems. He suspects that all the endeavors to elucidate African history and to compare it to European history are only the outcome of a deep inferiority complex'.[40] In this case, Mahfouz follows Césaire, and history plays an essential role in Mahfouz's writings ranging from his first novels about ancient Egyptians to his later ones – such as *Echoes of an Autobiography* and *The Morning and Evening Talk* –. In addition, the fact that they refer to the colonised as brothers is closer to Abdel Nasser's way like I mentioned previously.

The Suez crisis is another example of the resistance bond. In July 1956, Abdel Nasser's decision to nationalise the Suez Canal created uproar in the imperialist nations, namely France and Britain. In her paper *Suez and The High Tide of Arab Nationalism*, Anne Alexander posits that the foreign press

[38] Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*. Trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), p. 39
[39] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 314.
[40] G. K. Grohs, Frantz Fanon and the African Revolution, *The journal of modern African Studies*, Vol. 6, No.4, 1968, p. 544.

excels in insulting Abdel Nasser by calling him 'fascist' and comparing him to Hitler.[41] His decision has deprived the British from benefiting from the canal, which has led them to consider him the reason behind the nationalisation of the Suez Canal. In November 1956, Port Said was attacked by three nations: France, Britain and Israel. Popular resistance has fought the three powers even though the war is not an organised one in which two powers confront one another. Everybody in Port Said – including children, women and elderly people – has fought. Volunteers have come from many cities in Egypt to fight. Similar to the 1919 Revolution, women have been the first to volunteer. Alexander has interviewed women who have fought, and most of them reminisce about it. One lady states, 'a lot of women intellectuals and students and housewives joined us. We set up women's resistance committees across the capital. We had military-style training; how to defuse a bomb, how to shoot a rifle and so on'.[42]

In his book *Groundings with my Brothers*, Walter Rodney, a Guyanese historian and scholar, postulates that brotherhood strengthens the black struggle. It seems to Rodney that blacks have a certain language or code that non-blacks cannot crack. He states, 'I was prepared to go any place where any group of black people were prepared to sit down to talk and listen, because, that is Black Power, that is one of the elements, a sitting down together to reason, to "ground" as the brothers say: we have to 'ground together'.[43] Rodney adds:

> There was all this furore about whites being present in the Black Writers Congress which most whites did not understand. They did not understand that our historical experience has been speaking to white people, whether it be begging white people,

[41] Anne Alexander, Suez and the High Tide of Arab Nationalism, *International Socialism*, Vol. 2, Issue 112, 2006.
[42] Alexander, 'Suez and the High Tide'.
[43] Walter Rodney. *The Groundings with My Brothers.* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1969) p.77.

> justifying ourselves against white people or even vilifying white people. Our whole context has been, "that is the man to talk to". Now the new understanding is that Black Brothers must talk to each other. That is a very simple understanding which any reasonable person outside of a particular "in-group" would understand. That is why we talk about our 'family discussions'.[44]

Accordingly, people unite when they share a common ground; in other words, facing the same struggles, suffering, oppression, devastation, goals, just to name a few, results in a strong, sacred bond that empowers the weak despite the challenges and dangers the latter encounter. The bond is translated into a sense of brotherhood that entails power, courage and strength.

The Representation of Family in Egyptian Art

Ancient Egypt has a general impact on modern Egyptian art in general. It is worth stating that feminising Egypt, and sometimes picturing the nation as a 'mother', is a common theme in the Egyptian culture. Mahmoud Mukhtar, who belongs to the first generation of the Faculty of Arts in Cairo, is the father of the sculpture in Egypt. Mukhtar's work portrays both twentieth-century patriots and ancient Egyptians. Mukhtar's artistic journey began to develop in Paris where he exhibited the first versions of his art. Some nationalists from the Wafd Movement saw work. They helped to fund Mukhtar to be able to create larger versions of his work. When Mukhtar returned to Egypt in 1922, he joined the Wafd political party. His statue of Egypt was placed in Ramses Square in Cairo (before being moved to the Cairo University gate). Among the most important statues by Mukhtar are those of Saad Zaghloul, Huda Sharawi (a women's activist), Umm Khulthum (an Egyptian singer), Isis (an

[44] Rodney *The Groundings with My Brothers* p. 78.

ancient Egyptian Queen) and 'Nahdat Misr' (Egypt's Renaissance). According to Alex Dika Seggerman's paper 'Mahmoud Mukhtar: The first sculptor from the land of sculpture', Nahdat Misr is an outspoken portrayal of Egypt's feminism. She states:

> *Nahdat Misr* depicts a colossal sphinx and woman raising her veil. The sphinx represented antiquity and the woman was the symbol of an awakened Egypt, standing on a green base that possibly denoted Islam. The figure of the woman was a reference to the Egyptian women's movement led by Huda Sha'arawi, who decided to go unveiled in 1922 and had organized anti-British demonstrations. Mukhtar chose granite from Aswan in Upper Egypt as the material to symbolize the unity of the country.[45]

Nahdat Misr remains one of the most powerful symbols of Egypt, putting both the sphinx (a symbol of resistance) and a female (a symbol of giving and power in Egypt) side by side. It is solid proof that the role of the mother is substantial in Egypt. It is more rewarding to be a mother than a father, although the father's role is essential. For instance, in Egypt, there is no celebration for Father's Day, although Mother's Day (on the 21st of March) is a very important event that Egyptians await to celebrate with their families. State and private media present special programs such as TV shows and movies that are dedicated to the celebration of Mother's Day. Unlike Father's Day which has rarely been raised to discussion in Egypt, much has been written about the importance of Mother's Day which is originally a suggestion by Ali Amin, the Egyptian journalist and co-founder of *Al Akhbar* newspaper. Having received a letter from a mother complaining about her children, he has found it necessary to reward mothers and honour their sacred roles in society.[46] For Mahfouz, the role of the mother is pivotal.

[45] Alexandra Dika Seggerman, 'Mahmoud Mukhtar: The First Sculptor from the land of Sculpture', *Journal of World Art*, Vol.4, Issue 1, 2014, p. 33.
[46] 'History of Mother's Day: From Ancient Egypt to Modern Times', *AUC: Arts and Culture*, 20 March 2016.

Mothers usually play the wise, caring, patient figures in the majority of his novels, as in *The Beginning and the End*, *Khan El Khalili* and in *The Mirage* – yet the latter is strong and manipulative –.

The importance of sibling relationships in Egypt dates back to ancient Egyptian times, when the family played a crucial role. This is reflected in the significance of marriage and the encouragement of couples to have large families. Love, care and sacrifice among family members are the norm. Interestingly, in Egyptian mythology – which mirrors the lives of the ancient Egyptians – siblings have two images: the idealist sibling and the evil one. For example, Isis and Osiris (as discussed in Chapter Two) have fought the evil of their own brother, Nephthys.

Concerning the literature of ancient Egypt, it encompasses a variety of genres: narrative, teaching/instruction, lamentation, dialogue, love poems and banquet songs. As a case in point, *A Tale of Two Brothers* falls into the teaching/instruction genre. This story is one of the oldest popular ancient Egyptian folktale/myth about siblings.[47] It is about two brothers, Anubis and Bata, who are both living with Anubis's wife whose name is unidentified. The tale shows that the brothers' bond is firm. Anubis's wife tries to seduce Bata, but he refuses to be with her. Bata's response to her request is: 'now see, you are like a mother to me, and your husband is like a father. Now the one older than I, he has raised me'.[48] When Anubis returns, his wife convinces him that his younger brother wants to seduce her. She has manipulated Bata's words for her own benefit by saying, 'I'm like your mother and my husband is like a father'.[49] Unfortunately, Anubis believes her and decides to kill his brother. Nevertheless, he meets a talking cow which clarifies the misunderstanding. It is clear that the talking cow, which is the most mythical element in the story, is meant to convey a message that sibling

[47] Alan Dundes, 'Projective Inversion in the Ancient Egyptian: A Tale of Two Brothers'. *The Journal of American Folkore*, Vol. 115, No. 457-458, 2002, p. 378.
[48] Dundes, p. 378-9.
[49] Dundes, p. 379.

relationships are, in some cases, stronger than marital ones. Psychologically, Anubis is more inclined towards believing the cow rather than his wife in hope of protecting his younger brother. Accordingly, the tale emphasises the deep connection between siblings and how this bond creates a sense of peace and discipline in their lives in which each one of them has a role to fulfil. In a similar vein, William Kelly Simpson's book, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, describes the roles of the brothers and the typical sibling bond that the ancient Egyptians believe in as follows:

> Now as for Anubis, he (possessed) a house, and he (Anubis) had a wife who made clothes for him while he (Bata) followed his cattle to the fields, since it was he who had to plow. It was he who reaped for him, and it was (he) who did for him every chore that was in the fields. Indeed, his younger brother was a perfect man: there was none like him in the entire land, for a god's virility was in him.[50]

With reference to the book of wisdom entitled *The Teachings of Ptahhotep: The Oldest Book in the World*, living in peace depends on strengthening family bonds. The book consists of advice for life's journey. Despite being considered as the oldest book, it is still relevant and applicable to the present Egyptian society and to Egyptians' views of their social relationships. One of the pieces of advice about social life is: 'the good son is a gift of God and exceeds what is told him by his leader. He will do right when his heart is straight. As you succeed me sound in body, Pharaoh, content with all that was done, may you obtain many years of life'.[51]

[50] William Kelly Simpson. *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and poetry*. (New York: Yale University Press, 2003) p. 81.
[51] Asa G. Hilliard et al. *Teachings of Ptahhotep: The Oldest Book in the World*, (Blackwood Press, 1987) p. 35.

On a similar note, starting from Judaism, the divine religions maintain the importance of this bond, which is one of the similarities between the three monotheistic religions. Rabbi Levi Gershon summarises the bond as follows:

> One who loves (befriends) another is joined up with his beloved in good times and bad times. This is part and parcel of loving, that one does not abandon one's beloved in time of trouble. He will rejoice when (his friend) does well and assist him when things go badly. While a brother will not be impelled to be joined with his brother in good times, in bad times (for his brother) he will come to his aid, for he is his own flesh and blood.[52]

In Coptic Egypt, the sibling bond is sacred. According to 1 John 3:15, 'whosoever hated his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.' The verses reinforce the salience of this bond's accountability as in the verse 'my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joys and crown'.[53] This shows that sibling bonds entail much affection, appreciation, honour and happiness. Other verses state: 'if a man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen'[54]; in other words, failing to love one's siblings implies hypocrisy and failure to love God. This concept is reiterated in the verse that states, 'We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death'.[55] Even though the portrayed image of sibling relationships is controversial, the verses provide proof of not only their significance but also the link between the love of God and the love of a brother. This unravels the weight of relationship between

[52] 'Sibling Relationships', *My Jewish Learning*, 2014.
[53] *The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version: Containing the Old and New Testaments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4:1 .
[54] *The Holy Bible* 4:32.
[55] *The Holy Bible* 12:12.

siblings. For some believers, no love is comparable to that of God. This belief is applicable to the present in terms of the role of culture and religions in shaping the modern Egyptians.

In Islam, the definition of this bond is quite similar to, yet more comprehensive than, those of Judaism and Christianity. The words 'brother' or 'sister' do not only refer to blood relatives. According to the Quran, in Surat al-Hujurat (The Rooms), 'the believers are brothers, so reconcile between your brothers, and remain conscious of God, so that you may receive mercy'.[56]The first type of brotherly bond has to do with the relationship among all believers regardless of their religions. Their relationship brings mercy and peace to one another by declaring and believing in God. The presentation of the 'brotherly bond' is not always a positive one; in Surat al-Isra' (The Night Journey), 'the extravagant are brethren of the devils, and the devil is ever ungrateful to his Lord'.[57] The 'extravagant' (i.e. the spendthrift) is as evil as the devil who has a bond that is similar to believers'. Lastly, there is the blood-relative bond (i.e. the 'flesh and blood' type). In Surat Al Baqarah (The Heifer), a devout believer is the one who helps people, including his/her relatives. It states:

> Righteousness does not consist of turning your faces towards the East and the West. But righteous is he who believes in God, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Scripture, and the prophets. Who gives money, though dear, to near relatives, and orphans, and the needy, and the homeless, and the beggars, and for the freeing of slaves.[58]

[56] *The Translation of the Glorious Quran*. Trans. Ahmad Zidan et al. (London: Zidan (A/D), 1991) (49:10).
[57] *Quran* (17:27).
[58] *Quran* (2:177).

For Mahfouz, the definitions and value of marriage and family of both the ancient Egyptians and the Islamic civilisations are the same. At his Nobel lecture in 1988, Mahfouz introduces the impact of both civilizations on him in person and on his works as follows:

> Let me, then, introduce Pharaonic civilization with what seems like a story since my personal circumstances have ordained that I become a storyteller. Hear then, this recorded historical incident: Old papyri relate that Pharaoh had learned of the existence of a sinful relation between some women of the harem and men of his court. It was expected that he should finish them off in accordance with the spirit of his time. But he instead, called to his presence the choice men of law and asked them to investigate what he has come to learn. He told them that he wanted the Truth so that he could pass his sentence with Justice. As for Islamic civilization I will not talk about its call for the establishment of a union between all Mankind under the guardianship of the Creator, based on freedom, equality and forgiveness. Nor will I talk about the greatness of its prophet. For among your thinkers there are those who regard him the greatest man in history…. I will, instead, introduce that civilization in a moving dramatic situation summarizing one of its most conspicuous traits: In one victorious battle against Byzantium it has given back its prisoners of war in return for a number of books of the ancient Greek heritage in philosophy, medicine and mathematics. This is a testimony of value for the human spirit in its demand for knowledge, even though the demander was a believer in God and the demanded a fruit of a pagan civilization.[59]

[59] Naguib Mahfouz. 'The Nobel Lecture'. Trans. Mohamed Salmway, in Nobel Lectures Literature 1981-1990, ed. Charge Tote Frangsmyr, and Sture Allen. (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 1993).

Mahfouz's speech emphasizes his fondness of both civilizations in creating a just society, where the sense of fraternity is appreciated. Both religion and the Ancient Egyptian civilization are indispensable in Mahfouz's works; they both shape his understanding of the sibling bond in the Egyptian society. In many of his novels, Mahfouz uses symbols from the past to highlight the present. Mahfouz's interest in ancient Egypt goes back to the one and only translated book titled *Peeps at Many Lands: Ancient Egypt* by James Baikie. His translation was published in the *New Review*, a journal published by the liberal Egyptian writer, and Mahfouz's role model, Salama Musa. The book is about the daily life and rituals of ancient Egyptians. Its translation is Mahfouz's first step towards introducing his series of three novels *Khufu's Wisdom* (1939), *Rhadopis of Nubia* (1943) and *The War of Thebes* (1944). Mahfouz has used Baikie's book as a reference on the daily life of ancient Egyptians.[60]

In *Khufu's Wisdom*, Mahfouz examines narcissism and the lust for authority. The protagonist is Khufu, the second king of the Fourth Dynasty in the time of the Old Kingdom, and the builder of the first and largest pyramid. Khufu asks a fortune-teller about the future leaders that will rule his dynasty. The fortune-teller assures him that, although he will remain in power until he dies, none of his descendants will reign over the kingdom. He is told that a boy coming from the priest of the god Ra will rule. Having heard this, Khufu decides to look for the baby of the god Ra. Unfortunately, Khufu kills the wrong baby and, by mistake, saves the child who will reign.

In *Rhadopis of Nubia*, which is a novel about feminine strength and power, Rhadopis, the beauty of Nubia, is pursued by most men. The tale is similar to one of the stories of *The Harafish*, 'Royal Jelly', in which the protagonist, Shahd, is the centre of attention, and a 'femme fatale' that is doomed to fail after rising to power at the beginning. According to Mahfouz's description, Rhadopis's beauty is her

[60] El Enany *Mahfouz and His Life and Times* p. 42.

main asset: 'Rhadopis the enchantress and seductress. She lives over there in her enchanting while palace…where her lovers and admirers head to compete for her affections and to stimulate the flow of her compassion. You may be lucky enough to see her, may the gods protect your hearts from harm'.[61] Rhadopis becomes the king's mistress. Leaving the end open, many questions remain unanswered such as: Is Rhadopis's beauty a curse to Egypt and to its ruler? Is she the reason behind the downfall of the king?

The third novel *Thebes at War* is set in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Dynasties. According to Nadine Gordimer's introduction to the translated version of the three novels, this one is the closest to modern times. Gordimer argues,

> of the three novels, this one has the clearest intention to be related to the present from the period in which it was written – British domination of Egypt, which even after Britain renounced her protectorate in 1922 continued to be felt, through the 1939–45 war until the deposing of King Farouk by Nasser in the 1950's. It also does not shirk the resort to reverse racism which inevitably is used to strengthen anti-colonial resolves.[62]

For instance, as mentioned earlier in the brief discussion of *Children of the Alley*, Mahfouz employs religious symbols to refer to the political situation in Egypt under Abdel Nasser's regime. Similarly, by decoding the political symbols utilised in *Thebes at War*, the ancient Egyptians want liberation from the Hyksos (invaders from Asia). The protagonist, King Ahmose, is fighting the Hyksos, and begins a love story with Princess Amenridis, the daughter of the Hyksos leader. King Ahmose is torn between

[61] El Enany *Mahfouz His Life and Times* p.193.
[62] Naguib Mahfouz.*Three Novels of Ancient Egypt: Khufu's Wisdom/Rhadopis of Nubia/Thebes of War*. (London: Everyman's Library Classics and Contemporary Classics, 2007) p.20.

choosing his love for his country or his love for the Princess. He becomes a hero for preferring his country to his love. Mahfouz ends the novel with prioritising the moral duty over love.

In his work *Before the Throne: a debate with Egypt's men from Menes to Anwar Sadat* (1983), which discusses Egypt from its ancient times to its modern ones, Mahfouz introduces a genre that is exclusive to him. He focuses on the Egyptian leaders through a dialogue among them. Samia Mehrez comments,

> It is set as a tribunal presided over by Osiris and Isis. Egyptian leaders file in, one by one, and are questioned on their deeds and misdeeds…the book remains faithful to its subtitle by being a dialogue throughout, and all leaders are asked to sit in the rows of the eternal, until further judgement is passed.[63]

Forty years after his series of ancient Egyptian novels, Mahfouz's new novel titled *Akhenaten: Dweller in Truth* (1985) tackles the story of Akhenaten, the Eighteenth Dynasty leader. The novel portrays Akhenaten as an idealist leader and a purified soul that is interested in reciting poetry and discussing philosophy. Mahfouz draws attention to the negative side of Akhenaten, particularly as a leader, because the latter imposes his strong faith in divinity while disregarding the will of the non-believers.[64] For Mahfouz, Ancient Egyptian culture is crucial because like him, they prefer the altruistic type of sibling relationships, and they highly reject the rivalry ones.

Sibling Relationships in Mahfouz

The Cairo Trilogy is one of the most popular novels written by Mahfouz. Kamal is the youngest in a family consisting of five children and resembles Mahfouz as a child. *The Trilogy* presents the typical

[63] Samia Mehrez. *Egyptian Writers between History and Fiction: Essays on Naguib Mahfouz, Sonallah Ibrahim, and Gamal al-Ghitani*. (Cairo: AUC, 1994), P. 37.
[64] Naguib Mahfouz, *Akhenaton: Dweller in Truth*. Trans. Tagreid Abu-Hassabo (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1998)

Egyptian family in the first half of the 20th century. It 'serves as a genuine human symbol of Egyptian society during an extended historical period in terms of social, political, and intellectual development'.[65] Mahfouz accentuates family relationships and the sibling bond throughout the novel, which establish recollections of Egypt's history; he concentrates on the family dynamics under colonisation. The daily family gathering of the mother, Amina, is with her children Fahmy, Khadiga, Aisha and Kamal, along with her stepson, Yasin, which creates intimacy and reveals the Egyptian history. The father, on the other hand, goes astray to enjoy his nights with his male friends and mistresses. Each character expresses different interests: Fahmy talks about the Egyptian political situation; Yasin listens and nods at his lengthy speeches; Khadiga and Aisha talk about looks and marriage; and Kamal talks about his school day, claiming that he has had a fight in order to gain their attention. Their mother listens to her children in amusement, even though she does not understand most of Fahmy's political views. This is a vivid image of the Egyptian society under the British colonisation. Mahfouz emphasises the family bond, particularly the sibling one, where most of the siblings not only love each other but also admire one another. Fahmy is Kamal's ideal, both romantically and intellectually.

On a political level, Mahfouz gathers more than one incident that uncovers the terror of living under certain conditions. When the British occupies Al-Hussain, an old district in Cairo where the family lives, Abdel Gawad (the patriarch) is arrested on his way home. Mariam, Fahmy's beloved neighbour, flirts with one of the British soldiers. Kamal sees her and hurries innocently to tell everyone, which leads to Fahmy's deep sadness and disappointment. None of these incidents, which recollect Egyptian history, could have been written without Mahfouz's traces of real life.

[65] Anwar al-Ma'addawi. *Kalimat fi al-adab*. (Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-Asriyya, 1966), pp. 36-7.

The *Cairo Trilogy* introduces the sibling bond that Mahfouz himself is deprived of. In one of his interviews, Mahfouz mentions how the age gap between him and his older siblings has sometimes made him feel like an only child. Unlike Mahfouz's personal experience, the five siblings in Mahfouz's trilogy have a passionate bond with each other.

In addition, Kamal is one of the most significant characters in Mahfouz's works. He symbolises the past and the present, Eastern and Western cultures, old traditions, science, modernity, to name but a few. The similarities between Mahfouz and Kamal are innumerable, starting from Mahfouz's childhood until his youth. Kamal's first love is Aida, the elegant, aristocratic girl who memorises more of the Bible than the Quranic verses, which is something Kamal admires. He compares his old-fashioned parents in Gamaliya to Aida who lives in the most luxurious district, Garden City. Kamal discloses his inner thoughts about Aida in their first meeting.

> This love is a tyrant. It flies in the face of other values, but in its wake your beloved glistens. Normal virtues do not improve it and ordinary defects of character do not diminish it. Such contrasts appear beautiful in its crown of pearls and fill you with awe. In your opinion, was it in any way demeaning for her to have disregarded the customs most people observe? Of course, not…in fact it would have been more demeaning if she had observed them.[66]

Meanwhile, Mahfouz reveals his first love as an adult:

> al Abbasiya, I knew any first love of the other kind. It was an experience devoid of any relationship, in view of the difference in age, and class, which meant that it could have

[66] Naguib Mahfouz, *Palace of Desire: The Cairo Trilogy 1*. Trans. William Maynard Hutchins, and Olive E. Kenny (London: A Black Swan, 1994), p.

> no aftermath. If it had, it might be that the experience would have lost much of the emotion that I invested in it. The effects of this relationship would show up later in Kamal Abdel Gawad's experience in The Cairo Trilogy and his love for 'Aida Shaddad.[67]

Furthermore, *Palace of Desire*, the second volume of the *Cairo Trilogy*, describes the adolescent life of Kamal in detail; he struggles between adapting to his parents' lives and adopting the new Western life. As indicated earlier, Kamal is a semi-autobiographical character that portrays Mahfouz in many situations. One of them is Kamal's argument with his father regarding the former's first article about Darwinism which is totally rejected by the father. This father, Abdel Gawad, has a spiritual, religious background that considers Adam as the father of mankind, which contradicts Kamal's belief and support of Darwinism. In addition, when Kamal chooses to study for a teaching degree, his father objects and compares him to the maid's son who is studying law, the prestigious degree, while Kamal, the son of a wealthy man, is studying the disreputable teaching. Mahfouz has not denied the resemblance between him and Kamal; nevertheless, he denies the idea that his parents' characters resemble those of Amina and Abdel Gawad. Mahfouz has once stated that his mother does not have a weak, obedient nature like Amina, nor is his father a tyrant.[68] Later, he mentions his father's strictness in some situations, such as trying to stop him from studying philosophy at university, which is similar to Kamal's quarrel with Abdel Gawad.[69]

Palace of Desire begins with a sorrowful, sentimental introduction regarding Amina's grief over her son's death. The first volume, *Palace Walk*, ends with Fahmy's death during the nationalists' revolution against the English in 1919. In description of her grief, Mahfouz says, 'she sat as usual, but

[67] Al-Ghitani. *Mahfouz's Dialogs*, p. 78.
[68] Ibid, p.151.
[69] Al-Ghitani. *Mahfouz's Dialogs*, p. 83.

time had changed her. She had grown thin, and her face seemed longer, if only because her cheeks were hollow. The locks of hair that escaped from her scarf were turning grey and made her seem older than she was'.[70] Amina's sorrow reflects the character of Kamal who has been is the closest to her after Fahmy's death. Kamal's sadness does not appear conventionally as he is not seen crying or mourning. He experiences a new world while staying with Yasin, the eldest brother, in the same room. He reads philosophy and explores love by having an imaginary relationship with his friend's sister. Perhaps Mahfouz has not experienced the bereavement of a sibling, yet the passionate description of the trauma indicates how much he values sibling relationships.

Concerning the father, Al Sayed Abdel Gawad, he is a living example of patriarchy and he represents the tyranny of the colonial system. Both Abdel Gawad and the colonisers practice the dark side of patriarchy. Abdel Gawad exercises his ultimate power over his family, claiming that he is protecting them from any harm they might face. While Abdel Gawad plays the role of the powerful father in the first part of the *Trilogy*, *Palace Walk*, Mahfouz ends this book with the 1919 Revolution, during which Egyptians unite to fight the British. Fahmy's death leads to Amina's victory by retrieving part of her freedom from humiliation and victimisation. 'Amina will win her freedom at a very high cost' (referring to Fahmy's death).[71] On the whole, Abdel Gawad's family can be considered as a symbol of the Egyptians, who wish for independence but struggle to have it. Abdel Gawad's power decreases in each part of the *Trilogy*, particularly in the third one titled *Sugar Street*. It focuses on the time before Abdel Nasser's era; everything seems different. Mahfouz comments on the family's deterioration as:

> The old lantern with its oil lamp had vanished, and hanging in its place was an electric light. The location had changed too, for the coffee hour had returned to the first floor.

[70] Naguib Mahfouz, *Palace of Desire*, p. 2.
[71] Ibid, p. 3.

> Indeed the entire upper story had moved downstairs to make life easier for the father, whose heart was no longer strong enough for him to climb to the top. The family members had changed as well. Amina's body has withered, and her hair had turned white. Although barely sixty, she looked ten years older, and her transformation was nothing compared to Aisha's decline and disintegration. [72]

The perception of the colonial society is usually a negative one in which the colonised are portrayed as weak and helpless. The colonisers behave as the patriarch, or the father, who will save the family or the society. According to Walter Rodney's book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, colonialism has never benefited the colonised. Rodney devotes a chapter to the claimed benefits of the Western colonisation. He argues that 'colonialism had only one hand – it was a one-armed bandit.'[73] This theory applies to Abdel Gawad's abuse of power over his wife and children. The benefits he claims are nothing more than his justification his demeaning behaviour. The abuse of power and oppression are themes Mahfouz has adopted in many of his novels including *The Children of the Alley* and *Karnak.* Mahfouz has always dreamt of a balanced and just society, so he has devoted some of his writings to focusing on the repercussions of oppression and the hunger for power that some people have.

The book entitled *Safahat Min Mozakerat Naguib Mahfouz* (Pages from Naguib Mahfouz's Diaries) is a long interview between Mahfouz and Ragaa El Nakkash. In this interview, Mahfouz introduces the personal particulars of his life, which exceeds the details in *Echoes of an Autobiography*. The book is divided into twenty-four chapters which cover his childhood, youth, employment, literature, social life, and women, along with some discussions about politics and history in relation to his personal life such

[72] Naguib Mahfouz, Trans. William Maynard Hutchins and Angele Botros Samaan, *Sugar Street: The Cairo Trilogy III* (Cairo: AUC Press, 1992), p. 1.
[73] Walter Rodney, A. M. Babu and Vincent Harding, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington D.C.: Howard UP, 1991)

as his first experience in the 1919 Revolution which represents the first revolution in modern Egyptian history against the British colonisation. The book ends with discussing Mahfouz's near-death experience of 1994 caused by a young terrorist. The first chapter explores his family life; he talks about his mother, stating that she is the most important person in his life. He states: 'my mother, the illiterate, was the warehouse manager of the popular culture for her passion for Al Hussein and her constant visits to temples and museums. She was fond of listening to Sayed Darwish and has never gone to the cinema except once' (my translation).[74] Mahfouz also considers his mother as a symbol of tolerance and respect for others as she accepts all religions. 'When I used to ask her about her passion for Al Hussein and Mar Gergis (a church) she responded, "both are a blessing". She considered both the Muslim shrine of Al Hussein and the Mar Gergis Church as one chain. Honestly, I was touched by this tolerance because Egyptians did not know bigotry, and this is the real spirit of Islam' (my translation).[75]

Later in the same chapter, Mahfouz adds, 'I had two sisters, and four brothers; however, I have always felt like an only child. All my siblings left the house after they got married so I became a loner. My visits to my siblings' houses were very amusing, and sometimes my mother agreed to stay over in their houses for several days' (my translation).[76] In Chapter Three of the autobiography titled *This is how I chose writing*, Mahfouz discloses his first writing attempts and the reasons behind choosing writing novels instead of his first passion (i.e. poetry). He begins the chapter with, 'in the primary years, I read most of the renowned writers' works, and I tried to imitate their writing style. I tried to imitate Manfaloty (Egyptian poet) and to write my autobiography like Taha Hussein's *The Days*' (my

[74] Ragaa Al Nakkash, *Pages from Naguib Mahfouz's Diary* (Cairo: Dar Al Shorouk, 2011) , p. 15.
[75] Al Nakkash, p. 17.
[76] Ibid,, p. 18.

translation).[77] Mahfouz has also read for Kafka, Tawfik El Hakim and Beckett even though he does not like the latter's work for finding it incomprehensible.[78]

In Chapter Eight, *Women in my life*, Mahfouz speaks of his first true love: a girl he has loved from a distance. He portrays this unrequited love in the *Cairo Trilogy* in the love story of Kamal and Aida. The only difference between the real and the fictional story is the fact that Mahfouz has never talked to the girl. Mahfouz states, 'I admit honestly that Kamal Abdel Gawad in the *Trilogy* is similar to me, even his love story. Unlike me, he was able to reach his beloved' (my translation).[79]

Using Psychoanalytic Theory in an Egyptian Context

It is, to some extent, taken for granted in the Egyptian society and culture that sibling relationships are strong, sacred and non-negotiable. The fact that it is believed that siblings have this strong bond and impact on the society complicates discussing them because one would be questioning and analysing the familiar. Strengthening these bonds affects the definitions of the community and society as it raises the question of nationalism and resistance. In colonised societies, brotherhood establishes unity and helps resist the coloniser.

The cultural, historical, political and religious background of the Egyptian society has had a powerful influence on Mahfouz. To analyse the unexamined, an effective scientific tool of analysis, such as psychoanalysis, is required. Although psychoanalysis is the study of the formation of an individual, many psychoanalysts have neglected sibling relationships, including the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. Only a few have done research on this bond. The theories of three of the

[77] Ibid,, p. 57.
[78] Ibid, p. 61.
[79] Al Nakash p.114.

psychoanalysts, namely Anna Freud, Melanie Klein and Juliet Mitchell, are discussed in this thesis. These theories analyse the sibling bond and focus on its significance on the formation of the individual.

In line with Prophecy Coles's book *The Importance of Sibling Relationships,* Freud has not studied sibling bonds. Coles explains that 'one result of Freud's comparative neglect of the place of siblings in emotional development, has been that there is no mention of siblings in psychoanalytic theory or practice and it is assumed that siblings play little part in people's health or mental distress, except for Mitchell'.[80] Although Freud is interested in both Egyptian and Greek mythologies, he has not dedicated much attention to the sibling rivalry, cooperation, love and incest in the story of Isis and Osiris. Isis and Osiris are both siblings and lovers; the passion that they feel for each other is the reason behind the jealousy of their brother Seth. King Osiris's rule brings affluence and peace to the country. Seth and Nephthys are the married siblings of Isis and Osiris. Seth is jealous of Osiris not only because the latter has a better family life, but also because Osiris is the king, which makes Seth feel inferior. Hence, Seth successfully kills. Nevertheless, Isis manages to collect Osiris's traces after Seth throws him into the Nile.[81] This mythology raises the question of incest in ancient Egypt.

Brother and sister, and sometimes father and daughter, marriages are not seen as incest. In Russell Middleton's article 'Brother/Sister and Father/Daughter Marriage in Ancient Egypt', Middleton explicates the motives behind such marriage; he argues that it serves to preserve the family property intact and impedes the splintering of the estate via the force of the inheritance laws. This brother/sister marriage system maintains intact the material property of the family, especially that daughters usually

[80] Prophecy Coles. *The Importance of Sibling Relationships in Psychoanalysis*. (London: Karnac, 2003) p.21-2.
[81] Coles, p. 22-23.

inherit a share of the estate. This share is better preserved within the family instead of allowing a non-family member to lay hands on it.[82] Middleton writes:

> This type of marriage enhanced the family bonds, and as shocking as it sounds, brother/sister marriages were simply seen as a family tie. This type of marriage was not discouraged or seen as taboo, because the strengthening of family bonds was the most valuable factor in Ancient Egypt. At this time, sibling relationships were very sacred, and marriage and sexual relations enhanced the value of this bond. This enrichment was on many levels: emotional, familial, authoritarian and materialistic. Female power, and the valuable roles they played in authority and reign, ensured that 'all inheritance descended in the female line'.[83]

Clearly, Middleton is emphasizing the power of such bond in Ancient Egypt, and how this bond shaped the society. As for Freud, his attention is directed towards Greek mythology, particularly to the Oedipus Complex story. It is a myth that focuses on deception, murder and hatred. According to the myth, Oedipus kills his father, marries his own mother unknowingly, and blinds himself after discovering the truth. Freud's neglect of sibling bonds has made him focus only on the mother/son relationship in this myth, which has made him coin the term 'Oedipus Complex'. In his book *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud posits that most men have innate desire to murder their fathers. He describes this theory as follows: 'men have always known, in this particular way, that once upon a time they had a primeval father and killed him'.[84] In this respect, a man's inclination to kill his father is more of an instinct. This theory is discussed in detail in Chapter Three which introduces the definitions of the

[82] Russell Middleton, 'Brother-Sister and Father-Daughter Marriage in Ancient Egypt', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 27 Issue 5, 1962, p. 610.
[83] Middleton, p. 612.
[84] Sigmund Freud. *Moses and Monotheism.* (New York: Random House, 1955) p.5.

Oedipus Complex which are proposed by Freud and Mahfouz and highlights the cultural differences between both.

For Freud, siblings are simply rivals, who seek their parents' attention, particularly that of the mother. According to Mrinalini Greed Harry, Freud has only studied the Western patient, and has totally ignored the cultural aspect. He thinks that the non-Westerner lacks many skills to be accepted in the world, claiming that he or she is neither ready to explore it nor strong enough to understand the nature of life.[85] Therefore, this proves that it is inadequate to solely abide by the Freudian theory in analysing Mahfouzian characters due to the fact that the cultural aspect is missing.

In general, Anna Freud's main concern is about children. War children and those living in harsh circumstances constitute most of her targeted patients. The fact that she prefers children to adults is novel in psychoanalysis, especially that Anna is the daughter and accomplice of Sigmund Freud who totally disregards addressing the relationship among children in general and siblings in particular. Moreover, Anna has posited detailed analysis of children's behaviour and attitudes. Her book *War and Children* is about children, such as World War II survivors, who are deprived of family care.

Unlike her father, Anna believes in studying the relationships among children on many levels. Although Sigmund Freud had an interest in studying children, he has only focused on one aspect, which is that of the child and the parents. In contrast, Anna's studies of war children question the importance of the parental figure, and the failures and successes of the substitutes. In collaboration with Dorothy Burlingham, Anna Freud has observed the children in the Hampstead nurseries. The main reason behind her interest is to draw attention to personality formation and development.

[85] Mrinalini Greedharry. *Postcolonial Theory and Psychoanalysis: From uneasy Engagements to Effective Critique*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) p. 10.

It is worth noting that Anna has proposed a comprehensive study on children's influence on each other. In her book *The Writings of Anna Freud: Infants without Families. Reports on The Hampstead Nurseries (1935-1945),* she argues that children who do not want to obey their parents 'are quite ready to obey the commands and prohibitions of older children. Imitations of examples set by older children seem easier, and their rebukes or even punishments, though effective, seem to hurt less. This educational help rendered by older brothers and sisters is one of the reasons why the whole process of upbringing is smoother where the family is large'.[86] Accordingly, children are more influenced by fellow children, which makes having siblings they can imitate a relatively better environment for them.

In addition, Anna Freud has done further research on the character building and personal development of children, highlighting the relationship between childhood experiences and adult behaviour. She has coined the term 'altruistic surrender' (as discussed in Chapter One in detail) to refer to the gratification that an altruistic person feels when serving others. It is applicable in *The Beginning and the End*, in which Nefissa prefers to choose the happiness of her younger brother, Hassanien, over hers. Anna Freud has also provided thorough analysis of cases of childhood incidents that are connected to siblings. Her book *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* highlights the child's ego and its relation to sibling rivalries.

A well-known case in psychoanalysis is that of Little Hans (i.e. a child cured by Sigmund Freud). In Little Hans's case, Freud focuses on the child's relationship with his father, and his hatred towards him because of his mother. Little Hans's father is the one who has provided Freud with data for analysis. In his paper on Little Hans, Freud states, 'it is true that I laid down the general lines of the treatment, and

[86] Anna Freud, *The Writings of Anna Freud (Writings of Anna Freud, Vol. 3): Infants without Families Reports on the Hampstead Nurseries (1935-1945)* (New York: International Universities Pr. Inc., First Printing, stated Edition, 1976), p. 576.

on one single occasion, when I had a conversation with the boy, I took a direct share in it; but the treatment itself was carried out by the child's father'.[87] In a typical Freudian analysis, the child has dreamt of a horse he fears, and Freud has linked the fear of the horse to the child's fear of his father. Although Little Hans has been cured, Freud has disregarded the child's other fantasies such as his jealousy of his mother and sister. As mentioned earlier, Freud has neglected studying sibling relationships; he has refused to believe its significance on the individual. For both, Mahfouz and Anna Freud, jealousy among siblings should not be -disregarded because it reveals multiple facts about the individual and the community. Anna Freud's states:

> At the end of his analysis Hans related two daydreams: the fantasy of having a number of children whom he looked after and cleansed in the water-closet; and directly afterward, the fantasy of the plumber who took away Hans's buttocks and penis with a pair of pincers, so as to give him larger and finer ones…Hans now had, at least in imagination, a genital organ like that of his father and also children with whom he could do what his mother did with his little sister.[88]

Anna Freud's reflections on the case reveal her disapproval of analysing the fear of the horse as representing the fear of the father. She argues that it is inaccurate because humanising animals is not considered as scientific evidence due to that fact that many children have strong attachments to animals. She describes her analysis as:

> Our study of the defensive processes revealed in the analysis of Little Hans would suggest that the father of his neurosis was determined from the moment in which he

[87] Sigmund Freud, *On Metapsychology: The Theory of psychoanalysis, beyond the Pleasure Principle, the Ego and the ID and other works*. (London. Penguin Books, 1991) p. 19.

[88] Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence p. 20*

> displaced his aggressiveness and anxiety from his father to horses. But this impression is deceptive. Such a substitution process occurs frequently in the normal development of children and, when it does occur, the results vary greatly'.[89]

Accordingly, there are some differences between Anna's analysis and her father's regarding sibling relationships and children behaviour. It is possible to argue that the analysis of a child has to be more comprehensive and not confined to the jealousy of one parent and the love of another.

Although Melanie Klein and Anna Freud disagree on some points regarding child analysis – such the reliability of play analysis and its link to anxiety –, they are still considered the most influential figures in basing child analysis and sibling relationships on psychoanalysis.[90] Klein focuses on the passionate, caring side of sibling relationships; she describes incest as positive in some cases, referring to 'a league against the parents'. For Klein, sibling incest is less harmful than the parent-child incest; the former strengthens the sibling bonds because it creates secrecy, which plays an essential part in any loving relationship.[91] Similarly, in his book *The Sibling Bond*, Bank posits: 'if a father is emotionally unavailable, his daughter(s), feeling deprived of masculine affection, may turn to a brother to satisfy these unrequited needs'.[92]

According to psychoanalysis, neglected sibling relationships affect the development of human beings. Unlike Sigmund Freud, who put great emphasis on the Oedipus Complex, Juliet Mitchell believes that violent sibling relationships result from parental negligence. In her book *Siblings: Sex and Violence*, Mitchell makes a good case for considering that sibling relationships shape people's lives and personalities as much as parents' guidance and presence in the family do. Given a list of important

[89] Ibid, p. 20-1
[90] Coles p. 55
[91] Coles p. 56.
[92] Stephen P. Bank, and Michael D. Kahn. *The Sibling Bond*. (New York: Basic Books, 1982) p. 186.

influential factors children's lives, sibling relationships would inevitably come second after parents' power. Furthermore, Mitchell's book makes readers wonder why parents are oblivious to what siblings could be doing to one another. Mitchell comments on the jealousy of siblings of each other by stating that "'I' must be king of the castle, the new baby the dirty rascal'.[93] Most people have stories about sorrowful incidents in their childhood, or cruel brothers and sisters, and for some unclear reason certain obvious questions are rarely asked. Some of them are: Where were your parents? What happened afterwards? Could you tell your parents about it? Answers to those questions more often than not remain hidden because parents cannot be present physically every time one of their children is being abused.

In addition, Mitchell examines Freud's hysterical cases – such as the wolf-man – and sheds light on the fact that it is not only about the Oedipus Complex; in the wolf-man's case, for example, his older sister has had a negative impact on him as well. Not only has she seduced him at a very young age, but she has also shown him frightening wolf pictures days before his first dream of wolves. Mitchell's book, thus, has a comprehensive description of how crucial sibling relationships are, which is not discussed in many other works of psychoanalysis. She breaks the norm by not putting all the blame and burden on parents only; however, she does condemn parents' negligence and oblivion to their children's molestation attitude towards each other, fantasies and desires. Finally, concerning the inner desires of individuals, Jacques Lacan's desire theory is examined in Chapter Three to highlight his claim that one prefers to be recognised and accepted by others more than he or she yearns for addressing their own needs.

The Importance of Sibling Relationships in the Formation of the individual

[93] Juliet Mitchell, *Siblings* (Oxford: Polity, 2003), p. 91.

The harmful attitude of Wolf man's sister is similar to rival siblings' in Mahfouz's works; for instance, in the *Children of the Alley*, Idris and Kadri attempt to ruin their siblings' lives under the presumption that they are protecting themselves. Therefore, we can conclude that Mahfouz defines evilness through this bond. With reference to Jonathan Caspi's book *Sibling Aggression: Assessment and Treatment*, siblings unintentionally help each other develop their personalities as much as 'parental support' and 'social connections' do. Caspi states that 'it is our siblings that may be the most influential in this regard. They shape our sense of selves, our identities, our skill sets, and ultimately our life choices'.[94] Hence, his research focuses on the scientific reasons behind the relationship between sibling bonds and personality growth. He begins with examining the genetics and how they play a key role in making each child different. The fact that every sibling acts differently affects the other siblings' behaviour and personalities. Siblings share the same environment in most cases, such as school, neighbourhood and other family members. Parents play a crucial role in making each child act and think differently, by treating them differently and assigning them to different roles and duties. In addition, parents' reactions differ according to their own interests; for instance, some parents may prefer their children to do sports rather than pursue an artistic talent. Some parents compare their children to each other and/or to strangers in some cases. The competition sensed by children due to such comparisons helps them become aware of their limits and skills. Nevertheless, this comparison can have a negative influence on the children, demeaning their skills and knowledge, and can lead to aggressive behaviour. It is applicable in *The Children of the Alley*, Idris feels betrayed and jealous when Gebelawi favours his other son Adham, and hires him to manage his work matters.

[94] Jonathan Caspi, *Sibling Aggression: Assessment and Treatment* (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2011), p. 56.

On a different note, Caspi adds that 'sibling closeness' has a positive impact on personal growth. It acts as a shield in times of crisis as in divorce, domestic violence and loneliness. The more one examines his/her relationship with siblings, the more he/she develops and succeeds. Caspi explains:

In sum, positive sibling relationships are beneficial in many ways including promoting physical, mental, and relational health. When relationships are positive, competition is healthy and promotes success. Take time to build positivity into your own and your children's sibling relationships. This can be done by minimizing comparisons, openly talking about distribution of resources and equity, insuring that competition is not meant to diminish the other, creating opportunities for sibling closeness, support and bonding, and identifying endeavors in which one has the best biological fit for success.[95]

The first experiences of any individual are with his or her siblings, and this is considered as a preparatory stage for the outside world. Together, siblings play and think; share items and thoughts; and imitate adults. Whether the siblings act as rivals or companions, they have an impact on one another. The discomfort and/or hatred they might feel towards each other shape their behaviours and attitudes in the outside world. For instance, in *Children of the Alley*, Idris (the symbol of the devil) is the jealous sibling who has a negative attitude towards life. His turbulent relationship with his brother Adham affects his perception of life. The fact that one defines himself or herself in comparison with his/her siblings emphasises the importance of the sibling bond. As Suzan Scarf Merrell proposes in her book *The Accidental Bond*:

> Sibling experiences, which were long regarded as mere developmental leftovers, continue to affect how we function as adults, in the workplace, in friendship, and in

[95] Caspi, *Sibling Aggression*, p. 58.

> love relationships. Some people are very close to their siblings; some quite removed and unfriendly, but this-surprisingly perhaps, does not change the fundamental importance of this connection.[96]

Mothers are known to be the main caregivers in the family. Even though children, by instinct, rely on their mother's love and attention, siblings still play a crucial role in each other's lives; in many cases, the older or the most able sibling acts as a caregiver or a substitute for the parents. Moreover, in most individuals' lives, many of their family members offer help to each other. The development of an individual depends on his/her relationship with all the family members.

Interestingly, Freud ignores the sibling bond despite the impact of his older brother's death on his life and work.[97] The reason behind disregarding this topic could be an inner desire to avoid discussing the severe effects of his brother's death on him. At the age of sixty, Freud comments on this incident as follows:

> When other children appear on the scene the Oedipus complex is enlarged into a family complex. This, with fresh support from the egoistic sense of injury, gives grounds for receiving the new brothers or sisters with repugnance and for unhesitatingly getting rid of them by a wish. It is even true that as a rule, children are far readier to give verbal expression to these feelings of hate than to those arising from the parental complex. If a wish of this kind is fulfilled and the undesired addition to the family is removed again shortly afterwards by death, we can discover from a later analysis what an important experience this death has been to the child.[98]

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[96] Merrell, *The Sibling Bond: The Power of Sibling Relationships*, pp.14-5.
[97] Coles, p. 34.
[98] Coles, p. 35.

According to Helen Rosen, children's reaction to the death of their siblings is similar to adults'; they both feel depressed, anxious and guilty. Sibling loss is a 'major traumatic event with which the subjects had been unable to deal unsatisfactorily'.[99] In addition, sibling order plays a crucial role in the child's reactions. For instance, the older child feels guilty because he/she has always dreamt of being an only child with no competitors. The younger child feels the need to replace and imitate the older one, which can cause the feeling of being burdensome.

In conclusion, in spite of the fact that several scholars and writers have studied Mahfouz's life, works and theories, sibling relationships have been ignored. Hence, the main aim of this dissertation is to explore the significance of sibling relationships with regard to the cultural, political and social aspects in the works of Mahfouz in an attempt to achieve a proper study of such a neglected pivotal bond. Additionally, the thesis is structured according to a study of the importance of altruism and rivalry in sibling relationships while dedicating special attention to the only-child concept in order to investigate the impact of the absence of sibling relationships on individuals. For Mahfouz, sibling relationships are highly significant not only in relation to family structures but also regarding the development of the society ranging from ancient Egypt to modern times.

[99] Helen Rosen, Harriette L. Cohen, 'Children's Reactions to Sibling Loss', *Clinical Social Work Journal*, Vol.9, Issue 3, 1981, p. 4.

Chapter One: Altruistic Sibling Relationships

'Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness' Martin Luther King Jr.[1]

This chapter examines the concept of altruism and its manifestation in sibling relationships. While it is my goal to analyse altruism in psychoanalytical terms with reference to the works of Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud and Melanie Klein, I additionally mean to demonstrate that Mahfouz's interest in altruism articulates a moral and spiritual dimension that goes beyond questions of individual personalities or psychic tendencies to the socio-political formation of a nation. Accordingly, while altruism may be understood as a universal phenomenon, it varies with regard to its cultural content. In this chapter, the wide scope applied to the concept of altruism in Mahfouz's works *The Beginning and the End, Khan El Khalili* and *The Harafish* is highlighted. In examining Mahfouz's definition of altruism, the cultural and political impacts on this trait are also explored.

Altruism is a universal concept related to giving to others and enjoying the feeling that is engendered by doing so. While it is not rare to find altruism in sibling relationships in many countries, in Egypt this concept is particularly linked to the bond between siblings. In capitalist societies, on the other hand, rivalry among siblings is supposedly encouraged. Juliet Mitchell summarises this notion as, '*I* must be king of the castle, the new baby the dirty rascal'.[2]

[1]Matthieu Ricard. *Altruism: The Power of Compassion to Change Yourself and the World*. (London: Atlantic Books, 2015) p. 1.
[2] Juliet Mitchell. *Siblings.* (Oxford: Polity, 2003) p. 31.

In sociology, altruism is defined as 'social behaviour carried out to achieve positive outcomes for another rather than for the self'.[3] Within the practice of psychoanalysis, the individual's development is perceived as the result of a collaboration between two urges: 'an urge towards happiness', which is egoistic, and another urge towards 'union with others', which is altruistic.[4] Anna Freud notes of the latter urge that 'the surrender of one's own wishes to another person and the attempt to secure their fulfillment thus vicariously are, indeed, comparable to the interest and pleasure with which one watches a game in which one has no stake oneself'.[5] Freud adds that 'it enables the subject to take a friendly interest in the gratification of other people's instincts and so, indirectly and in spite of the superego's prohibition, to gratify his own, while, on the other, it liberates the inhibited activity and aggression primarily designed to secure the fulfilment of the instinctual wishes in their original relation to himself'.[6] In this regard, Freud provides an example of one of her patients, stating, 'an employee who would never venture to ask for a raise in salary for herself suddenly besieged the manageress with demands that one of her fellow workers should have their rights.'[7]

Defining Altruism

Definitions of altruism vary in many cultures and disciplines; in this chapter an attempt is made to focus upon those definitions that are related to both siblings and Mahfouz. According to Kristen Monroe, Professor of Political Science and Philosophy at the University of Irvine,

[3] J. Philippe Rushton. *Altruism, Socialization, and Society*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980) p. 36.

[4] Anna Freud. *The Ego and the Mechanisms of the Defense,* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1986) p.127.

[5] Anna Freud p.126.
[6] Ibid, p.127.
[7] Ibid, p.129.

California, altruism is related to action. She believes the altruistic individual is one who is willing to take risks in order to achieve the action of altruism. The altruistic person is expected to have 'good intentions', but these intentions are not considered to be altruistic unless the person actually attempts to realise the intended action. [8] She writes that 'altruism does not require a personal sacrifice; it can even lead to personal benefits, provided that those benefits do not constitute the ultimate goal of our behaviour, but are only the secondary consequence of it'.[9] According to the *Teachings of Ptahhotep: The Oldest Book in the World*, the Ancient Egyptians were encouraged to sacrifice themselves and to think of others. Ptahhotep, a vizier in the Fifth Dynasty, states that relationships with relatives and friends are extremely significant; he writes, 'help your friends with things that you have, for you have these things by the Grace of God. If you fail to help your friends, one will say you have a selfish Ka (soul)'.[10] In Islam, altruism is regarded as a rewarding practice and many Quranic verses and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad make reference to altruism and empathy as evidenced in the following examples:

None of you truly believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.[11]

And they give others preference over themselves even though they were themselves in need.[12]

By no means shall you attain righteousness unless you spend of that which you love.[13]

[8] Kristen Monroe. *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) p. 29.
[9] Monroe *The Heart of Altruism* p. 30.
[10] Asa G. Hilliard III. *The Teachings of Ptahhotep: The Oldest Book in the World*, (Blackwood Press, 1987) p. 12.
[11] Abdul Raheem Kidwai. *Daily Wisdom: Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad*, (Leicestershire. Kube Publishing Ltd, 2010) p.304.
[12] *The Translation of the Glorious Quran*. (London 1991) (59:9).
[13] *Quran*, 3:92.

Needless to say, the three divine religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – have had a strong impact upon Egyptian society as all three religions encourage altruism and empathy. A verse from the Bible points out:

And if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then your light will live in darkness and your gloom will become like midday.[14]

The ways in which altruism is presented in Mahfouz' 1949 novel *The Beginning and the End* is discussed in the following section.

The Beginning and the End

The term 'altruism' is applicable to thematic concerns in Naguib Mahfouz's novel *The Beginning and the End*, within which the altruistic character Nefissa accepts work as a seamstress, believing she is fulfilling her desires by helping her family to survive. She is the only daughter of a humble family and acts as a second mother to her three brothers. After the death of her father, a government official, her family is cast into extreme poverty. Samira, the mother, chooses dressmaking as a profession for Nefissa, which she miserably accepts, biting her lips and nails and fighting the tears that begin falling down her cheeks. In the 1940s, such a profession was not considered to be prestigious, especially for the daughter of an official. Nonetheless Nefissa takes up the profession to support her younger brothers, who are in secondary school, and her older brother, who prefers the life of a bully. However, this burden grows heavier as Nefissa also has a dream that she wishes to achieve, that of having a family. In this regard, Nefissa's case is similar to a patient of Anna Freud, the altruistic governess. Anna Freud coined the term 'altruistic

[14] *The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version: Containing the Old and New Testaments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994 (58:10)).

surrender', which refers to instances in which an individual avoids anxiety by living indirectly through someone else as an ego defence mechanism.[15] Freud gave the example of one of her patients, a governess, who as a child had expressed the desire to enjoy a happy marriage and many children. As an adult, however, she had failed to achieve any of these dreams. In spite of this, she appeared not to hold any grudges or disappointment but instead found that giving her time and energy to her friends and living vicariously through their lives gave her satisfaction. She helped to fulfil her friends' dreams by matchmaking and buying them nice gifts, while ignoring her own needs. The altruistic governess divided her attention between her male and female friends; the former satisfied her ambitious dreams and the latter satisfied her sexual or libidinal dreams. She pushed her male friends into professions that she was unable to practice as a woman, and she helped her prettier female friends to have better romantic relationships.[16]

Mahfouz explains that Nefissa's need to have a family is primarily a sexual one. Feeling desired is something she has wished to feel since she was a teenager. She compares herself to her attractive brothers, and even Hassan the eldest, who is not as good-looking as the younger ones, is still more handsome than she is even though he is masculine. She has her mother's looks, firm and coarse, while being less attractive than her mother. Her brothers are luckier and have their father's looks but not his lenient attitude towards life and people. Mahfouz writes:

> However, Nefissa, her daughter, who resembled her closely, was an adequate replica of what she once had been. Nefissa, too, had the same thin oval face, short, coarse nose and pointed chin, was pale, and a little hunchbacked. She differed from

[15] Anna Freud p.123.

[16] Ibid, p.131.

> her mother only in her height being as tall as her brother Hassanein, but was far from handsome, indeed almost ugly. It was her misfortune to resemble her mother, whereas the boys resembled their father.[17]

Nefissa spends her life trying to believe her father's notion of her, namely that her sense of humour is more important than her looks, but deep inside herself she rejects this idea. Nonetheless, she tries to convince herself that as her father is a man, therefore, he is likely to know more about men's needs than she does. He is her closest friend, and after his death she realises that marriage is an unattainable dream for her.

As Mahfouz describes, Nefissa's dilemma is her unattractive somewhat masculine appearance, which is unlike that of her attractive brothers, except in height which was not important for a girl at that time. She complains: 'Why was I born ugly? Why wasn't I created like my brothers? How handsome Hassanein and Hussein are! Even Hassan!'[18] Mahfouz indicates that Nefissa's dilemma is a physical one, emphasising how strongly a woman's appearance affects her self-image. Mahfouz's understanding of the importance of appearance is similar to the insight expressed by John Berger, the art critic: 'Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only the relations of men to women, but the relation of women to themselves'.[19]

Her appearance is not the only explanation for Nefissa's altruistic nature. Richard Dawkins, in his book *The Selfish Gene,* states that genes play a vital role in the formation of the individual's

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[17] Naguib Mahfouz. *The Beginning and the End*. Trans. Ramsis Awad. (New York: Anchor Books Double Day, 1989) p. 28-9.

[18] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p.87

[19] Naomi Wolf. *The Beauty Myth.* London: Vintage Books, 1991 p.58.

personality.[20] According to Dr. Phillipe Rushton's article 'Altruism and Society: A Social Learning Perspective', women are more altruistic than men; in this regard, even female babies are more receptive to an 'empathetic response' than male babies.[21] Rushton writes:

> We are most altruistic to those who are genetically similar to ourselves, that is, family rather than friends and friends rather than strangers. Within families, mothers should be more altruistic than fathers to offspring. This is because mothers have a potentially larger genetic investment in any one child than does the father.[22]

This quotation raises the question of whether altruistic behaviour is genetically determined or a socially learned trait. Rushton believes altruism is learned and can be achieved through social education. Rushton notes, 'I would argue, we are altruistic primarily because we have learned to be so, being genetically programmed to learn from our environments'.[23] In this regard, according to Mahfouz, Nefissa is altruistic for two reasons: her environment and her resemblance to her mother in that they both morally support the family. In addition, Nefissa always helps with the domestic chores within the family home, more than her brothers, except for Hussein. In Egyptian society, a girl devotes her life to her family; as the old Egyptian proverb states, 'Like mother, like daughter' (my translation).[24] This proverb underscores Dawkins's theory. Nefissa's mother, Samira, does everything she can to keep her family happy and successful. She is described by Mahfouz as strong and stoical, carrying the family burden on her shoulders. Samira stands alone,

[20] Richard Dawkins. *The Selfish Gene.* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1976).

[21] Phillipe Rushton. *Altruism and Society: A Social Learning Perspective,* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980) p. 70.

[22] Rushton, p.31.

[23] Ibid, p.248.

[24] Ahmad Taymour. *The Egyptian Proverbs*. (Cairo: Dar Al Shorouk, 2010) p. 58.

serving her family until the end. As a result, Nefissa acts like her mother in some ways, serving and working for her family, particularly Hassanien, the most narcissist character in the novel.

Nefissa's nurturing nature benefits her family, particularly her youngest brother Hassanien. She has a very strong attachment to him for many reasons that seem logical to her and her family. Within his family, Hassanien is the youngest, the handsomest, the tallest and the most accomplished at school. However, the real reasons for Nefissa's attachment are more profound. Hassanien has a distressing nature, of which his family are aware but who never try to change him, believing he is very young, and that inevitably he will change for the better as he matures. The fact that he is the youngest makes it easier for them to believe this notion. In many societies, including Egyptian society, the youngest child may be treated with extra care and is often pampered, and as a result may be accused of being vain and possessive, which appears to be a common conception. Hassanien's dilemma is that he thinks he deserves more than he receives, and, therefore, he is never satisfied, no matter how others try to please him. Nonetheless, Nefissa does not find Hassanien a distressing or possessive person; on the contrary, she perceives him as a fine, proud young man, who deserves the best on account of his good looks and education. When he decides to join the military school, which is very expensive, forgetting all about the family's severe financial straits, he turns to Nefissa for help. When their mother has doubts, Nefissa comforts him with the words, 'Don't worry as far as I'm concerned. I'll give you whatever I can'.[25] It is Nefissa who suggests borrowing money from their oldest brother Hassan to help them pay Hassanien's expenses. Their relationship seems more like that of a mother and a child.

[25] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p.262.

The passionate bond that exists between Nefissa and Hassanien, while not incestuous, is similar to other sibling bonds in history. The poet William Wordsworth had a strong bond with his sister, Dorothy. Although she was two years younger than him, she appears to have been more of a mother to him than a sister.[26] Melanie Klein argued that strong bonds between siblings, whether incestuous or not, are a result of a fear of their parents and parental neglect.[27] However, it is very difficult to assert the same of Nefissa and Hassanien's relationship. They respect their parents more than they fear them, as their parents are never harsh or oblivious to their children's needs despite their different personalities. Mahfouz writes of Samira, 'her attitude towards her children was probably more fatherly than motherly, while her husband possessed the tenderness and frailty of a mother'.[28] Thus, the Oedipus complex (which will be analysed in detail in Chapter Three) has no role in the family. All of the children prefer their father's leniency over their mother's firmness and rigidity. The children do not compete; rather Mahfouz illustrates within the novel that all the siblings love one another, and even Hassanien, the youngest and most selfish, has some degree of love for his family. He is the one who suggests to Hussein that he should choose work over studying at the university, which results in Hussein leaving the city and living alone. Consequently, Hassanien feels lonely when he contemplates the sacrifices made by his siblings. Mahfouz notes from Hassanien's perspective that 'Nefissa and Hussein being the victims of these difficult times, they had to face the storm at its most violent. He felt pity and sympathy for them, but he rejoiced that his prospects were more cheerful than theirs'.[29]

[26] Prophecy Coles. *The Importance of Sibling Relationships in Psychoanalysis*, (London: Karnac, 2003) p.71.
[27] Ibid, p. 56.
[28] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 32.
[29] Ibid, p.220.

Accordingly, in his paper ‘Is the Oedipus complex universal?’ Dr Mostafa Safouan argues that the Oedipus complex is in the end no more than one cultural form among others, those others being equally possible providing they perform the same function of promoting the function of castration in the psyche.[30] To understand Safouan’s analysis of the Oedipus complex, a brief reference to Freud’s definition of the castration complex is necessary.

The castration complex is a term coined by Freud following his analysis of the case of Little Hans. As stated in the introduction, Little Hans was a five-year-old who was afraid of horses. Freud and Little Hans’ father worked together to analyse Little Hans’ fear. Freud’s analysis concluded that the fear of the horses was a symbol of the fear of the father. Little Hans was afraid that his father would castrate him as a punishment for loving his mother, which Freud interpreted as an Oedipus complex. Little Hans preferred his mother’s company to that of his father. The term ‘castration complex’ thus refers to one of the stages in Freud’s theory of child psychosexual development. Dr. Catherine Bates’ essay ‘Castrating the Castration Complex’ discusses the importance of castration in child development; Bates states:

> The reason why the castration complex is so important, in Freud's formulation, is that it intervenes at a critical point within infantile sexual development, bringing to an end the third and final phase of childhood sexuality — the so-called 'phallic' stage — during which the child, boy or girl, holds fast to the belief that both sexes are in possession of a penis. The castration complex refers to the terminal collapse of this infantile misconception, the moment at which a series of childhood experiences (a comparison of the male and female genitals, parental threats of

[30] Mostafa Safouan, ‘Is the Oedipus Complex Universal?’ *The Woman in Question: M/F*, ed. Parveen Adams, and Elizabeth Cowie. (London: Verso, 1990).

> punishment) come together to bring home to the child in a catastrophic way the fact that the penis is something that might be absent.[31]

Freud neglects the caring aspect of sibling bonds, placing more emphasis upon the Oedipal relations, thereby, only leaving room for the incestuous or repressed desires which initially were for the parents to exist between siblings. However, Nefissa and Hassanien's relationship bears a stronger resemblance to the historical figures of Antigone and her brother, Polynices, mentioned by Bank:

> If Freud had only looked more thoroughly into the family of Oedipus, he would have discovered that Oedipus's daughter, Antigone, loves her brother, Polynices. Antigone defies the cruel King Creon who refuses to bury her brother's body. In effect, brother-sister love not only stems from repressed lust for a parent but can also develop out of loyalty, caring, and mutual sense of destiny.[32]

In this regard, the characters' upbringings are influenced by Egyptian social traditions, within which brothers and sisters are willing to sacrifice something of themselves for each other and, thus, create a bond that no one from outside the family would dare to destroy; this is expressed in the old Egyptian proverb, 'my brother and I are against my cousin, and my cousin and I are against the stranger'(my translation).[33] Taha Hussein, the renowned Egyptian writer, explained the strength of the Egyptian family bond in his autobiography *The Days*. Referring to himself though writing in the third person, he observes that 'he recalls the time when he used to go to

[31] Catherine Bates. 'Castrating the Castration Complex', *Textual Practice*, Vol.12, Issue 1, 2008 p. 101.
[32] Stephen P. Bank Et al. *The Sibling Bond*. (New York: Basic Books, 1982) p. 162.
[33] Taymour p.123.

school carried on the shoulder of one of his brothers because the school was a long way away and he was too weak to go such a distance on foot'.[34]

Mahfouz does not treat sibling relations in a sexual way so much as in an effective way. This differs from a psychoanalytical approach. For instance, Klein describes sibling incest as 'a league against the parents'.[35] For Klein, sibling incest is less harmful than incest between parent and child; it strengthens the sibling bonds because it creates secrecy, and this secrecy plays a significant role in any loving relationship.[36] Klein states 'If a father is emotionally unavailable, his daughter(s), feeling deprived of masculine affection, may turn to a brother to satisfy these unrequited needs'.[37] However, Nefissa's relationship with her father, as mentioned previously, is very strong. In losing him, she loses not only a father but also a friend, perhaps the only friend she has had since leaving school at an early age, which has resulted in Nefissa having no real friendships with any of her peers. Sigmund Freud also analyses this sibling incest theme in his theory that brothers have sexual relations with their sisters to strengthen their role in the family. If the father is weak, inattentive or absent, daughters rely on their brothers for support and their brothers seize the chance to enhance their roles in the family as father figures or as a substitute for the father.[38]

Another factor that makes incest less relevant in a reading of Mahfouz is his interest in writing about the compassionate and caring aspects of sibling love. Although he had many siblings, Mahfouz felt like an only child because his next brother was ten years older than him. He

[34] Taha Hussein. *The Days*. Trans. E.H. Paxton, Hilary Wayment, and Kenneth Cragg. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2006) p.21.
[35] Coles p.56.
[36] Coles p.56
[37] Bank p.41
[38] Bank p.163.

mourned this lack of normal sibling bonds, which is evident in the portrayal of fraternal relationships in much of his work.[39] In *The Beginning and the End*, most of the siblings share love and warmth, but Hassanien is torn between loving his siblings and loving himself. In this regard, Hassanien's views concerning his sister's work are discussed in order to emphasise Hassanien's narcissistic nature.

Hassanien's reaction to his sister's decision to work as a seamstress underlines his narcissistic behaviour; he states 'no, my sister will never be a dressmaker. I refuse to be a brother to a dressmaker'.[40] Hassanien talks about Nefissa as if she is his own property, forgetting that neither is she happy about her mother's decision that she become a dressmaker. He only thinks about his life as the 'brother of a dressmaker'. This attitude is due to the class divisions in Egyptian society against which Mahfouz rebelled. Nonetheless, throughout the novel Hassanien, receives help from Nefissa, a seamstress and later a prostitute, and his oldest brother Hassan, a bully, drug dealer and pimp. Hassanien knows about his oldest brother's profession; however, he acts as though he is oblivious to it and still requests money from him. Hassan welcomes this for he is proud that his youngest brother will be an officer one day. Later, when Hassanien graduates, he goes to Hassan and asks him to quit the life of a bully and begin to lead a decent life. Hassan responds in the following way:

> An honourable life! Don't let me hear such words from you again. You make me sick. A mechanic earning a few piasters a day. Is this the honourable life you are talking about? I'd rather spend my life in prison. If I'd followed your honourable

[39] al-Ghitani. *The Mahfouz Dialogs.* Trans. Humphrey Davies. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007, p. 66-7.
[40] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p.36.

> life all long, that star would not be decorating your shoulder. Is it only my life that isn't honourable? Young officer, you are labouring under a delusion. Your life is no more honourable, since mine is its origin.' He pointed again to the photograph. 'I've made an officer of you with illegal money obtained from this woman and from traffic in narcotics. So, you are indebted for your uniform to narcotics and this prostitute. Fair enough; if you really want me to abandon my trained life, then you, too, must abandon yours. Go ahead, take off your uniform and let's start a new honourable life together.[41]

Hassan is the only one who can confront Hassanien with the painful truth as he is the sibling with the least education but a sound philosophical mind. In response, Hassanien nurses his anger at his brother until the opportunity arise to take his revenge upon Hassan by refusing to help him at his death. Hassan is injured and seeks his family's help. Nefissa and her mother welcome him, however, Hassanien is conflicted between his love for his brother and the scandal that might follow the family if he fetches a doctor for his wounded brother. Their mother, Samira, begs Hassanien as follows:

He heard his mother shouting at him, Help me, Hassanien! Can't you see that he's dying?

> No, he won't die, Hassanien thought. It is I who will die a slow, cruel death. My dignity is mortally wounded. Now, if he dies here, a doctor will come to examine his body. Soon the police and prosecutor will follow. While they can't hurt him after

[41] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 325.

> he's dead, the rotten stench from his decaying corpse spreading throughout the place will be scandalous in itself.[42]

Hassanien compromises and brings one of his own friends, who is a doctor, in order to prevent any scandal. Afterwards, Hassan feels unwelcome because of Hassanien's behaviour and insists on leaving the house and even the country, even though he is still ill. Hassanien welcomes the idea, hoping Hassan will vanish from their lives forever. Hassanien leaves the house, thinking that Hassan will stay for a short while and holding onto the hope that Hassan will leave the country. Hassanien's narcissism functions in opposition to his family's altruism, particularly that of Nefissa, who attempts to sacrifice herself for her family until the end. In the next section, the relationship between narcissism, selfishness and altruism is explored.

The Toxic Relationship between Narcissism and Altruism

The character of Hassanien is a narcissistic and selfish one. Narcissism is the extreme opposite of altruism; however, some scholars and thinkers have defended selfishness as a necessary part of life. Machiavelli, the Italian thinker and political philosopher, wrote a book entitled *The Prince,* in which he introduced the aspects of an effective leader in the sense of a being a powerful one. Machiavelli defined selfishness/narcissism as necessary, stating:

> To preserve the state, he (new prince/leader) often has to do things against his word, against charity, against humanity, against religion. Thus, he has to have a mind ready to shift as the winds of fortune and the varying circumstances of life may

[42] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 387.

> dictate. He should not depart from the good if he can hold to it, but he should be ready to enter on evil if he has to.[43]

Although, within this quotation it is debatable whether the leader's narcissistic acts are performed for the state or for himself, I argue that the altruistic person is simply not prepared to do evil. This is because being altruistic does not arise from evil actions. Nietzsche, the German philosopher, argues that altruism is 'by the weak for the weak.'[44] Nietzsche adds that loving another like a neighbour is 'bad love for yourself.'[45] In other words, loving another will affect love of the self in a negative way; it will take away from the attention the self needs. Freud defined altruism as an 'aspiration for union with other members of the community', however, this is a rather broad definition because union with others can be both good and harmful.[46] Arguing that human nature contains more evil than good, Freud perceives empathy and altruism as unreal. Freud states 'all who wish to be more noble-minded than their constitution allows fall victims to neurosis; they would have been more healthy if it could have been possible for them to be less good.'[47]

Hassenien applies these same tactics to his fiancée's family. His father-in-law, Farid Effendi, helps Hassenien's family by nominating both Hussein and Hassanien to tutor his youngest son in English and math. Hassanien and his family know that Farid Effendi is doing this only to help them financially and not because his son needs help in studying. Later after he graduates from the military school, Hassanien breaks the engagement, believing that Bahia, his fiancée, is

[43] Ricard, p.299.
[44] Ibid p.300.
[45] Ibid, p. 300.
[46] Ibid p. 306.
[47] Ibid p. 309.

beneath him both socially and educationally. Mahfouz may be seen to be highlighting the hypocrisy of those who seek to achieve higher social rankings by means of the poor and needy, only to deny them in the end. This is a theme that Mahfouz adopted in several works, such as *The Thief and the Dogs* (1961), in which the protagonist, Raouf Alwan, a poor university student who despises the rich for their wealth, convinces a poor, uneducated worker, Said Mahran, that stealing money from rich people is not a sin in order to take the revenge upon them. In addition, he seeks a slave and a follower to satisfy his need for recognition. After years of working as a journalist, Raouf becomes rich and famous, and when Said confronts him with his old theories Raouf denies them. Afraid of a scandal Raouf takes revenge on Said and has him put into prison. In this respect, the ending of *The Thief and the Dogs* is different from *The Beginning and the End*. Raouf wins in the end, which is a realist ending, unlike in the latter where all the sinners lose, which is very idealistic. In other words, *The Thief and the Dogs* is a realist novel; it is one of the novels that demonstrates the transitional phase through which Mahfouz passed as a writer in the late fifties. Mahfouz wrote *The Thief and the Dogs* in the sixties, a decade after the 1952 revolution took place that converted Egypt from a kingdom to a republic; a phase that Mahfouz writes of as an age of humiliation entailing a rise in hypocrisy in both of his books *Al Karnak* and *The Throne*. Sabry Hafez comments that this period was 'a decade of confusion, a decade of numerous huge projects and the abolition of almost all political activities.'[48] Hafez adds that 'the bulk of the novels of the sixties belong to the realistic trend.'[49]

During the time in which *The Beginning and the End* is set, life was harsh under British colonisation; however, people had hopeful aspirations for the future and observing patriots

[48]Sabry Hafez. 'The Egyptian Novel in the Sixties.' Journal of Arabic Literature, Vol. 7, 1976. Pp.68-84, p. 68.
[49] Ibid, p. 68

fighting for independence compelled the society, including Mahfouz, to prefer idealism to realism, which was a philosophy only later adopted by Mahfouz. Mahfouz noted of the revolution,

> The democratic course could have continued if the revolution had relied on its achievements, such as the attack on feudalism and the ending of the occupation…it achieved important things, but the absence of democracy threatened the reforms, and if you look now at what took place, you will find that it was all compromised by the lack of consultation and democracy.[50]

Mahfouz criticised the practices of the revolution, rather than its principles. Following Nasser's death, Mahfouz wrote *Al Karnak*, a harsh attack upon the police state and its negative impact on the population, destroying their dignity.[51] In 1954, two years after the revolution took place, Gamal Abdel Nasser became the second president of Egypt, after the removal of the first president Mohamed Naguib. Nasser adopted a socialist regime following its principles precisely, particularly at the beginning. He was known as an eloquent speaker and his speeches were ideally suited to the times, making the future seem as hopeful as people desired. Nasser commenced his speeches with the word 'brothers', which was interpreted as a sign of modesty. Nasser talked to people in a simple way as if he was recounting an anecdote and this style allowed all the different layers of society to understand him and to appreciate his modesty. He encouraged the people to work as one team, reminding them that Egypt could only be independent through a cooperative effort. Nasser provided them with a feeling of fraternity, which is one of the main concepts of socialism. According to Sir Bernard Rowland Crick's book

[50] al- Ghitani. *The Mahfouz Dialogs*, p. 115.
[51] El Enany *Naguib Mahfouz His Life and Times* p.30.

Socialism: Concepts in Social Thought, he states that common targets create unity. Crick affirms 'fraternity arises from people actually working together towards common ends.'[52] Notably, Abdel Nasser began his speech celebrating the new Egyptian constitution on the 16th of January 1956, almost two years after he came to power, with the words:

> My brothers, the new constitution is not the end of the tunnel; we still have to work hard united as one heart and one man. People are the guardians of this event. We will learn from the past, we will never surrender, and will never lose again (my translation).[53]

Nasser also referred to women in his speeches, which was a novelty at that time. He stated that, 'women have become equal with men, standing side by side. We need to give women their rights' (my translation).[54] This ideal is the utopia of which Mahfouz dreamt, as did many other Egyptians. Mahfouz's utopian image of a human society included the notion, 'that man should be freed from all forms of exploitation'.[55] However, the ideal did not remain as hopeful as it had initially promised. By the end of the 1950s, a considerable amount of turbulence had destroyed the revolution's reputation. Mahfouz reflects on the 1952 revolution as follows:

> I only write when a split between society and me occurs. I began to feel that the 1952 revolution which (at first) had given me assurance and peace of mind was starting to go astray. Many faults and errors upset me, especially the repression and the tortures and the imprisonments. Thus, I began to write my big novel, *Children*

[52] Bernard Crick. *Socialism: Concepts in Social Thought*. (Milton Keynes. Open UP, 1987) p.99.
[53] Samir Abbas. Gamal Abdel Nasser's note in celebrating the new constitution in 1956.' *YouTube*. 27 Apr. 2013. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoswHOcCDr.> [accessed 04 July 2013].
[54] Samir Abbas. 'Gamal Abdel Nasser's Note in Celebrating the New Constitution in 1956.'
[55] El Enany *His Life and Times* p. 28.

> *of the Alley*, which depicts the conflict between prophets and thugs. I wanted to ask the revolutionary leaders which path they wanted to choose: the prophets' or the thugs'. The stories of the prophets provided an artistic framework, but my intention was to criticise the revolution and the existing social system. At that time, I had noticed a new class evolving and growing extraordinarily rich. The question which then agonised me was whether we were moving towards socialism or towards feudalism of a new kind.[56]

Mahfouz rejected oppression not only under Nasser's regime but also during British colonization. As a result of the severe conditions Egyptians experienced under British colonization, and specifically the family in *The Beginning and the End*, Nefissa chooses to become a prostitute, the reasons for which are explored in the following section.

According to Anna Freud's book, *The Ego and The Mechanisms of Defence*, egoism and altruism act in unison in some situations. She states, 'In such cases egoism and altruism may be blended in various proportions.'[57] In this case, Anna Freud was referring to parents and their children. Parents strive to make a living in order to support their children and sometimes also make sacrifices for them. However, they also choose their children's paths according to their own desires and in doing so demonstrate egoism. Correspondingly, Nefissa does not interfere in her brothers' businesses yet forgets the effects it will have upon her family when she initially decides to meet men and go out with them. She only remembers her family again after she leaves the men and goes home. She believes that she can hide the dark side of her life forever, given that she is not a professional prostitute and does not work for a pimp. She thinks the hours or minutes

[56] El Enany *Naguib Mahfouz*: *His Life and Times* p. 92.
[57] Anna Freud p.131.

of pleasure with men are something that belongs only to her, forgetting that she is ruining her family's future and reputation. Mahfouz describes her situation as that of a woman who is hungry for attention and desire, which is an unusual reason for prostitution, at least in his books. Mahfouz depicts prostitutes differently to the character of Nefissa in his other novels. In his book *Love in the Rain* (1973), poor college students, Sanya and Aliyat, sell their bodies for the sake of money not pleasure, unlike their rich friend Mona who can afford an ethical view of life. They are pretty, and they hate the fact that richer girls can dress more attractively than they can believing they deserve better because of their own good looks. These characters have beauty and education, whereas Nefissa has nothing. She knows no man will want her unless she gives her body to him, as she does with her neighbour, Salman, thinking he will marry her.

Consequently, her acts of prostitution are not intended merely as prostitution. She follows every man who seems to be interested in her, whether he gives her money in return or not. Mahfouz offers her thoughts as follows:

> What he wants is perfectly clear. Shall I do it? Why is he interested in me? I'm not pretty, and it's impossible that this make-up will make me so. But in the market of lechery even ugliness itself is a saleable commodity, and pleasure seekers, at least some of them, are not fastidious in their demands. This is the truth. Should I allow myself to fall? Why not? I wouldn't be losing anything I haven't already lost.[58]

She finds the men's flirting delicious and irresistible even if they are lying. Her weakness for men is similar to that of Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* by the American playwright Tennessee Williams. Blanche has a stronger attachment to strangers' words and

[58] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 131.

gestures than to those of her family and friends, which results in her having a relationship with her seventeen-year-old student. Nefissa has a similar problem, and although she knows that it is her body that men desire, she still believes that they may treat her with consideration and kindness. Nefissa's thoughts regarding one of the men opine, 'all the same, would it not have been better to treat her kindly, or at least to say a tender word to erase the ill effects of his roughness?'[59]

Ervin Staub is a Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and summarises Reykowski's note on confidence and altruism as follows:

> People who tend to have positive moods, high self-esteem, and a positive sense of well-being may be less preoccupied with themselves, have a greater sense of potency or strength, and perhaps feel more benevolent toward others than individuals characterised by more negative moods, low self-esteem, and a poor sense of well-being. Consequently, the former may tend to be more helpful, on the whole, than the latter.[60]

In this regard, Nefissa gradually loses all sense of her self-esteem throughout the novel. At the beginning of the novel, her father, who was close to her, dies, then she begins work as a seamstress to help her family and in the middle of the novel she loses her virginity. She looks in the mirror and, in addition to observing an unattractive face, she also sees misery, sadness and disappointment. She loses the last traces of confidence and hope, and it is here that she decides to devote some of her time to herself, forgetting about her family for the first time. She dwells in

[59] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 191.
[60] Rushton, p.84.

the illusion that any money she earns as a prostitute may help her family. She knows perfectly well that she may not get paid because of her lack of experience and her appearance. In this respect, she is under the influence of psychic mechanisms of denial and disavowal, which occur when an individual rejects reality, particularly when that reality is distressing.[61] Accordingly, she tries to convince herself that she may help her family by working as a prostitute, although, in times of self-confrontation, she knows her profession stems out of physical desire, rather than a desire for money. Mahfouz writes:

> She could easily make excuses for her loose behaviour, pretending that her object was to earn money to support her starving family; true enough, but only part of the truth. There was the tormenting mortal despair of resisting her sexual urge. How much she wanted to extinguish it, even if it involved her own extinction! Yet this sexual urge, flaring up more desperately and degenerately than before, had become almost uncontrollable.[62]

Nefissa's misery leads her to consider suicide; she feels worthless. In the next section, the reasons for her suicide and the perception of suicide in Mahfouz's works are examined.

Nefissa's Choice of Suicide

Suicide is a rare occurrence in Mahfouz's work, whereas murder is more common in many of his novels. In Nefissa's case, the only inevitable destiny that awaits is to end her life. She does not fear death, thinking her life is tragic enough and that it is worth ending since she is disgracing

[61] Jean Le Planche Et al. *The Language of Psychoanalysis.* (London: Karnac Books and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1988) p.118.

[62] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p.209.

her family. In *The Beginning and the End*, the depiction of suicide is close to that of Dostoevsky's in *The Dream of A Ridiculous Man*, which offers an idealistic and romantic view of suicide. In this regard, Mahfouz has stated his admiration for Russian literature, particularly the work of Fyodor Dostoevsky.[63]

Ultimately, Nefissa commits suicide after she is arrested by the police at a brothel. The police call Nefissa's youngest brother, Hassanien, who assumes that his brother Hassan the bully has been arrested. He is shocked to learn from the officer that his older sister Nefissa is a prostitute. Mahfouz describes Hassanien's state of mind while hearing the truth about his sister:

> With heavy steps, the officer walked to the door and opened it. Like a sleepwalker Hassanien approached, casting a glance over the officer's shoulder like a man entering a morgue to identify a corpse. Close to the wall facing the door, a girl huddled against a sofa, her head flung back, her eyes half closed, dim, unseeing. She was either unconscious or had just recovered. Her face was as pale as death, and a few wet strands of hair stuck to her forehead. It was unmistakably Nefissa.[64]

Both Nefissa and Hassanian consider only one destiny is possible for Nefissa: death. Hassanian thinks about killing her, but this seem too difficult. As Mahfouz explains, Hassanien does not have the courage to choose dignity over his own safety. Although a 'proposed suicide' saves him from killing his sister, he feels defeated that he does not have enough honour to kill her himself. She chooses to play the patriarchal role for him to prevent any scandal in the family. Nefissa cares about Hassanien's future as much as he does. Nefissa's suicide can be described as a

[63] El Enany *Mahfouz His Life and Times* p. 19.
[64] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 398.

'melancholy' one, in which the individual feels trapped in his or her own world and can no longer integrate into society. According to Durkheim's theory of suicide, the more socially connected the person is, the less likely s/he will be to consider suicide; therefore, social integration is a primary factor in survival. However, Nefissa has no link to the world outside her family. For this reason, suicide is her only choice.

Her altruistic nature encourages her to commit suicide; for an altruistic person, committing mistakes seem overwhelmingly unforgivable; therefore, Nefissa's only desire is to vanish. Mahfouz writes:

> I don't want you to be punished in any way, she exclaimed. What will you say when they ask you why you killed me? Let me do the job myself so that no harm will come to you and nobody will know anything about it.
>
> You'd kill yourself? he inquired, astounded.
>
> Yes. she said breathlessly.[65]

According to Anna Freud's book *The Ego and The Mechanisms of Defence*, an altruistic person does not fear death since he/she thinks constantly about the security of others. She writes:

> Anyone who has very largely projected his instinctual impulses onto other people knows nothing of this fear. In the moment of danger his ego is not really concerned for his own life. He experiences instead excessive concern and anxiety for the lives of his love objects.[66]

[65] Mahfouz p. 400-1.
[66] Anna Freud p. 133.

This clarifies the reason behind Hassanien's hesitation to commit suicide later in the book. After Nefissa willingly throws herself in the Nile, Hassanien hides in shame, observing the passers-by who insist on rescuing her, and failing to do so, they ask the police for help. A crowd gathers and Hassanien pretends that he is one of them, a stranger. The police ask him about the corpse and Hassanien denies knowing anything. Later, thoughts of suicide occur to him, particularly after he remembers Nefissa's last words 'This is God's will', 'no, life to me is even more dreadful than death'.[67] Mahfouz ends the novel as follows:

> Hassanien reached the same place on the bridge. He climbed the rail, looking down into the turbulent waters. Driving all other thoughts from his mind, he made his decision, his thought to God as follows: 'If this is what you want, so be it! I won't scream. For once, let me be courageous. May God have mercy upon us.[68]

The two preceding quotations create an open ending for some readers, which is Nefissa's suicide and Hassanien's relief, and a definite ending for others, which is the suicide of both characters. However, in 2002, Maher Shafik wrote the following in his book *Nāġūīb Māḥfōūẓ Fy ʿYwn Alʿālm* (Naguib Mahfouz in the Eyes of the World).

The writer recalls the readers' analysis of Hassanien's suicide, thinking his suicide was successful. The ending of the novel seems to be closer to this analysis; however, I would like to register that I heard Naguib Mahfouz state that Hassanien commits suicide psychologically not physically. If Hassanien wanted to commit suicide, he would have shot himself; he would never throw himself in the Nile because he is an officer and he knows

[67] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 412.
[68] Ibid, p. 412.

how to swim. I find that the second analysis is stronger and more suitable to Hassanien's cowardice (my translation).[69]

Given Mahfouz's interest in Dostoevsky, it is interesting to note Dostoevsky deals with the issue of suicide several times in his works.[70] His characters are mostly doomed to failure, which leads them to choose death over life. One of the reasons Dostoevsky wrote about suicide was the high rate of suicide in Russia between 1819 and 1875. In his work *An Honest Thief* (1848), the protagonist Emelian commits suicide out of guilt. He is not a professional thief, since he only steals once because he has a drinking problem. The title is a contradiction, in that a thief can never be honest but it is also an indication that Emelian steals out of weakness not wickedness. He struggles between his ethics and his needs. His character and his choice of suicide are similar to Nefissa's, who chooses suicide willingly believing that it is the right punishment for her. She never wants to be a prostitute, but her constant desire for men leads her to become one, as is the case with Emelian, who steals as a result of addiction.

Suicide, for Dostoevsky, is the prerogative of nihilists and unbelievers. Nefissa is not an atheist but also not a strong believer. The mention of God in her thoughts refers to her disappointment over her looks, questioning 'Why am I ugly?' or seeking help from Him in times of fear, which are rare. She fears her siblings and the society around her more than she fears God. For instance, she asks herself 'What will my brothers do when they find out?'[71]

[69] Farid Shafiq Maher. Nāġūīb Māḥfōūẓ Fy ʿYwn Alʿālm. (Alhyʾt Almāsryh Alʿāmh llktāb, 2002) p.67.
[70] El Enany. Mahfouz: His Life and Times p. 19.
[71] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p.300.

Within psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud viewed suicide as an innate drive, but one which is counter-balanced by the pleasure principle or sex drive so that death is only achieved as an end in rare cases. He states the following:

> There exist from the beginning in all of us strong propensities toward self-destruction and these come to fruition as actual only in exceptional cases in which many circumstances and factors combine to make it possible.[72]

It is easy to apply this notion to Nefissa, since when her fantasy of having a husband and children fades away, she chooses self-destruction over life. It is worth noting that in Freud's work the sex drive is on the side of life. Freud believes that the death drive is characterised by a compulsion to repeat earlier traumatic experiences. It seems that in Nefissa's case she tries to rediscover her father's love, while her sex drive is subject to a death drive. Although Nefissa sees her family as a loving one, she still believes that they will not receive the news of her prostitution in an understanding manner. She pictures her family as 'predators' who will exploit her ruthlessly when they learn about her profession. She states:

> None of them could have possibly imagined it. Impossible! As the room swam before her eyes, she saw them gazing at her in demented fury, their fiery, bulging eyes flaming with anger and preying like monsters on her flesh.[73]

[72] Sigmund Freud. *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis, beyond the Pleasure Principle, the Ego and the ID and other works*. (London. Penguin Books, 1991) p. 297.
[73] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p.201.

She isolates herself from time to time to prevent any confrontation with her family. She does not even confine to her only altruistic brother Hussein. The relationship between Hassanien and the second altruistic character, Hussein is now presented.

The Relationship between Hussein and Hassanien

Nefissa is not the only altruistic character in the novel; Hussein, her younger brother, also makes sacrifices for the sake of his family. He is an idealist and a stoic. 'Hussein was more like his mother than the rest of her children. He had her patience, sagacity, and loyalty to the family.'[74] When Samira convinces Nefissa to be a seamstress, Hassanien strongly objects; however, Hussein manages to control himself and his brother saying: 'we shall bear it as lots of others do. Do you think that everybody lives in prosperity, with a generous father to provide for him? Yet all human beings survive and don't commit suicide'. Hussein tries to comfort his younger brother, who nevertheless appears to reject this. 'Hassanien became exasperated. He stared at his brother and exclaimed, "your sangfroid is amazing"'.[75] Hussein talks about suicide as an impossible thing; he can never accept failure or surrender like his other siblings, Nefissa and Hassanien.

Mahfouz describes Hussein and Hassanien as opposing energies, yet they support and help each other most of the time, as their contrasting natures operate hand in hand. Mahfouz describes both brothers in the following way:

> Of the two, Hussein was the wiser, Hassanien the stronger. Hussein undertook the task of guiding and directing whatever problems presented themselves, the bulk of

[74] Ibid p. 36.
[75] Ibid p.443.

> these being related to play and minor questions about money. Hassanien bore the larger burden of defence in any fight they had with outsiders.[76]

Hussein's sacrifices stem from a sense of duty and his love for his family. His altruistic nature seems spontaneous. He does not wait to be asked to make sacrifices, unlike Nefissa who has to be coerced into becoming seamstress, a profession she never liked. However, she detests the small amount of money that is left for her. Mahfouz explains her need for money as follows: 'the fact that her meager earnings from her work were swallowed up by the family's urgent needs increased her misery, for she was unable to keep any of her earnings.'[77] For Hussein, giving up his dream of becoming a college student seems to him to be a wise decision rather than a sacrifice. Mahfouz depicts Hussein's inner thoughts as the following:

> Now, one of us two [referring to Hassanien] has to make sacrifices and accept a job. As the elder brother and having obtained the baccalaureate, it's my duty to do so. I know how bad our circumstances are, and how wicked and cruel it would be of me to think of continuing my education. I must be content with my lot. Let's all pray to God to help us get what we want.[78]

He puts the family's desperate conditions above his own dreams and desires. In describing Hussein's inner thoughts after he decides to work instead of pursuing his studies, Mahfouz implies that Hussein's feelings are peaceful and happy. Hussein remarks on his decision to make this sacrifice.

[76] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 100
[77] Ibid p. 186.
[78] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 203.

> Our family has almost forgotten all sense of relief and security. I should be glad to restore some such feelings to them. Why should I regret my sacrifice? To be a teacher or a clerk is all the same to me.[79]

Hussein refers to God and seeks his guidance in most situations. Religion plays a vital role in his life. Hussein's inner strength is possibly due his religious faith which is explored in the next section.

Hussein symbolises the role of religion in the novel as the strongest believer in the family, while other characters either have weaker faith or no faith, such as Hassan the oldest brother. The following dialogue occurs between the two brothers Hussein and Hassanien about faith in God:

> God has taken our father from us, he said, and left us without support.
>
> He is our support, said Hussein.
>
> Hassanein burst out, I'm not taken in by your pretended calmness. Do you really feel secure?
>
> The believer would never feel anything but serenity.
>
> I believe, but I am still worried!
>
> I have never driven God out of my heart. To tell you the truth, we overdo it when we hold God responsible for our many calamities. Don't you see, if God is

[79] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p. 203.

> responsible for our father's death, he is not responsible for the small pension he left us, said Hussein.[80]

In a previous interview, Mahfouz discussed his ideal society: 'A society builds on constant ethics like freedom, social justice, education, and refined ethics emerge from all religions, particularly Islam.'[81] It appears that every aspect of this ethical spectrum listed by Mahfouz is represented in the character of Hussein. This interview took place in the late 1980s on Egyptian television, forty years after the publication of *The Beginning and the End*, yet Hussein remains the symbol of Mahfouz's ideal society, the balance of the family. Hussein is not completely free as he follows his mother's rules. However, he follows these rules out of duty and respect, rather than submission and fear. As stated previously, Hussein is as 'stoical' as his mother.[82] Both mother and son think alike. Hussein's wisdom and religion are interwoven, which is a notion that was first discussed by Abbas Mahmoud Al Aqqad, an Egyptian writer and scholar, in his book Altfkyr Fryḍh Aslāmyh *(Thinking is Obligatory in Islam)*(1962) (my translation). Al Aqqad was a writer whom Mahfouz admired and, moreover, was the reason behind Mahfouz's decision to study philosophy at university. Al Akkad (1962) discusses in Altfkyr Fryḍh Aslāmyh *(Thinking is Obligatory in Islam)* an important ritual that Muslims should follow. He uses verses from the Quran as a reference, for instance:

> Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the disparity of the night and day, in the ships that course in the sea with that which benefits people, in the water that God sends down from the sky, reviving with it the earth after it was barren, in

[80] Mahfouz *The Beginning and the End* p.44.
[81] Ahmed Zaki Osman. 'A Rare Interview with Naguib Mahfouz', *YouTube,* YouTube, <www.youtube.com/watch?V=ChQMEWWhpMM> [accessed 2 Aug 2011].

[82] Mahfouz *The Beginning and The End* p.36.

> His spreading in it all kinds of living things, in the changing of the winds and the subjected clouds between the sky and the earth, indeed are signs for people who have understanding.[83]

A second verse states, 'So God expounds His Commandments to you, that you may understand.'[84] Both verses emphasise the link between God's creations and the wisdom behind them, as well as showing that all good things are understood before they are accurately felt. All creations are created for the believer to think and understand. A Muslim is not a blind follower but must be a thinker to be a believer. This approach applies to Hussein, who thinks, understands, believes and acts, unlike Hassanien, whose thoughts follow his actions.

Mahfouz's opinion of religion and God is opposed to that of Freud. Freud labelled himself a non-believer, stating 'why did none of the devout create psychoanalysis? Why did it have to wait for a completely godless Jew?'[85] Freud did not believe in religion; instead he used psychoanalysis as a religion, within which individuals confess to psychoanalysts, rather than to priests, while for Muslims, there is only God, because there is no mediator. This is not the only time that Freud's discussions of religion appeared controversial. His letters to Oskar Pfister (1964), a Swiss Lutheran minister and a psychoanalyst, consisted of an exchange of ideas about psychoanalysis and religion. The two men had opposing views, but they never argued. One of Freud's letter to Pfister states, 'You are in the fortunate position of being able to lead them to God and bringing about what in this one respect was the happy state of earlier times when

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[83] ʿAbbās Maḥmwd Alʿ Qād. Altfkyr Fryḍh Aslāmyh. Alqāhrh: Nhḍh Mṣr, 2002) p.11.

[84] *Quran*, (6:151).

[85] John Gay. *Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism and the Making of Psychoanalysis*. (London: Yale University Press, 1989) p.5.

religious faith stifled the neuroses.'[86]This appears to be a confession by Freud that God and religion exist and seeking them is beneficial. A clearer opinion of God and religion that is closer to Mahfouz's views can be found in Carl Jung's book *Psychology and Religion* (1969), in which Jung stated:

> For instance, that life is a disease with a very bad prognosis, it lingers on for years to end with death; or that normality is a generally prevailing constitutional defect; or that man is an animal with a fatally over-grown brain. This kind of thinking is the prerogative of habitual grumblers with bad digestions. Nobody can know what ultimate things are. We must, therefore, take them as we experience them. And if such experience helps to make your life healthier, more beautiful, more complete and more satisfactory to yourself and to those you love, you may safely say: This was the grace of God.[87]

This opinion is closer not only to that of Mahfouz, but also to the Islamic framework, which encourages wise thinking in order to follow God's path. In Hussein's situation, his life begins to blossom following misery and hard work. He has a job, a future plan to finish his studies, and is engaged to his brother's former fiancée, whom he had always secretly admired. For Hussein, life seems to work, unlike his siblings who lose their lives after choosing to be sinners by following their instincts over their rational minds. Hussein may be said to exemplify the qualities of an ideal society as envisaged in the perfect image presented by Mahfouz in *The Beginning and the End*. In the next section, the second novel *Khan El Khalili* will be analysed.

[86] Carl Gustav Jung. *Psychology and Religion*. (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture publications, 1969) p.16
[87] Ibid, p.114.

***Khan El Khalili* and the Second Type of Altruism**

The Beginning and the End is not the only novel by Mahfouz that explores altruism. There are others, such as *Khan El Khalili* (1945), in which Mahfouz presents the life of an Egyptian family before the 1952 revolution. The novel takes place in a one-year span from September 1942 to August 1943. In this year, Egypt was struggling with the Great Depression and the gradual improvement of the economy. The 1936 peace treaty was not the success that Egyptians had hoped it would be. In fact, it was a victory for the British rather than for Egypt due to the constraints it imposed.[88] According to Virginia Danielson's book *The Voice of Egypt: Um Kuthum: Arabic Songs and Egyptian Society*, low wage levels were one of the biggest economic issues. She comments on the issue as follows:

> In 1939, Egyptians were once again subjected to the hardships of what many viewed as a European war. Wages for most Egyptians were still low. During the war cotton acreage was restricted. Prices rose sharply as war caused inflation and a dislocation of food supply so that in 1942 there were famine riots, labour disputes and strikes for higher wages.[89]

In *Khan El Khalili*, the family moves from al Sakakini, where they have lived for most of their lives, to Khan El Khalili, believing it will be safer in the time of World War II. The family believes that as Khan El Khalili is closer to the shrine of Hussein, the grandson of the prophet, the Germans will not bomb it out of respect for its religious value. The protagonist of the novel is Ahmed Akif, a middle-aged clerk, who lives with his parents and his younger brother, Rushdi.

[88] Virginia Danielson. *The Voice of Egypt: Um Kulthum: Arabic Songs and Egyptian Society*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) p.100.
[89] Danielson, p. 100.

Ahmed is quite a complex character, acting altruistically and feeling superior at the same time. In school, he is the good shy student, whom most of the teachers expect to be a scholar or a writer. After he receives his secondary degree, however, his world changes and he must support his family due to his father's early retirement. His father has a dispute that he cannot accept with one of the authorities. As a result, he chooses to retire instead of fighting to keep his job, anticipating that he will be dismissed shamefully. The father's decision to retire is shocking for Ahmed though he never complains. However, this decision creates pessimism and bitterness within Ahmed's character. He preoccupies himself with reading and writing, which leads him to believe that he is as qualified as a university scholar. Mahfouz writes of Ahmed:

> The decision to abandon his studies had been a severe blow to his hopes. At first it sent him reeling, and he was overwhelmed by a violent, almost insane fury that completely destroyed his personality and filled him with a sense of bitter remorse. To him it was obvious that he was a martyr to injustice, a genius consigned early to the grave, a victim of malicious fate.[90]

This psychological state convinces him that he is a well-qualified writer and thinker to the extent that he sends his work to renowned publications, believing it will be welcomed. He expects to find his writing in the newspapers every other month, and when this fails to transpire, he feels even greater despair. He thinks that the world is unfair. His talents are neglected while those of university graduates are favoured even when they had not performed as well in school as he had. Mahfouz remarks about Ahmed's false appreciation of himself as follows:

[90] Naguib Mahfouz. *Khan El Khalili*. (New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2008) p.89.

> He kept a relentlessly close watch on the careers of some of his more distinguished school contemporaries who had managed to continue their studies. Quite frequently he would look up from reading the newspaper and say ask incredulously, do you know this person they keep writing about? He was at school with me, grade after grade. He was a very poor student; he never managed to beat me at anything.[91]

Ahmed tries to convince himself that being a keen reader of philosophy, religion and critical thought is enough, and that university degrees are worthless. He develops a sense of superiority in order to refute his real-world failure. He is in denial or disavowal as Sigmund Freud would have put it. He does not want to blame his family, particularly his father, so instead he blames society, and, in particular, publishers. He questions all authority, forgetting that his father is exerting authority over him by making him work for the family. To heal his wounded pride, he convinces his family that he is an accomplished writer and researcher, and the fact that his parents are not well-educated helps him to create the image of himself as a thinker. He acquires recognition and respect in the new neighbourhood, except from Ahmed Rashad, a young lawyer. Rashad is a sceptical socialist who rejects the old traditions that favour religion over science.

Mahfouz represents the opposing views of both characters in the following dialogue:

> Degrees are just a kind of game young people compete over. My studies have only one quest, genuine learning. Maybe one day I'll have done enough to think about publishing something.

[91] Mahfouz *Khan El Khalili* p. 12.

> But what do you mean when you say that degrees are merely a game? Ahmed Rashid asked him with the kind of smile on his face that made the other Ahmed furious.
>
> A degree is no indication of learning, Ahmed replied, doing his best to control his anger.
>
> Does it indicate ignorance then?
>
> His temper kept rising, to the extent that he had to consciously suppress it. What I mean, he went on, is that a degree merely demonstrates that a young person has spent a few years memorising certain topics. Genuine learning is nothing like that. Ahmed Rashid gave a cryptic smile but then let the subject drop.[92]

Mahfouz positions Ahmed Rashid as a symbol of the new modern way of living while Akif represents the old. He constitutes Ahmed's status as threatening to the old as a result of his intellect. He is familiar with the works of Western figures about whom Akif knows nothing, such as Freud and Nietzsche. The differences between the two characters are made evident within the following dialogue:

> Unlike his colleague, Ahmed Akif was someone who believed that genuine greatness resided in the past. Or rather, the only examples of greatness that he was familiar with were in the past; he had no knowledge of greatness in the contemporary era. As a result, the other Ahmed's statement made him angry again.

[92] Mahfouz *Khan El Khalili* p. 55.

> Why would anyone wish to deny the greatness of times past? he asked,
>
> With their prophets and messengers?
>
> Our era has messengers of its own. Ahmed was about to express his sense of outrage, but he didn't want to express it in words unless it was his companion's ignorance that was involved rather than his learning. So, he asked calmly, who are the messengers of this era?
>
> Let's take those two geniuses: Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx.
>
> He felt as though a hand had grasped his neck and was throttling him. Indeed, he felt as if his honour had just suffered a deep wound because he had never heard either of those two names before.[93]

This demonstrates clearly how the old and new disagree. Ahmed Akif, who lives in his own world of religion and tradition, is a symbol of the old lifestyle, while Ahmed Rashid follows the new science as a substitute for religion. For him the discovery of the atom renders religious rituals little more than myths. Both Akif and Khan El Khalili symbolise resistance to the threat of change and new wisdom. They are constant, while everything around them changes. Ahmed Akif's family is trying to remain in a safe place, which for them is a religious one. The family feel threatened by change; they prefer to live in the old style, which is symbolised by religion.[94]

Akif devotes his time to the family and going to work is his only routine. He does not have many friends and is very shy with women, hence, his only reliable female relationship is with his

[93] Mahfouz *Khan El Khalili* p. 59.
[94] Ibid p. 9

mother. In secondary school, he meets his neighbour, the pretty, young, flamboyant Jewish girl about whom everyone talks, but he cannot speak to her. She approaches him and makes him follow her to talk. He does so like a child following its mother, except he is sweating. She forces him to kiss her, described by Mahfouz in the following scene:

> He stole a quick kiss that seemed to last for whole decades. How he longed for more of the same! But that is the way he was: intense passions but along with them desperate shyness. This pretty Jewish girl liked to poke fun at his face. He took her seriously and started hating his own face to an unnecessary degree. Now he had yet another excuse for his innate shyness, which only intensified. Had it been possible for a man to wear a veil over his face, he would have been the one to do so. It was one of the key factors in the excessive attention he paid to his personal appearance, something that transformed itself into utter neglect when despair got the better of him.[95]

His second romantic encounter with a woman is with a neighbour, who refuses to wait for him while he supports his family and subsequently marries someone else. They both like each other and their mothers are friends, yet they do not have a proper relationship like most lovers of the time – not even writing letters or meeting in secrecy. Although they only meet in the presence of their mothers, he likes her. However, the fact that he is supporting his family means he loses not only his dream of achieving a university degree but also the opportunity of marriage. Ahmed never blames his family, but he does blame women. As a result of his shyness and the severe conditions with which he battles, women become Ahmed Akif's enemy. He claims that they are

[95] Mahfouz *Khan EL Khalil* p. 38.

evil creatures, greedy and ungrateful, and in this way, he hides his shyness. He does not have the courage to admit to other men that he is shy, particularly to those who speak of their trysts with pride.

Finally, after twenty years of avoiding women, yet all the while observing them, Nawal, Ahmed's neighbour, appears in his life. Seeing her from the window from time to time makes him feel that he is in love again. Ahmed is approaching forty and Nawal is a sixteen-year-old secondary school girl. Nawal is devoted to her house chores because her ultimate dream is marriage. She considers intellectual pursuits and science a waste of time because neither will pave her way to marriage.[96] The obvious age gap between Ahmed and Nawal discourages Ahmed from proposing, yet when he sees her, he completely forgets about it. His small salary does not help him to present himself as a good suitor, but he cannot stop thinking about her. Mahfouz describes his infatuation:

> All he had seen of her was her eyes. Once he had realised she was there, he had been looking straight at them. They were large and limpid, with honey-coloured irises; her lashes were so long that they looked as though she had used kohl. They managed to suggest both softness and attraction and made their way straight into his affections.[97]

It is clear from the description that Ahmed perceives women through sincere and shy eyes. He does not see any other part of Nawal except her eyes. He has difficulty talking to her throughout

[96] Ibrahim El Sheikh. "Egyptian Women as Portrayed in the Social Novels of Najib Mahfuz. Al-'Arabiyya, Vol. 15, No. ½, 1982. Pp. 131-145, p. 136.
[97] Mahfouz *Khan El Khalili* p. 35.

the novel and only manages to utter, ‘After you, Miss,’ when she walks near him in the street. He is even shyer than a teenage girl.

In this regard, Rushdi, Ahmed’s younger brother, has a contrasting character to that of Ahmed, but the two men still share a good brotherly relationship. In the next section, the brotherly bond between Ahmed and Rushdi is explored.

The Relationship between Ahmed and Rushdi

Mahfouz describes Rushdi, Ahmed’s younger brother, who lives outside Cairo, and works in a bank, as the opposite of Ahmed. Rushdi is flamboyant and in love with life in all its aspects. Ahmed plays the father figure in the family and Rushdi acts as the spoiled son. He enjoys drinking, gambling and flirting with women. However, the brothers share a strong bond as emphasised in the passage below.

> He loved his brother more than anything on earth because the young man had shown his love for him in ways that far surpassed the love and respect he showed to his parents. He always remembered the way Ahmed had taken care of him and served as his benefactor. Rushdi adored his elder brother because the latter had crafted him with his own two hands, nourished him with his spirit, and spent his own money on his younger brother's upbringing. Ahmed was both elder brother and loving parent. He had enjoyed his younger brother's childhood, carrying him in his arms, teaching him to talk, and training him to walk. He had watched over him as a boy and directed his education.[98]

[98] Mahfouz *Khan El Khalili* p. 112.

This special bond between brothers compels Ahmed to surrender his dream and forget about Nawal. He sacrifices his love and his only hope of having a family of his own when he sees Rushdi talking to Nawal. He leaves the scene he has witnessed in pain and comparing himself to his brother; he feels that his brother deserves Nawal more than he does as he is still a young man in his twenties with a lovable and kind personality. He is even happy when they become engaged:

> When I need advice, Rushdi said, you are the one I turn to. I've come to see if you agree to the idea of my getting married.
>
> His heart leapt as though what he had just heard was a complete surprise, something that had not even occurred to him. Even so, he was unwilling to show any sign of distress and put on a show of innocent surprise, indeed of happiness at the idea. So, at last you have come to talk about marriage, he replied. I'm utterly thrilled![99]

This role, that of the 'big brother', tends to differ in the East from its function in the West. Victor Cicirelli compared sibling solidarity in Eastern and Western societies in his article, *Sibling Relationships with a Cross-Cultural Perspective*. In the article, he defined Western society as industrialised and Eastern society as non-industrialised, stating, 'For purposes of making comparisons, two broad categories of societies can be identified. The first consists of the modem urban industrialised, technologically advanced societies of such 'Western nations as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, and so on. The second consists of non-

[99] Ibid, p. 192.

industrialised technologically backward agrarian or pastoral societies found in more remote rural areas or villages of Asia, Oceania, Africa, and Central and South America'.[100]

Cicirelli adds 'In non-industrialised societies, the objective of sibling caregiving is more than just to give the mother free time for other activities; it allows the parents to fulfil necessary work roles for family survival and maintenance. In addition, sibling caregiving serves as a backup system in the event that parents do not survive some catastrophe'.[101]

In George Orwell's *1984*, however, 'Big Brother' is a symbol of tyranny. In *1984*, the main objective is the prevention of a totalitarian regime in the West. Orwell suggests that leaders' actions are questionable, and their authority should serve the people rather than oppressing them. This is a theme Mahfouz also adopts in many of his novels including *The Karnak* and *The Children of the Alley*, which are discussed in the second chapter. 1n *1984*, the main protagonist, Winston, sees posters of a man saying, 'BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU' everywhere he goes. Citizens are told that Big Brother is the leader of the nation and the head of the party; however, no one has met him, and Winston wonders if he even exists. Big Brother is a controversial character; his name suggests warmth and familiarity, but he is also a threat to his citizens. They fear him more than they respect him. The phrase "Big Brother is watching you" emphasises the brutality of the character.

Nonetheless, the ambiguity of the Big Brother character compels those within the society to be more obedient; the love and hate feelings that they have for the leader make them feel guilty when they consider disobeying. The word 'brother' symbolises warmth but adding 'big' makes

[100] Victor G. Cicirelli. 'Sibling Relationships with Cross-Culture Perspective: Journal of Marriage and Family, Vol.56, Issue 1, 1994 p.7.
[101] Cicirelli p. 10.

the concept appear more powerful than altruistic as though whoever has this title has power over others. Being ‘big’ makes others ‘small’. In a capitalist society, it is power that rules and not emotions. Conversely, for Mahfouz, being ‘big’ means a responsibility to be a second father emotionally more than financially. Acting otherwise makes others suspicious and creates a bad image for the ‘big’ individual within society.

While in Egypt brothers often stand in for fathers, it is the case that parents may be replaced by significant others across cultures, as has been explored in psychoanalysis. According to Prophecy Coles’ book *Sibling Relationships* (2006), the clinical cases on which she has worked have included those concerning the sister-mother role. In *Khan El Khalili*, the role of both parents is marginalised, particularly that of the father. In this regard, one of the psychoanalytical cases Coles worked on is also relevant. The subject of the case was Ms F, who was raised and nurtured by her elder sister. At the beginning of the analysis, Ms F wrote a list of remarkable events in her life which all included her elder sister. She noticeably excluded the maternal relation, however, that was not the problem so much as the fact that she also found her mother’s absence unproblematic. Dr. Coles’ remarked of the patient:

> In working with this patient it is the sibling transference that dominates and needs interpretation. Without this the work lacks vitality. The family of siblings dominates the internal world and the parental couple are, of course, present but deeply fragmented. This is not to say that mother and father, first separate and then representing the idea of the couple, the cornerstone of the transference, will not be

> worked with, but this case study illustrates a need for putting the siblings first and facing them out in the transference.[102]

Working on sibling transference is more complicated than working on the parental relationship. Coles explains that sibling transference leaves the therapist 'wondering about the quality of the depth of the interaction taking place within the session'.[103] Conversely, according to Mahfouz, the replacement of a parent is an expected fact in Egypt when the father is often not present. Although the role of the father is significant in Egyptian society, the older sibling is raised to be a substitute for or an assistant to the parent in most cases. According to Dr. Safaa Abdel Kader, an Egyptian psychiatrist, the older brother is the symbol of security within the family. Both parents expect him to be the most responsible for the majority of the time; in contrast to the other siblings, they consider him to be an icon and the 'nurturing figure' in the family. Some studies have shown that by nature the older brother tends to lead; therefore, some have a tendency to control, favour success and utterly refuse to lose. In this case, they succeed in bearing the responsibility for the family' (my translation).[104] Coles reflects on the replacement:

> The degree of anxiety, for example, which infantile emotions and behaviour arouse, will vary from parent to parent. Mothers have different abilities to contain distress and anxiety and to be aware of the areas of similarity and difference between their own needs and that of their baby. Likewise, fathers have different capacities to contain the baby's mental state, and their own ability to support the intensity of the relationship between mother and child will be tested for the first time. Feelings of

[102] Coles p.240.
[103] Ibid p. 240.
[104] Fāṭmā Yāsr. Alākh Alākbr Hw Alqāʾd Bṭbʿh. Alywm Alsābʿ, 2014.

> exclusion may be re-evoked, either sensed or actual, as well as resentment about being left out of what has now become, if only temporarily, the primary couple. It may be some time, even years, before an unresolved difficulty in these early relationships makes its appearance in the family, usually under the impact of some kind of renewed stress.[105]

Freud's early studies were on the psychology of children and youth; he stated that 'the nature and quality of the human child's relations to people of his own and the opposite sex have already been laid down in the first six years of his life. The people to whom he is in this way fixed are his parents and brothers and sisters.'[106] However, his later studies demonstrate the importance of the role of the mother and neglect the influence siblings have upon each other. According to Coles's book *The Importance of Sibling Relationships in Psychoanalysis* (2003), Freud's initial studies of sibling bonds are not related to his clinical theory. Coles states:

> Freud's discovery of the Oedipus complex contributed to the abandonment of the theoretical problem of sibling attachment. Freud's reluctance to pursue more deeply the question of how early sibling/peer relationships 'fix' later ones has meant there has been a lack of interest in this idea, at both the level of theory and in clinical practice. We still consider these relationships to be unimportant.[107]

Mahfouz shows that Ahmed tries to return to his cocoon by reading and writing aimlessly. However, when his brother is diagnosed with tuberculosis, his world is turned upside down and instead of dreaming of being published or getting married, his dream changes to seeing his

[105] Yasser p. 101.
[106] Coles p. 79.
[107] Coles p. 80.

brother healthy again. After many ordeals to help his brother recover and ultimately accompanying him to the sanitorium, even this dream, like all the others, vanishes and his brother dies at the age of twenty-six. According to Melanie Klein, if a person is not envious of others, it is likely that admiration will emerge. She notes 'when envy and rivalry are not great, it becomes possible to enjoy vicariously the pleasures of others'.[108] Ahmed had enjoyed seeing Rushdi succeed in life, particularly in education, which is one experience that Ahmed lacked; although Rushdi barely passed his exams, he managed to achieve the university degree that Ahmed had always wanted. Klein adds:

> This attitude becomes particularly important when people grow older and the pleasures of youth become less and less available. If gratitude for past satisfactions has not vanished, old people can enjoy whatever is still within their reach. Furthermore, with such an attitude, which gives rise to serenity, they can identify themselves with young people.[109]

There is no doubt that through raising Rushdi Ahmed had experienced the pleasure of reliving his childhood and youth and which had also allowed him to perform the role of a teacher to fulfil his need for recognition. Ahmed is not elderly at forty-years-old but old age is not only about numbers, and in Ahmed's case, he feels old. He is supporting a family without having one of his own, and his shyness stops him from having proper relationships with women, which only adds to his sense of being old.

[108] Melanie Klein. *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-1963*. (London: Vintage, 1997) p.259.
[109] Klein p. 259.

As previously stated, the role that Ahmed plays as the big brother and second father to the family is a general one in Egyptian society, where the elder brother replaces the father in cases of absence or sickness. This role includes both financial and moral aspects. Many Egyptian writers have examined this role, as Ehsan Abdel Qudoss does in his novel, *La Totfe' Al Shams* (The Sun is Always Shining), within which the protagonist Ahmed bears the responsibility for his family on his shoulders after his father dies. The family comes from an upper-class background and is financially stable. Ahmed wears his father's suits rather than casual wear. H considers his governmental work a burden and dislikes his job as much as Ahmed Akif in *Khan El Khalili.* Although Ahmed finishes his college degree, he still finds himself trapped in a job that he hates for the sake of his family, similarly to Ahmed Akif.

Ultimately, however, Ahmed Akif's altruism is different from that of Nefissa and Hussein in *The Beginning and the End.* The former's altruism stems from admiration; he admires his younger brother, Rushdi, and the fact that Rushdi admires his big brother's intellectual status. He enjoys seeing Rushdi grow up and become a man which allows him to feel that he is not a failure. For Nefissa, on the other hand, an inferiority complex and acting like her mother are the main reasons for her altruistic behaviour. As for Hussein, his sense of duty and his belief in God make him a very altruistic person. He strives to move his family forward, while keeping his own dreams on hold but not forgetting them. He does not live with the illusion that he is a great scholar as Ahmed Akif does, nor does he lead a double life like Nefissa, a seamstress in the morning and a prostitute at night. Thus, Mahfouz may be seen to be engaged in clarifying the different forms altruism may take, distinguishing between the person's desires and mature forms of responsibility.

It should be noted that Ahmed Akif's character is based on a real person. Akif's character is a portrayal of a work colleague of Mahfouz. Mahfouz describes the reasons behind choosing this person to be the protagonist of his novel:

> Akif was a real person. He was an official at the university, in the university administration to be precise… The Ahmed Effendi Akif whom I knew was no more than a petty official in the university administration, but he thought he knew everything about Egypt. He was silly and superficial.[110]

According to Mahfouz, Ahmed Akif's post in Alexandria was better than the one in Cairo and would have led to him receiving the title of *'bek'* a very prestigious social title at that time.[111] The fact that Ahmed Akif is a real person makes the link between altruism and narcissism real, not just fictional. It might be assumed that the role of a big brother is a rewarding one for Mahfouz; yet, this role can also be a burden. Unlike Nefissa, Ahmed falls into the trap that lies between altruism and narcissism. He struggles to be altruistic without maintaining a good self-image even if it is not a real one.

According to Anna Freud, altruistic surrender overcomes narcissistic mortification. If we apply this to Ahmed, we may find that it is partially true. Ahmed's altruism (like Nefissa's) is close to that of the altruistic governess (Anna Freud's patient) in that he puts tremendous effort into making his brother successful in order to fulfil his own needs and not only those of his brother. In other words, Ahmed Akif finds his happiness in his brother's achievements rather than in his own; however, his narcissistic nature is not removed. In his case, the levels of altruism and

[110] al-Ghitani. *Maḥfouz's Dialogs* p. 100-1.

[111] Ragaa Alnqāš. *ṣfḥāt mn mḏkrāt Naguib Mahfouz*. (Cairo: dār ālšrwq),p. 44.

narcissism rise together. This notion is close to Melanie Klein's definition of narcissism, which she attaches to the emotions and fantasies of childhood. In her book *Envy and Gratitude,* Klein makes a comparison between her view of narcissism and that of Freud.

Freud's use of the term object is here somewhat different from my use of this term, for he is referring to the object of an instinctual aim, while I mean in addition to this, an object-relation involving the infant's emotions, phantasies, anxieties, and defenses.[112]

This is applicable to Ahmed: he feels anxious about forsaking his dream of becoming a scholar and having a real relationship with a woman. Thus, he suppresses his needs and anxieties until they form a sense of superiority that leads to narcissism as a defence mechanism.

In addition, Mahfouz presents three kinds of love in *Khan El Khalili*. In this case, three men are in love with one girl, Nawal. There is Ahmed Akif's platonic love, Ahmed Rashid's pragmatic love because he leaves the girl, believing she is neither intelligent nor ambitious enough to be his partner, and the flamboyant love of Rushdi. They all fail to be with Nawal. Ahmed Akif's shyness stops him from developing the relationship, Ahmed Rashid's inflexibility and critical nature make her leave, and, ultimately, Rushdi's death stops him from marrying her. The inflexibility displayed by Ahmed Rashid is present in Mahfouz's description of Nawal's feelings and thoughts about her brief encounter with Rashid, as a teacher and potential suitor:

> As far as she was concerned, he was not so much a teacher as a real man. Her heart softened a little, and life began to quicken its pulse. However, the young lawyer was far more strict and serious than necessary, and she was totally

[112] Klein p. 51.

> incapable of gauging the real feelings that lurked behind his dark eyes. At first, he merely patronized her, but when he started actually scolding her as well, she came to regard him as being both gloomy and somewhat frightening. With that she changed her mind about him and lost hope.[113]

In this way, Mahfouz seems to criticize three ways of living: the old conservative and traditional way, the socialist intellectual way and the hedonistic way. In this case, Nawal may represent life, and in order to pursue life, extremism is rejected. The three men are all extremists in their own ways. Mahfouz describes Akif as shy 'like an immature teenager falling over himself out of sheer embarrassment', Rashid as an intellectual and Rushdi as a lover of life, who lives a distasteful life. Rasheed El Enany comments on the ways of living presented by Mahfouz:

> One might be tempted to argue that Rushdi's death should not be read in symbolic terms since it did not result from an air-raid. But it must be remembered that Rushdi's hedonism, which kills him and which is the opposite of all the traditional values that the old quarter stands for, is part of the cultural package symbolised by modern, Western warfare from which they had tried to escape'.[114]

He adds:

> I have shown that the advocate of the old is negatively portrayed in certain ways. It must be observed now that the socialist advocate is also presented in less than attractive terms. He [referring to Ahmed Rashid] is a dry, lifeless character who is bigoted and tunnel-visioned, and although he is free from Ahmed Akif's shyness

[113] Mahfouz *Khan El Khalili* p. 144
[114] El Enany *Mahfouz Pursuit of Meaning* p.50.

> and clumsiness, he is shown to be equally incapable of love in spite of his access to the same girl as her private tutor. Is this a defect in portrayal or is it a rejection by Mahfouz of a totally socialist solution? If the novel is examined in isolation, the case would seem to be the second.[115]

A question then arises regarding the right way to pursue one's dreams, even if it is a simple dream such as marrying, if the three methods presented within the novel are mistaken. The lack of an answer to this question emphasises the turbulence that the writer felt at that time. Chaotic and confused relationships are the result of the instability of the society that Mahfouz criticized in many of his works. Mahfouz believed that politics played a vital role in his work; he stated 'in all my writing, you will find politics. You may find a story which ignores love, or any other subject, but not politics; it is the very axis of our thinking'.[116] To this end, Mahfouz refers to British colonization in many of his novels, including *The Trilogy*. We find in both *The Beginning and the End* and *Khan Khalili*, that the severe conditions in which most of the characters live is a symbol of Egyptian society under British colonization. For instance, in *The Beginning and the End*, there is little direct reference to this colonization. Mahfouz argued that the novel was politically symbolic. Mahfouz believed that Ismail Sidqi,is 'the real villain of the novel, the despotic prime minister of Egypt at that time.'[117] Nonetheless, Mahfouz's statement about politics can be easily applied to *The Beginning and the End*. The father dies in the opening pages, leaving the family to confront their destinies alone. The family symbolises Egyptian society facing its colonizers alone. Each family member fails to survive except for the strongest and the most resilient member of the family. Accordingly, symbols of colonial oppression and

[115] El Enany *Mahfouz's Life and Times*, p.50.
[116] El Enany *Mahfouz Pursuit of Meaning* p.22-3.
[117] El Enany *Mahfouz Pursuit of Meaning* p. 67.

the feelings of frustration that the colonized experience are expressed through the characters. Hassanien expresses his resentment of his lowly and impoverished life stating, 'poverty prevented me from my education…distinction, good luck, and respectable jobs are hereditary in our country. I have no resentment, but I am sad. I am sad about myself and about the masses. I am not an individual but an oppressed nation.'[118] Another reference to colonization in this novel is the misery that Nefissa suffers throughout. It can be argued that Nefissa is a symbol of a 'humiliated nation'.[119] For Mahfouz, under the harsh socio-political conditions, Nefissa lacks confidence, and material and educational resources. In this respect, Mahfouz plays two roles: namely, the historian and the writer. In reading between the lines, we can see the bridge between the poor and the rich, and the middle class is almost non-existent. Under British colonial rule, as previously stated, Egyptians struggled financially. This raises a question about the role of altruism in colonized societies.

According to Mahfouz, the family members in both novels make sacrifices for each other in order to resist poverty and oppression. It is suggested that the sense of community increases in time of crisis; this is not only an Egyptian Mahfouzian theme but also an African one. As previously stated, Egyptian society is a blend of Ancient Egyptian, Jewish, Christian and Islamic cultures. To state that African culture has influenced Egyptian heritage is debatable. According to Cheikh Anta Diop, the Senegalese historian, anthropologist, physicist and politician, African culture had a strong impact on the culture of Ancient Egypt. The study of Ancient Egyptian culture in his book *The African Origin of Ancient Egyptian Civilisation* is very thorough,

[118] Naguib Mahfouz. *The Beginning and the End* p.199.
[119] Ibrahim El Sheikh. 'Egyptian Women' p. 135.

detailing many aspects including social anthropology, archaeology, kinship and language. Diop identifies the similarities between the cultures in terms of kinship:

> The oneness of Egyptian and Black culture could not be stated more clearly. Because of this essential identity of genius, culture, and race, today all Negroes can legitimately trace their culture to ancient Egypt and build a modern culture on that foundation. A dynamic modern contact with Egyptian Antiquity would enable Blacks to discover increasingly each day the intimate relationship between all Blacks of the continent and the mother valley.[120]

Diop adds 'the social stratification of African life is precisely that of Egypt. In Egypt, the stratification was as follows: peasants, skilled workers, priests, warriors, and government officials, the king. In the rest of Black Africa, there are: peasants, artisans or skilled workers, warriors, priests, the king'.[121] Although, Mahfouz has never spoken directly of the influence of African culture on his work, it is still worth referring to emancipation and the African struggle and the rise of altruism in times of crisis. Africans, like the Egyptians, fought for independence from foreign colonizers in the 19th and 20th centuries. The next section offers an exploration of the African personality and a brief history of the African struggle against colonization in relation to altruism. A resemblance between the African perception of the sibling bond and the Egyptian perception is easily recognisable in the way both cultures raise their children to act altruistically towards each other in order to highlight the sense of community in society. The sense of brotherhood is important in African culture and it is considered to be a duty to act in this way.

[120] Cheikh Anta Diop. *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. (Chicago, IL, Lawrence Hill Books, 1997) p.140.
[121] Diop *The African Origin of Civilization* p.141

Consequently, there is a strong relationship between the Egyptian and African understanding of this bond.[122]

The African Brotherhood

In Africa, brotherhood is a central theme, particularly within the family. On a broad scale, many African scholars have developed the significance of brotherhood as an act of resistance. According to Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican publisher, journalist and the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, black people can develop themselves without depending on 'white' countries. He established his association in 1914 to unite blacks, the motto of which is: 'One God! One Aim! One Destiny!' Garvey added that its purpose was 'to establish a universal confraternity among the race: to promote the spirit of pride and love; to reclaim the fallen; to administer to and assist the needy; to assist in civilising the backward tribes of Africa'.[123] In Dr Walter Rodney's book entitled *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1981), Rodney analysed Africa's stages of development before colonization. Although Rodney's focus was economic growth, his analysis can still be applied to family and siblings. Rodney emphasises the importance of community work, which occurs initially in the infrastructure of families. He states, 'numerous examples could be brought forward to show the dominance of the family principle in the communal phase of African development. It affected the two principal factors of production – land and labour – as well as the system of distributing goods'.[124] In his book, *Groundings with my Brothers* (1969), Rodney notes that in Africa the

[122] I interviewed Dr. Mohamed Mohieddin, Sociology professor at the Monefiya university, about the impact of sibling relationships in the modern Egyptian society, and its links to African culture. In addition to, the effects of sociopolitical conditions on this bond.
[123] Marcus Garvey. 'Aims and Objects of Movement for Solution of Negro Problem'. (*National Humanities Centre*, 1924) p.124.
[124] Walter Rodney. Et al. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. (Washington D.C.: Howard UP, 1981) p.37.

negative effects of colonization were many; however, the sense of community and the significance of brotherhood were not affected as he points out that ‘it was only natural that imperialism and its local lackeys should have intensified the oppression of our Black brothers'. [125]

Rodney’s uses the word 'brothers' many times in his writings and speech and this enhances the sense of black solidarity. It strengthens the impression of two opposing sides: 'white power' and 'black power'.[126] According to O. Igboin’s article, *Colonialism and African Cultural Values* (2011), one of African society’s main values is the sacredness of family:

> Among the various African values, the sacredness of human life is of utmost importance. The respect and dignity accorded human life cannot be over-emphasised. Respect for humanity spreads beyond the confines of the nuclear family. Members of the extended family, community or tribe are regarded as brothers whose lives must be preserved and protected. In this case, the notion of human value is intrinsically linked with a wide range of brotherhood, which may not be biologically based. The concept of brotherhood in Africa goes beyond the Western notion. Therefore, in whatever circumstance, the spirit of brotherhood stimulates a patriotic response and kind disposition of one towards another. Man is valued above every other possession, which is the reason African places a high premium on children. The African attitude to human life has an ultimate worth because of its intrinsic relation with the creator of life.[127]

[125] Walter Rodney. *The Groundings with my Brothers*. (London: Bogle. L’Ouverture Publications, 1969) P.20.
[126] Rodney *Groundings with my Brothers* p.22
[127] O.B. Igboin. ‘Colonialism and African Cultural Values’. *Journal of West African Studies*, 2011 P.99.

Igboin adds that the strong bonds in African society are not only related to biological kinship because Africans perceive society itself as one family.

> Africans share mutually; they care for one another, they are interdependent and they solidarize. Whatever happens to one happens to the community as a whole. The joy and sorrow of one extends to other members of the community in profound ways.[128]

Another value to consider is the African appreciation of children, and African culture enhances the value of having children. Children are a moral blessing rather than an economic one. A famous African proverb is, 'Children are the wisdom of the nation', which encourages children to have an impact upon their society. Jacob Drachler's *African Heritage: An Anthology of Black African Personality and Culture* (1964) discusses the importance of this proverb to the African community. Drachler states:

> In travelling from village to village the native visitor will almost invariably make it his business to ask the children whom he is certain to find playing below the village 'Well, children, what is the news in the city?' Without any suspicion or fear the children will tell him the most important of the latest news. If the stranger should find it not expedient to enter the village because the news indicates that his tribe had become involved in some trouble with it, he would turn back at once. The children would calmly resume their play with the feeling that they had done their duty by giving the man the information he desired.[129]

[128] Igboin 'Colonialism and African Cultural Values' p.99.
[129] Jacob Drachler. *African Heritage: An Anthology of Black African Personality and Culture*. (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1964) p.48.

Respecting the value of children and allowing them to share in social responsibility enhances their sense of empathy and altruism. According to Dr Ervin Staub's article, 'Empathy, Compassion, Responsibility in Altruism and Heroism', feelings of responsibility are especially important motivators in helping others and taking responsibility for an action or event can help the person involved feel the needs of others and refrain from causing harm. Oblivious to his or her own circumstances, the responsible person tends to help the other. Staub adds, 'they can end up helping even when circumstances do not focus responsibility on a person. Such a personal orientation may be fostered in a variety of ways. One of them is practice by parents and teachers, such as warmth and affection, combined with values that stress helping others.'[130]

A good example of the appreciation of community and brotherhood is Albert Luthuli's Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance speech. Albert Luthuli (1899) was a South African teacher, activist, Nobel Peace Prize winner and politician. In 1960, he became the first South African to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Luthuli devoted his life to the long 'non-violent struggle for his people's rights'.[131] In his Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech, Luthuli discussed peace and oppression in Africa; he stated:

> There can be no peace until the forces of oppression are overthrown. Our continent has been carved up by the great powers. In these times, there has been no peace. There could be no brotherhood between men.[132]

[130] Ervin Staub. 'Empathy, Comparison, Responsibility in Altruism and Heroism'. *Psychology Today Online*, 2013. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-the-garden-good-and-evil/201312/empathy-compassion-responsibility-in-altruism-and-heroism>
[131] Drachler, p. 154.
[132] Drachler, p. 154.

Examining the role of brotherhood leads to discussing the role of sisterhood in times of crisis, which has been omitted in most of Mahfouz's works except *The Palace Walk* in *The Trilogy,* in which Mahfouz writes of the 1919 revolution. The next section explores the role of sisterhood, which demonstrates how Mahfouz uses the family structure as a symbol of wider social relations. For instance, in the 1919 revolution, women and men revolted against the British for denying Saad Zaghloul permission to travel outside the country. As stated previously in the introductory chapter, the 1919 revolution had an impact on Mahfouz as a child, as an adult and as a writer.

Sisterhood

Although the word 'brotherhood' is a broad term, which includes both men and women, it is still important to discuss the role of sisterhood in colonial societies. Since the term sisterhood is also broad, an attempt will be made to define it according to its comprehensive relationship within sibling bonds. Sisterhood is a common theme in many cultures; it is 'global'.[133] Women in Egypt have conducted more than one revolution relying only on upon themselves, except for the 1919 revolution, which was a cooperative effort between men and women. For Egyptian women, their honour and the 'honour of the nation' are essential.[134] Centuries ago, patriots presented the 'concept of family honour to the national plane, using the rhetoric of honour to mobilise the population. In the following decades, they built on family metaphors and female images of the nation to strengthen a sense of national honor in the face of occupation and humiliation'.[135]

At the time, 'the French campaign' against Egypt, specifically in September 1798, involved Napoleon Bonaparte, commander of the French campaign, demolishing the cemeteries located

[133] Reina Lewis Et al. *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. (New York: Routledge, 2003) p.4.
[134] Beth Baron. *Egypt As a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005. P. 53.
[135] Baron. *Egypt as a Woman*. P. 55.

next to some of the houses in Old Cairo in preparation for new plans for the region. When the army began demolishing the cemeteries, their activities also spread to some of the homes in the area resulting in the expulsion of their inhabitants. This led to a major women's protest. The history books, unfortunately, do not record the names of those involved. However, the women went to the headquarters of Napoleon Bonaparte, who was so surprised by the demonstration that it caused him to retract his previous decision to demolish the graves and homes. It was the first Egyptian triumph of the French campaign, a victory which demonstrated the character of the women of Egypt. Then in mid-March 1919, the largest women's demonstration in the country took place in protest against the British occupation of Egypt. On that day, the first martyr shot during the British occupation fell in the 1919 revolution, about whom the leader Saad Zaghloul stated upon returning from exile in his first speech, '*Tsahawwa* all live Egyptian women'. In 1946, there was a student uprising, in which students in colleges and secondary education demonstrated against the British occupation in support of the demonstrations of students in the preparatory stage. In 1951 and subsequently, Mostafa El Nahas Pasha, leader of the 'delegation' party, decided to cancel the 1936 treaty for the women of Egypt by calling for a boycott of foreign products. However, this resulted in pickets in front of stores and calls of 'Do not remind us of what is happening now' (my translation).[136].

Women's movements reached their zenith in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when Huda Shaarawi, the Egyptian feminist activist was an icon for the rebellion. Shaarawi was born in 1879 in Upper Egypt into a wealthy family. She was married at the age of thirteen to her cousin Ali Shaarawi. During a long separation from her husband, Shaarawi decided to focus upon women's rights and the development of the socio-political situation in Egypt. In 1908, she

[136] Anğyl Rḍā. Nsāʾ SnʿN Twrāt: Almrāh Almṣryh wʿLāqthā Bālğyš w Alḥrb. Grydh Wṭny, 11 Aug. 2013.

established the first philanthropic society to be run by Egyptian women. In 1910, she opened a school for girls, changing most of the curriculum from mainly domestic to academic. Shaarawi founded the Egyptian Union for Women in 1923, which focused on voting rights and education.[137] Shaarawi is an icon not only for women but also a cultural figure. Her memoir is a blend of travel writing and literary heritage. It is a literary historical text of the life of an Egyptian woman in the late 1800s and early 1900s, a period in which women gained confidence and fought for their independence.

Both sisterhood and brotherhood have a social significance beyond the nuclear family which is privileged both in psychoanalytic theories and more broadly in the structure of Western societies. Moreover, this social significance includes an emphasis upon equality, liberation and independence. While Western enlightenment subscribes to the French motto 'liberty, equality, fraternity', this is also observably influenced by the social relations of capitalism which foster competition and inequality.

It is worth noting that Sophocles' Antigone is a female liberation fighter. Her roles as an altruistic sister and as a patriot in a colonised nation are intertwined. In reference to Mandela, who calls her 'a freedom fighter', Antigone can be read as an anti-colonial text.[138] She is a relevant example of 'anti-colonial struggles', and a symbol of the collective brotherhood. [139]

[137] Huda Shaarawi. Trans. Margot Badran. *Harem Years: The Memoirs of An Egyptian Feminist*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1986 p. 98-9.
[138] Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom. London*: Abacus, 1997, p. 541.
[139] Caroline Rooney, *African Literature, Animism and Politics*, London: Routledge Research in Postcolonial Literatures, 2001, p. 33

According to Lacan, Antigone makes an 'ethical choice', which is allowing a proper burial to her brother.[140] Her fight for her brother's burial is a fight against authority, advocating freedom and independence; nevertheless, Antigone lives in a 'miserable state' due to her unhealed grief and loneliness.[141] As Caroline Rooney comments on Antigone's colonial nature, 'it can be proposed that an anti-colonial resistance movement can work to mobilise the colonized in terms of a family-nation.'[142]

On a similar note, Lacan finds Antigone an inspiring model of liberation. He has even read some parts of the play to his captivating stepdaughter Laurence. Caroline Rooney narrates, 'Elisabeth Roudinesco has drawn attention to the fact that Lacan delivered excerpts of his work on Antigone to his stepdaughter Laurence Bataille when she was in prison for her active involvement in FLN politics in the struggle for Algerian Liberation.'[143] This shows how inspiring Antigone is to those who are deprived of, or striving to achieve, freedom. However, there is no direct relevance to Laurence in Lacan's seminars despite Rooney's argument that Laurence is 'a captive addressee of the text.'[144]

Antigone chooses to disregard the laws; she posits that human laws are breakable, and that they should not be treated religiously. She does not deny breaking them because she believes that these laws do not 'concern her'.[145] For example, Antigone has chosen to disobey King Creon by attempting to bury her brother. She argues that the laws are not sacred to obey, stating 'he has no

[140] Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII,* Trans. Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 1992), p.68.
[141] Sophocles, *Antigone* (New York: Dover Publications), p. 36
[142] Caroline Rooney, *African Literature, Animism and Politics*, London: Routledge Research in Postcolonial Literatures, 2001, p. 152
[143] Ibid, p. 40
[144] Ibid, p.42
[145] Caroline Rooney. *African Literature, Animism, and Politics*, p.43

right to keep me from what's mine'.[146] Having caught her in the middle of the burying process, King Creon decides to bury Antigone alive, yet she opts for hanging herself with dignity. Her suicide can be perceived as an act of liberation; in other words, she refuses to surrender to the power of authority and constraints. She also chooses death in hope of joining Polynices (her deceased brother). Antigone comments on her death decision as follows:

> I gave myself to death, Long ago,
>
> So I might serve the dead.[147]

Like Antigone, Nefissa in *The Beginning and the End*, commits suicide to free herself from societal restrictions. Nefissa has chosen suicide to secure the future of her youngest brother, Hassanien. She knows that he might consider honour killing and, thus, ruin his future. While Antigone has chosen to die in pride, Nefissa dies in disgrace after being caught in a brothel. Nevertheless, both women would rather die than be humiliated; they rebel against the circumstances, and renounce surrender. Similarly, Khidr in *The Harafish* resembles Antigone for representing the power of altruism (as discussed in the next section). He, too, is an ideal altruistic character that abstains from humiliation.

Moreover, Tiresias, King Creon's prophet, comments on the liberation of death by stating, 'no man alive is free'.[148] That is to say, freedom does not exist under harsh circumstances and absence of liberty. Being victims of oppression, both female characters die for the sake of their societies. In this case, King Creon is a power-hungry dictator who tyrannises others under the

[146] *Antigone*, p. 7
[147] *Antigone*, p. 88
[148] Ibid, p. 58

claim, 'never let some women triumph over us.'[149] Creon underestimates not only women but also people who attempt to resist his tyranny.

Accordingly, Antigone is an ideal exemplar of an altruistic sibling that strives to attain her rights. She is more assertive than the Mahfouzian altruistic characters in both *The Beginning and the End* and *Khan El Khalili.* Antigone is also a 'genderless representation of the inhuman limit of the human.'[150] In other words, she represents invincible humans who prefer strength to weakness, and pride to ignominy.

The Harafish

The Beginning and the End and *Khan El Khalili* are not the only novels by Mahfouz that focus on a loving type of sibling relationship. It is very difficult to discuss Mahfouz as a writer and to neglect one of his strongest works, *The Harafish* (1977). El Enany's comments on *The Harafish* as follows:

> A novel which today would appear on any shortlist of his most enduring achievements, it was immediately clear that the master-craftsman had pushed his newly discovered form to the limits of its potential. The enterprise which commented with character vignettes and recollections of childhood in the first two works was extended in *Harafish* in ten lengthy tales which together evoked the human condition from creation to a millenarian future.[151]

[149] *Antigone* p. 44
[150] Rooney p. 44
[151] El Enany *Mahfouz His Life and Times*, p. 110.

The Harafish was written eighteen years after *The Children of the Alley*, which is discussed in detail in Chapter Two. The first introduction to the concept of *The Harafish* was in *The Children of the Alley*; both works capture the essence of the 'hara' or the alley. Mahfouz poses the question of social evil and justice and the possibility of ending this evil.[152] In *The Harafish*, Mahfouz introduces the *futuwwa*, or the Harafish, meaning 'the members of the lower class', who are oppressed, some of whom use their physical powers to either oppress or to help the rest of society.[153] The novel consists of ten tales which introduce the history of approximately sixteen generations of the family of the Nagi. The descriptions of the alley are close to Mahfouz's usual district, Old Cairo. The name al-Nagi comes from the fact that Ashur is the only person who survived the plague that attacked the alley.[154] Ashur was raised by a respectable blind man, Shaykh Afra Zaydan, and his wife who did not have children. Ashur was found by Shaykh Arfa Zaydan at the door of a *takkiya*, a place for underprivileged travellers. Ashur grows up to be a decent young man like his adoptive father. Ashur lives happily with the couple and is engaged in the musical life of the *takkiya*. However, after his adoptive father dies, his adoptive mother returns to her village, and Ashur feels the bitterness of loneliness for the first time. The only person he knows is the Shaykh's brother, Darwish, who attempts to convince Ashur to use his physical ability in an evil way. Ashur rejects Darwish's advice to work with him and decides to be a cart driver. The novel emphasises the strength of Ashur al-Nagi and the significance of his survival. The third story within the novel is *Love and the Iron Bars* (1994).[155] It concerns

[152] El Enany *Mahfouz The Pursuit of Meaning* p. 44.
[153] El Enany *Mahfouz His life and Times*, p. 147.
[154] Nedal Al Mousa. "The Nature and Uses of the Fantastic in the Fictional World of Naguib Mahfouz". Journal of Arabic Literature. Vol. 23, Issue 1, Jan 1992.
[155] Naguib Mahfouz. *The Harafish*. (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

Ashur's grandchild, Salyman al-Nagi, who has inherited his love of chivalry and altruistic sense, devoting his life to the alley.

In *Love and the Iron Bars,* the third tale in the epic of the Harafish, Sulayman Shams al-Din al-Nagi, the grandson of Ashur, is married to Fathiyya, his friend's sister. After ten years, he marries a wealthy lady Saniyya al-Samari. They have two boys: Bikr and Khidr. The two brothers possess more differences than similarities even in appearance, but they have a strong bond. They form their own union, oblivious to their father's iconic personality, ignorant of his popularity. They are both focused on their own business. Mahfouz describes their world in the following way:

> They ran their business from a luxurious room in the house, only meeting the most important clients and leaving the daily transactions with the public to their subordinates. They did not understand their father. Although they saw him as imposing, they were not convinced of the worth of his position and did not entirely respect it. They had no idea that, without his influence, their business would have failed, and their employees and the merchants they dealt with would have made fun of their naivete.[156]

The bond deteriorates when Bikr marries Radwana, who loves his brother Khidr, another allegory of Abel and Cain after that of *The Children of the Alley,* which is discussed in detail in the next chapter. Although, there is no murder in the story, the struggle between the brothers ensues because of a woman. Radwana approaches Khidr, who rejects her love, similarly to the Egyptian mythology concerning the tale of two brothers, stated previously in the introduction.

[156] Mahfouz *The Harafish* p. 109.

Radwana decides to seek revenge and tell her husband, Bikr, a twisted story. Hearing from his wife that his brother is seducing her, Bikr decides to fight with his brother. Khidr leaves the house, choosing to sacrifice his interest in her rather than ruin his brother's marriage. Khidr acts as the altruistic one in the family, but he does so in a different manner to Nefissa in *The Beginning and the End* and Ahmed in *Khan El Khalili*. Khidr is neither weak nor victimised. He is similar to Hussein in *The Beginning and the End*, choosing the right path even if it is a complicated one. Both Khidr and Hussein are the saviours and survivors of their families. In *The Harafish*, when Sulayamn falls ill and is on the verge of losing his money, Khidr comes to save him from bankruptcy. For Mahfouz, it appears that altruism is to be encouraged, while also being a trait that can be found in both weak and strong people. The choice is whether to be a weak, victimised altruistic individual or a strong one. In other words, altruism cannot be blamed if the altruistic individual chooses to be withdrawn and weak.

In conclusion, even though altruistic relationships are unusual and rare, they can still be found in some cultures, including that of Egypt. For Mahfouz, a sibling is expected to sacrifice him/herself for religious and cultural reasons. Rivalry among siblings, which is discussed in the next chapter, is considered to be evil. Parents raise their children to be altruistic believing that this relationship is the strongest after the parent-child relationship. Brotherly love is sacred, and people tend to think that siblings share mutual traits and goals. All divine religions encourage their believers to respect such a bond. As the prophet Mohammed states, 'if you want plentiful sustenance and a long life, then you should maintain your family ties properly'.[157] In addition, religion encourages strong ties with relatives and family members, regardless of their behaviour. Another saying of the prophet is 'he who acts kindly towards those relatives who are good to him

[157] Kidawi p.22

does not do real justice to the ties of kinship; rather, he who discharges this obligation perfectly maintains ties of kinship even with those who sever relations with him'.[158] According to Anna Freud, 'altruistic surrender' is entirely based upon the gratification of others before oneself, simply because the altruistic person's happiness stems from the happiness of others.[159] However, Mahfouz defines altruism in relation to socioeconomic, cultural and religious perspectives. Egyptians have been encouraged to act altruistically towards their siblings throughout history. Mahfouz's work offers useful examples that emphasise the concept of altruism among siblings. He focuses on sibling relations due to the lack of contact between himself and his own siblings because of the age gap that existed between them.

> You will notice that I am always picturing brotherly relationships among siblings in my works: it is a result of my being deprived of such relationships, which appear in *The Trilogy*, *The Beginning and the End* and *Khan El Khalili.* I never experienced that kind of relationship in my real life. I always regarded it as something forbidden or unknown.[160]

This chapter focused on *The Beginning and the End* and *Khan El Khalili. The Trilogy* is excluded because it deals with love and rivalry rather than altruism. In *The Beginning and the End*, although Nefissa and Hussein are the most altruistic characters, their reasons for being so differ. Nefissa is altruistic for cultural reasons; parents raise their daughters to act like their mothers, and in her case her mother was altruistic. Another reason was her sense of inferiority because of her appearance, lack of education, poverty and, later in the novel, the loss of her

[158] Kidwai p.48
[159] Anna Freud p.127.
[160] Gamal al-Ghitani. *The Mahfouz Dialogs.* P. 66-7.

virginity, which is something crucial in Egyptian society both religiously and socially. On the other hand, Hussein is an idealist and working for his family is a duty that gives him pleasure. His altruism is affected by Islamic teachings that encourage thinking before believing. In *Khan El Khalili*, admiration is behind Ahmed Akif's altruistic nature; his role as a big brother and a second father creates a sense of admiration towards others in him. He admires his younger brother Rushdi and finds value in his brother's achievements, such as the university degree that he could not attain because of the severe economic conditions. For Mahfouz, altruism is a cultural concept that flourishes during difficult times marked by oppression and poverty. This can also be witnessed in the struggle for independence in Africa including Egypt, which enhanced the colonised community's sense of altruism. The concepts of brotherhood and community were the main tools of resistance for the colonised. In *The Harafish*, Khidr plays a powerful altruistic character in the three works of Mahfouz. He is able to support his family without ruining his life as Nefissa and Ahmed do. Mahfouz prefers this type of altruism because it enhances the sense of community that every colonised society needs in order to survive.

Mahfouz's works focus on altruism in times of hardship. The three versions of altruism he depicts are associated with the socio-economic conditions in Egypt in the first fifty years of the 20th century. Mahfouz also employs some of the perspectives offered by Anna Freud and Melanie Klein, that is, altruistic surrender and their definitions of narcissism in relation to the sibling bond, however, we cannot say that his works are influenced by these Freudian terms. This is because Freud was concerned with sibling relationships dominated by parent-child relations unlike Mahfouz, who focuses on the individual's development in relation to society.

Chapter Two: Sibling Rivalry

In this chapter, I shall discuss Mahfouz's treatment of rivalry in sibling relationships. As explored in the previous chapter, altruism amongst siblings is shown by Mahfouz to be the ideal, even when sibling relationships are fraught with ambivalence. Many psychologists, sociologists, and psychoanalysts have studied rivalry as an inevitable part of society. The aim is to reveal the ill effects of rivalry on the individuals and the society.

According to Freud (1917), the rivalry among siblings unravels a fight for the mother's attention. He argues: 'as a rule there is only one person an English girl hates more than she hates her mother, that's her elder sister';[161] in other words, rivalry represents the direct mistreatment of the younger child by the older one. Freud adds: 'the elder child ill-treats the younger, maligns him and robs him of his toys'.[162] This maltreatment reflects the older child's inability to withstand the mother's division of love among her children. The older son or daughter has been raised to receive the whole share of love and undivided attention from the mother, which is later on disturbed by the birth of a brother/sister. The sudden presence of a sibling, thus, gives birth to prejudice, and justifies the child's hostile actions towards the younger ones.

In *Love, Guilt, and Reparation*, Melanie Klein (1998) postulates that rivalry is a common phenomenon among siblings. She argues, 'every analysis proves that all children suffer great jealousy of younger sisters and brothers as well as of older ones'.[163] Her opinion on rivalry is slightly dissimilar to that of Freud, because she believes that rivalry is mutual.

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[161] Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Trans. James Strachey (London: Norton, 1977), p. 205.
[162] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in *the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1976), p. 250.
[163] Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation* (London: Vintage Classics, 1998), p. 9.

In reference to Mahfouz, rivalry is born from evil. In his novel *Children of the Alley* (1959), he introduces two examples of rivalry: the first example concerns the characters of Adham (Adam) and Idris (the devil), and the second example concerns Adham's sons, Kadri, and Hammam – who may be read in terms of Cain and Abel allegory –. A decade after the publishing of *Children of the Alley*, Mahfouz co-wrote the feature film *The Choice* (1970) with the Egyptian director Youssef Chahine. The film is about sibling rivalry between twins who, like the siblings in *Children of the Alley*, ruin each other's lives.

Sibling rivalry is widely discussed in both Eastern and Western literature. *The Brothers Karamazov* is one of the most prominent rivalry novels in Western literature. Dostoevsky (1880) presents multiple facets of rivalry in this novel, namely those of brother versus brother and father versus son. As noted in the previous chapter, Mahfouz is influenced by his admiration of Russian literature. Mahfouz's works are similar to many Russian literary pieces in terms of exploring the society's conflicts, conundrums and quandaries. They variously provide readers with the interwoven psychological impact of social dilemmas and political circumstances on individuals. For instance, Dostoevsky examines rivalry in *The Brothers Karamazov* by reflecting on family values and culture.[164] The good characters are the patient, kind ones who are capable of enduring their siblings' aggression. In a similar sense, Mahfouz's characters sketches assimilate to Dostoevsky's for realising altruism and rivalry.

In Egyptian literature, Ihsan Abdel Quddous's novel *La Totfe' Al Shams* (The Sun Is Always Shining) – previously referred to in Chapter One – introduces a tranquil version of rivalry. Ahmed, the protagonist, not only envies his younger brother Ramzy – the daring, ambitious

[164] Fyodor Dostoyevsky. *The Brothers Karamazov* (East Sussex: Delphi Classics, 2014).

university student who strives to become independent – but also aimlessly lives in his father's shadow. Ahmed's rivalry is not palpable to the family because he pretends to be disciplining his brother for the latter's own good whilst aspiring, in his innermost thoughts, to be like Ramzy. On the other hand, Ramzy is unaware of his brother's sense of rivalry; the former finds his brother's rigid and old-fashioned behaviour similar to their late father's. Moreover, Ahmed's suppressed nature and inner sense of obligation to act like his father bridle him from acting freely. However, when Ramzy dies, Ahmed loses his restraint and takes after his deceased brother by imitating his behaviour and dressing style. He takes off his classical suit and wears Ramzy's shirt and jeans. It is worth noting that Abdel Quddous considers Ahmed's behaviour as a manifestation of jealousy; nevertheless, it is a mixture of both jealousy and love. Ahmed's sense of admiration is stronger than rivalry; additionally, he wants to revive his brother's essence in any possible way, which underscores the love between the brothers.[165] Hence, Abdel Quddous's novel is an exemplar of the perception of sibling rivalry in the modern Egyptian society.

In addition, this chapter juxtaposes rivalry with tyranny in relation to the regime and allegory of the Arab leader Gamal Abdel Nasser. The use of allegory by Mahfouz, in this regard, aims to offer a moral lesson. Mahfouz addresses the political leaders of Egypt to urge them to decide whether to play the role of thugs or prophets. His novels *The Choice* and *Children of the Alley*, which encompass rivalry among siblings, emphasise the negative effects of political crises such as the 1967 defeat during which the Egyptians suffered immense psychological trauma. In other words, Mahfouz believes in the sacredness of sibling bonds, and relates rivalry – which is the rejected type of sibling bond – to the harshness of the defeat.

[165] Ihsan Abdel Quddous, *La Totfe' Al Shams* (Cairo: Dār Almṣryh Allbnānyh, 1990).

In the selected works for this research, people question their identity, beliefs, and relationships with others. Some of them are lost and others are in denial. In fact, Mahfouz does not only convey a message to the political leaders, but he also offers a message to all Egyptians in an attempt to warn them about the negative effects of the defeat on the society. He focuses on the sibling bond in order to show how its frailties represent the wider failures of society leading to the defeat of the nation. Accordingly, Mahfouz's message is political as he links tyranny – represented in Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime – and rivalry for their role in the society's deterioration.

***Children of the Alley*: First Exemplar of Rivalry**

The novel is considered a 'roman fleuve' that posits the history of humanity and religion rather than merely focusing on family ties in a neighbourhood. The novel presents the life of Adam and Eve, and Satan's intervention in the lives of the couple and of most prophets.[166] For instance, Mahfouz tackles the lives of Cain, Abel and their children – Adham (Adam), Idris (Satan), Moses (Gabal), Rifa'a (Jesus) and Qassem (Mohammed) –. The alley they live in symbolises humanity; it is a place of fear, injustice and oppression where the characters struggle to feel the freedom, and they strive to attain bravery in order to make their lives more tolerable. In Qassem's opinion, 'courage is the most important thing for the people of this alley, if they aren't going to be trampled down for the rest of their lives'.[167] This reinforces the people's entrapment in fear and the absence of freedom.

[166] Rasheed El Enany, *Naguib Mahfouz: His Life and Times* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007) p. 88-9.
[167] Naguib Mahfouz, *Children of the Alley* (New York: Double Day, 1996), p. 316.

An example of a tyrant is Gebelawi, the God-like figure who rules the alley and no one dares to oppose him. One of the incidents that reflect Gebelawi's power is his peculiar choice of the residents in his house; he does not allow whoever he considers as a sinner even if the latter is his own child. After he forces his son Adham to leave the house for disobeying him, Gebelawi cuts ties with him for a long time. Afterwards, he sends Karim, his messenger, to invite Hammam, his grandson, whom Gebelawi considers to be the good son in the family. This has made Kadri, his other grandson, feel jealous. Gebelawi, then, asks Hamman to live with him and start a new life at his house. Hammam is eager to help his family to return to Gebelwai's house. Gebelawi rejects Hammam's idea because the former accepts benevolent people, not traitors. Hammam feels confused; while he does not want to reject Gebelwai's tempting offer, he finds it difficult to leave his family. Hammam's inner conflict is evident in his words: 'the fortune chance is like a dream, my father's dream for the past twenty years. But I have a terrible headache'.[168]

The array of character sketches, as well as the instances of social, political and psychological predicaments, makes this novel a comprehensive one. Mahfouz proposes the social injustice, the power of good and evil in the society, and the relation between the spiritual beliefs and science as in *Khan El Khalili* and in *The Trilogy*. Nevertheless, representing the prophets makes *Children of the Alley* a contentious one. In the next section, the controversy of this novel is discussed.

Children of the Alley's **Controversy**

Children of the Alley is one of the most controversial novels in the history of Egyptian literature. The controversy lies in the representation of the novel. Mahfouz employs the stories of some prophets to portray the Egyptian society, and he metaphorically depicts the alley as heaven.

[168] Naguib Mahfouz, *Children of the Alley*, p.65.

Reading the prophets' stories under different names is shocking to the readers, especially that one of the characters, Gebelawi, is indirectly described as God.

In September 1959, *Al-Ahram* newspaper released the novel in daily instalments. After the seventeenth one, many readers and leaders at Al-Azhar wanted to stop the publication of the rest of the instalments, claiming that the content is inappropriate to the Egyptian culture and religious beliefs. Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram* back then, rejected their request and insisted on publishing the whole novel, asking Mahfouz to censor the parts he chose for the rest of the instalments. When Abdel Nasser heard about the uproar against the novel, he asked Heikal about the novel. The latter commented as follows: 'I cannot stop Mahfouz's work from being published' (my translation).[169] Nevertheless, at that time, Mahfouz attended a debate about his novel at *Al-Gomhuria* newspaper headquarters. He aimed to soothe the objectors by explaining the reasons behind writing the novel:

> I want to explore the main purpose of humanity: to search for the secret of the universe. In order to do so, we need devotion and preparation. We cannot achieve this unless the rich stop abusing the poor. The novel depicts the struggle of the prophets, which was to defend the poor, and to help them live a better life. Only then will the poor have the time and energy to devote their lives to searching for the greatest secret. However, each time the message ends, the rich start abusing the poor again, and the battle of injustice resumes. After the end of the prophets' messages, science interferes to achieve the same goal, which is to make people happy; however, abusers use science for their own sake. Hence, science is

[169] Mohamed Shair. "Zyārh ğdydh āly ālrwāyh ālmḥrmh āwlād ḥārtnā" (ğrydh ālwādy, 2013).

> murdered in the novel. Someone appears to have scientific modern inventions, and escapes to end the struggle of abject poverty. His aim is to devote his time to knowing the secret of life. (My translation)[170]

Accordingly, Mahfouz believes that finding the truth is crucial to humanity, yet this can only happen when people's basic needs are met. He posits that those who are deprived of their survival essentials can never think of finding the truth or the secret of the universe. The on-going struggle between the rich and the poor is a primary theme adopted by Mahfouz in many of his novels, such as in *The Thief and the Dogs* (1961) and *The Beginning and the End*.

As for the last instalment of *Children of Alley*, it was published in December 1959. Surprisingly, in 1970, the novel was adapted into a radio series, to which there was no objection either by Al-Azhar or the audience. Having been persuaded by Abdel Nasser's representative, Kamal el-Kholy, to await Al-Azhar's approval prior to publishing the novel again, Mahfouz agreed to wait. He rejected all publication offers, particularly after winning the Noble Prize. It was not until 2006 – after Mahfouz's death – that *Children of the Alley* was finally published by Dar al-Shorouk.

Children of the Alley has stirred much controversy since its release; while it appeals to some readers, it provokes others, sometimes to extremes. As a case in point, a religious fanatic attempted to assassinate Mahfouz by shooting him in the neck in October 1994. The former – who considered Mahfouz as an atheist – stated in the police investigation that he wanted to kill the latter because of the content of his novel *Children of the Alley*. According to the police investigation, Mahfouz argues that using the prophets' stories is a symbolic literary form. In

[170] Shair 2013.

contrast, with reference to Ayman el-Hakim's book *Fy Hḍrh ālmthm Naguib Maḥfouẓ* (2013) (In the Presence of the Accused, Naguib Mahfouz), one of Mahfouz's attackers sent a letter of apology to Mahfouz from prison, to which Mahfouz replied later.[171] The letter of apology was delivered by the mother of Amr Ibrahim – who was in his early twenties at the time of the attack –. Mahfouz believes that understanding the rationale behind his work is what would make the attackers realise they are wrong about him. Mahfouz considers Ibrahim a means that terrorists manipulate to achieve their own goals. Uneducated and poor, Amr Ibrahim was brainwashed and blinded by hatred. He was told that murdering Mahfouz shall be a heroic act. In addition, Mahfouz asked the authorities to move Amr to a prison with better conditions. The authorities agreed, but they refused Mahfouz's second request to shorten Amr's nearly twenty-year sentence.

Despite being perceived as religious, *Children of the Alley* is intended to be political; in other words, Mahfouz uses religious symbols, such as depicting the lives of some prophets, with the aim of providing Egyptian political leaders with a perception of both the prophets and the thugs in attempt to show them that they have the choice to be either of them in ruling the country. Nevertheless, the representation of sibling relationships does have a religious foundation. This is because the type of rivalry tackled by Mahfouz mirrors his religious beliefs, namely that this rivalry comes from evil. According to Peter Dews's *The Idea of Evil* (2008), humans share the same discernment of the moral ideal self; however, choosing to be evil, which is usually linked to immorality, is a personal choice.[172] Similarly, Mahfouz's proposition of rivalry among

[171] Ayman El Hakim, *Fy Hḍrh ālmthm Naguib Maḥfouẓ* (Cairo: dār ālšrwq, 2013).
[172] Peter Dews, *The Idea of Evil* (Oxford: Blackwell publishing, 2008).

siblings is also based on choice. Rivals are responsible for their actions because they make a choice to compete with, or even to hate, their siblings.

In his book *The Roots of Evil* (2005), John Kekes shares a similar view on evil. He argues, 'the evil of an action consists in the combination of three components: the malevolent motivation of evildoers; the serious, excessive harm caused by their actions, and the lack of morally acceptable excuse for the actions'.[173] In Mahfouz's perspective, when siblings choose to be rivals, their actions are not justifiable; they deserve the punishment they receive in the end. For example, in *Children of the Alley*, Kadri chooses to kill his brother because he is jealous of him. Competing with his brother facilitates the decision of killing him. Thus, there is a connection among rivalry, evil and religious views in Mahfouz's work.

Supporters' Views of the Novel

According to Hosam Aboul-Ela's paper, 'The Writer Becomes Text: Naguib Mahfouz and State Nationalism in Egypt', the attempted assassination of Mahfouz is a catastrophe for Egyptians. Aboul-Ela states, 'only in the aftermath of the attack did the results of the State's forced adoption of the Mahfouz symbol become obvious. On October 17, three days after the attack, *Al-Ahram* published a cartoon which showed, under the title 'The Assassination of Naguib Mahfouz', a sparse drawing of the Sphinx shedding a tear, with nothing in the background but the three pyramids of Giza'.[174] Mustafa Amin, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Akhbar* (the second largest newspaper in Egypt after *Al-Ahram*) published an article, a few days after the attempted

[173] John Kekes, *The Roots of Evil* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 223.
[174] Hossam Abou-Ela, The Writer Becomes Text: Naguib Mahfouz and State of Nationalism in Egypt, *Biography*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2004, p. 344.

assassination, in which he expressed his anger and disappointment regarding the incident. Amin explains:

> Whoever has tried to strike down Naguib Mahfouz has tried to smash one of Egypt's pyramids. For Naguib Mahfouz was not an individual, but rather one of the symbols of Egypt. He was a sun that lit up this country, a flag elevated over its flags, a great professor among its professors. He was not just an individual, but rather an *ummah* (nation). He was a generation and a *nahdah* (renaissance) that raised our heads collectively. For this wound in the neck of Naguib Mahfouz is the blood of us all, and this wound will abide in our hearts for all time. He never used his pen to elevate a ruler but rather to elevate all of Egypt. The blade that plunged into Naguib Mahfouz's neck will not kill him, for this type of great man does not die if we bury him in the dirt. Naguib will live as long as the Arabic language lives, as long as we have something called Arabic literature.[175]

According to the supporters of Mahfouz himself and of his novel *Children of the Alley*, the attempted assassination is a ruthless act of injustice on an innocent being. Jacques Berque, Dean of Islamic Studies in France, condemns this act not only as a crime of freedom but as one of brutality as well. He argues, 'I was shaken by the news of this disaster, because Naguib Mahfouz, apart from being an international literary figure, is an old man, whose body and sensitive soul could not withstand this ordeal'.[176] In other words, Berque regards the incident as a savage act against humanity, thought, and morals. Similarly, the philosopher Fuad Zakariya

[175] Hossam Abou-Ela, p. 344.
[176] Fauzi M. Najjar, 'Islamists Fundamentalism and the Intellectuals: The Case of Naguib Mahfouz', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 1995, p. 139.

accuses the terrorists of lack of reason, and that they must be suffering from 'mental weakness' that prevents sound judgement. Ahmed Abdel Muti Hijazi, a poet and an intellectual, suggests that the terrorists' target is to destroy Mahfouz the man, not the novelist; in other words, the terrorists consider the attack a personal revenge against someone they believe to be a nonbeliever. In fact, Mahfouz's courage, talent, and intellect are intimidating to some Islamists. They do not accept change, diversity and opposing opinions. They usually respond with hatred and aggression. The terrorists' only means of communication are their weapons, not their minds; therefore, they want Mahfouz dead to end the enlightenment he brought to the Egyptian society.

In defence of Mahfouz, the Syrian writer George Tarabisihi believes that Mahfouz's objective is to write about the history of creation including Adam's story, which is not possible to achieve without referring to God and his messengers. On a similar note, Sami Khabasha, a writer, is one of the few supporters who consider *Children of the Alley* as a religious text. He defends Mahfouz by arguing that the novel is about belief. He states that the novel is 'based on the belief of God, and a sound Islamic faith, which rejects injustice, violence, and oppression, and champions equality, justice, knowledge, and human dignity'.[177] In this regard, Mahfouz's work is not confined to politics; it encompasses a religious message, unravels social diseases, condemns injustice, incriminates violence, and advocates freedom.

Another expounder is Jalal Sadiq Al-Azm, a Syrian critic and scholar, who defends Mahfouz's work. His two books *Thihniyat al-Tahrim* (1992)(The Taboo Mentality) and *Ma Ba'da Thihniyat al-Tahrim* (1997) (Beyond the Taboo Mentality) advocate freedom of speech and analyse the controversy of Salman Rushdie's work *The Satanic Verses* (1988) – which has been

[177] Najjar, p. 158.

criticised by Mahfouz himself claiming that Rushdie insults the prophets in his book –. In discussing *Children of the Alley*, Al-Azm responds to Mahfouz's opponents who blame him for writing a novel that does not reflect the values of the Egyptian society. Furthermore, Al-Azm posits that setting boundaries for writers by opponents – whether the latter are Islamists or literary critics – limits those writers' imagination. Al-Azm also believes that Mahfouz's novels are all about Egypt. He adds that Mahfouz's world is his district of Gamalia, which symbolises Egypt. To Mahfouz, the alley is a microcosm of this country with all its vices and virtues. This fact is also underscored by Ragaa el-Nakash argues:

> Naguib Mahfouz is a national writer; what he represents to the Egyptians is similar to what Dickens represents to the English, Tolstoy to the Russians, and Balzac to the French. To Arabs, he represents us. Every line he writes opens my eyes to Egypt. Mahfouz constantly listens to Egypt's pulse; he does not set boundaries between his literature and the country's history. Every story Mahfouz has written is connected to Egypt, its history, the individual, and the future. He is the ceaseless link between us and our national history. Mahfouz is the builder of our original Arab conscience (my translation).[178]

The above debate is significant because it implies that writers serve as scribes of the nation rather than of a particular religion. They share the nation's identity, and they play an indispensable role in mirroring their society's inner conflicts, beliefs, traditions, to name only a few. However, opponents disagree with writers' presentation of their nations as discussed in the following section.

[178] Sadiq Jalal Al Azm, Dhnyh āltḥrym: *Salman Rushdie w ḥqyqh ālādb* (Mrkz ālbḥwṯ ālāštrākyh w Drāsāt fy ālwṭn ālʿrby, 1997), p. 47.

Islamist Views of *Children of the Alley*

The commotion caused by *Children of the Alley* has resulted in the incrimination of Mahfouz by several leaders. One of them is Sheikh Abd al-Hamid Kishk – who accused Mahfouz of being an atheist –. In his book *Klmtnā Fy ālrd ʿly āwlād ḥārtnā* (Our Response to Children of the Alley), Kishk rejects the fact that Mahfouz has used a religious allegory to describe human history since creation. The book comprises seventeen chapters. It starts with Mahfouz's history of associations with socialism and Marxism, which Kishk claims to be the reason behind Mahfouz's atheism.[179]

The first chapter of Kishk's book discusses the relationship between Mahfouz and Salama Musa, a socialist Egyptian writer who has encouraged Mahfouz to be a socialist and a believer in science. In Kishk's interpretation, Mahfouz replaces God with science. The book criticises the concept of personifying God and the prophets, which is strictly forbidden in many religions especially Islam. This is because Gebelawi is a God figure, Adham is Adam, Gabal is Moses, Rifaa is Jesus, Qassim is Muhammad, and Arafa represents science. Mahfouz, in the eyes of Kishk and his supporters, diminishes the value and dignity of God by attributing human traits and actions to Him, such as marrying and having children. This is prohibited in Islamic teachings because, with reference to Surah al-Ikhlas in Quran, God does not marry. This used as a defence for Mahfouz's position, proving that Gebelawi is not a personification of God; nevertheless, Kishk insists that Mahfouz is personifying God because Gebelawi is not seen except in the beginning. Many characters wish to see him but fail to do so. They talk about him as if he has hidden higher power and authority. Additionally, Kishk finds further humiliation of God in the dialogue between Omayma (Eve) and Adham (Adam). After Gebelawi orders them to leave his

[179] Abdel Hamid kšk, Klmtnā Fy ālrd ʿly āwlād ḥārtnā (Cairo: ālmḫtār ālāslāmy llṭbʿ w ālnšr w āltwzy, 1994).

house (heaven), Omayma says, 'I never thought he (Gebelawi) could be that harsh'.[180] Idris (the devil) is also mad at him, and he calls him 'a tyrant' more than once in the novel.

Kishk's book accuses Mahfouz of humiliating God and His prophets. The book provides several examples; one of them is Gebel (Moses) who works as a magician. It is a profession that is not stated in the Quran. Mahfouz's image of Rifa'a (Christ) has also provoked Kishk, because it implies that the Christ is a soft man who is bullied by the people of the alley who call him 'woman'. Rifa'a is also described as impotent when he insists on not touching his wife who later on cheats on him in the novel. Moreover, Kishk and his supporters have expressed a deep shock and felt insulted for learning about Qassim (Muhammad), who is described as being a womanizer and a hashish smoker.[181] As for Arafa, the last member in Gebelawi's family, he personifies science, civilization, and knowledge, particularly the Western kind. 'Arafa' is a word derived from the Arabic verb 'to know'. This implies that he is the only knowledgeable one among the other characters who are ignorant in comparison with him.

The criticism of Mahfouz by Kishk and his followers is not only because of *Children of the Alley*, it covers Mahfouz's works collectively. In *The Cairo Trilogy*, Kamal Abdel Gawad is one of the most detested characters. In the second part of *The Cairo Trilogy*, *Palace of Desire*, Kamal's philosophical journey makes him realise that science is the ultimate truth. He publishes an article about his appreciation for science, particularly Darwin's theory of evolution, diminishing the role of religion. When his father Al-Sayed Ahmed Abdel Gawad reads the article, he feels shocked and angry, despite his own hideous way of life. Kamal offers his confession as follows:

[180] Mahfouz, *The Children of the Alley*, p. 74.
[181] Najjar p. 151.

> How I hesitated before sending the article! But, it was as if I wanted to announce the death of my faith; that faith which had held steadfastly for the past two years against tempestuous doubts raised by the Maarri and Khayum, until the iron fist of science dealt the final blow. Science is the true religion; it is the key of sublime mysteries of the universe and if the prophets of old came back to life today, they would make science their only mission.[182]

In a rare interview on British television featuring Mahfouz after winning the Nobel Prize in the late eighties, he is asked about his opinion of Salman Rushdie's controversial novel *The Satanic Verses* and about the *fatwa* of Khomeini (the Iranian leader at that time) to kill Rushdie. Mahfouz argues that both sides are extremists. He accuses Rushdie of exploiting freedom of speech by insulting a religion. Mahfouz explains that there is a 'difference between freedom of thinking and incensing outrage'; in other words, freedom of speech and thought do not entail giving oneself the right to affront religious beliefs. Additionally, he insists that Khomeini should not pass such an improper futile judgment without debate. Mahfouz states, 'he should give the writer a chance to change his mind'. Nevertheless, Mahfouz's response has not satisfied the Islamists because putting the writer and the religious leader in one scale has angered them.[183]

In the summer of 1992, two years before the attack, Mahfouz was interviewed by *The Paris Review*. The interview covers many parts of Mahfouz's life and works. Mahfouz expresses his opinions about his and others' work. The following excerpt is extracted from Charlotte el-Shabraway's interview with Mahfouz:

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[182] Naguib Mahfouz, *Palace of Desire: The Trilogy Volume II*, Trans. Raymond Stock (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1991), p. 23.
[183] Ahmed Zaki Osman, 'A Rare Interview with Naguib Mahfouz', YouTube, 2 Aug 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?=chQMEWWhpMM [accessed 21 Jan 2015].

INTERVIEWER

What did you intend with *Children of the Alley*? Did you intend for it to be provocative?

MAHFOUZ

I wanted the book to show that science has a place in society, just as a new religion does, and that science does not necessarily conflict with religious values. I wanted it to persuade readers to see that if we reject science, we reject the common man. Unfortunately, it has been misinterpreted by those who don't know how to read a story. Although the book is about ghettos and those who run them, it was interpreted as being about the prophets themselves. Because of this interpretation, the story was, naturally, considered shocking, supposedly showing the prophets walking barefoot, acting cruelly—but of course it's an allegory. It's not as though allegories are unknown in our tradition. In the story of *Kalila and Dimna*, for example, a lion represents the Sultan. But no one claims that the author turned the Sultan into an animal! Something is meant by the story—an allegory is not meant to be taken literally. There is a great lack of comprehension on the part of some readers.

INTERVIEWER

What do you think about the Salman Rushdie case? Do you think a writer should have absolute freedom?

MAHFOUZ

I'll tell you exactly what I think: Every society has its traditions, laws, and religious beliefs which it tries to preserve. From time to time, individuals appear who demand changes. I believe that society has the right to defend itself, just as

> the individual has the right to attack that with which he disagrees. If a writer comes to the conclusion that his society's laws or beliefs are no longer valid or even harmful, it is his duty to speak up. But he must be ready to pay the price for his outspokenness. If he is not ready to pay that price, he can choose to remain silent. History is full of people who went to prison or were burned at the stake for proclaiming their ideas. Society has always defended itself. Nowadays, it does so with its police and its courts. I defend both the freedom of expression and society's right to counter it. I must pay the price for differing. It is the natural way of things.[184]

Most notably, the dichotomy between the prophets and the thugs is clearly relatable to sibling rivalry when siblings fear being replaced. In this case, one can argue that jealous siblings' behaviour is similar to that of thugs; they share much tension, animosity, superiority and/or competitiveness. It is noteworthy, that prophets are more inclined to be perfectionists and significantly sacrificing siblings. In the novel, the thugs' motive is rather hideous; they want to dominate and practice their power, and they fear that the prophets may win the rivalry. The fear of losing power makes the thugs want to dominate before being dominated. In this sense, thugs and prophets in the novel can also symbolize colonisers and the colonised. Accordingly, *Children of the Alley* seems to divide the world into good and evil. Rivalry is clearly evil in the Egyptian society, which complies with Mahfouz's viewpoint of it.

As noted before, Mahfouz's work addresses not only laymen but also political and religious leaders. His message to the leaders raises a debate over the role of intellectuals/writers in society.

[184] Charlotte El Shabrawy, 'Naguib Mahfouz: The Art of Fiction' (*The Paris Review*, No. 129, Issue 123, 1992).

According to the 1972 conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze in 'Intellectuals and Power', intellectuals cannot live on the sidelines:

> They know perfectly well, without illusion; they know far better than he [the intellectual] and they are certainly capable of expressing themselves. But there exists a system of power which blocks, prohibits, and invalidates this discourse and this knowledge, a power not only found in the manifest authority of censorship, but one that profoundly and subtly penetrates an entire societal network. Intellectuals are themselves agents of this system of power—the idea of their responsibility for 'consciousness' and discourse forms part of the system. The intellectual's role is no longer to place himself 'somewhat ahead and to the side' in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather, it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of 'knowledge', 'truth', 'consciousness', and 'discourse'.[185]

Edward Said has a similar opinion to that of Foucault and Deleuze. In *Reith Lectures: Representations of the Intellectual*, Said argues that the intellectual is the one who is responsible for progressing freedom. He posits that intellectuals cannot be private ones because they write for the people. In addition, they cannot write only for the sake of recognition; there must be 'the personal inflection and the private sensibility, and those give meaning to what is being said or written'.[186] Hence, what intellectuals write has private and public dimensions. Moreover, with reference to El Desouky, the nature of the intellectual's speech is defined based on the audience.

[185] Michel Foucault, *Intellectuals and Power*, in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 206.
[186] Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, in *Reith Lectures* (London: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 24.

This nature explicates the 'intellectual's image of voice'; therefore, the intellectual ought to have the ability to address power by speaking and writing publicly, to and for the world.[187]

However, Mahfouz states that the role of the intellectual is critical to the extent of posing a potential threat. He tackles the negative side of the intellectual in more than one literary work. For instance, in *The Thief and the Dogs*, Raouf Alwan is a hypocritical journalist who only pretends to represent society despite being a traitor. Alwan seizes every opportunity to be rich and popular by discussing societal ethics and equality for the poor. He manipulates people to achieve his own goals. Consequently, Alwan represents intellectuals who are opportunists, manipulative and hypocritical, which reiterates Mahfouz's concern about their roles in society.

Sibling Rivalry in Mahfouz

In Mahfouz's opinion, rivalry among siblings in Egypt is more of a religious nature. It is easy to compare his characters in *Children of the Alley* to Cain and Abel, and to Joseph and his brothers. According to heavenly religions, the story of Cain and Abel (i.e. the sons of Adam and Eve), in which Cain killed his younger brother Abel for a woman (i.e. their sister), is the first crime in the history of humanity. The story raises a number of questions about the human nature, especially regarding the reasons why the first crime involves brothers, and why it is a murder.

Freud's theory of sibling rivalry attempts to answer those questions. As previously stated, Freud (1899) believes that older siblings are usually jealous of the younger ones, and the opposite rarely happens. He argues that the older sibling fights for his or her existence by possessing the younger's belongings.[188] It seems that the younger brother/sister never initiates a fight or dispute.

[187] Ayman El Desouky, 'Heterologies of Revolutionary Action: On Historical Consciousness and the Sacred in Mahfouz's *Children of the* Alley', p. 439.
[188] Freud. *The Interpretations of Dreams*, p. 250.

He or she is the receiver, and his/her anger and envy result weakness rather than hatred. He or she is too weak and young to defend themselves, which eventually results in rage, unlike the older sibling who attacks the young one out of pure jealousy. As for the other question, murder is expected because jealousy creates a sense of replacement. Having known that Abel wants to marry his twin sister, Cain has decided to stop him. In order to make this happen, Cain murders him. Hence, preventing the young brother from taking this action is an act of replacement and proof of sibling rivalry.

In fact, the idea of replacement is emphasised in Egyptian mythology, particularly in the story of Isis and Osiris, the brother and sister who are married to each other like their parents, Geb and Nut. They have other siblings, Seth and Nephthys, who are also married. Isis and Osiris, however, have been the queen and king of Egypt, which has made Seth jealous of Osiris. This jealousy has made Seth throw Osiris into the Nile. This has broken Isis's heart, and aroused feelings of betrayal; hence, with the help of her sister Nephthys, Seth's wife, Isis has searched for Osiris's remains to revive him. After the lovers' successful reunion, their son, Horus, is born. Seth has decided to kill Horus. Both have fought until Horus eventually won and became the king of Egypt.[189] This story is another version of the destructive kind of rivalry and the idea of replacement. What is equally critical to the idea of replacement is imitation. Cain and Seth desire to have what Abel and Osiris have. Thus, the former couple imitate the latter. The only idea that has occurred to Cain and Seth in order to imitate Abel and Osiris has been to replace the latter.

Another story of sibling rivalry is that of Joseph and his brothers, which exists in the three Abrahamic religions (i.e. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Joseph's brothers are jealous of him

[189] Coles, p. 23.

and would like to replace him for two reasons: his affectionate relationship with their father and his handsomeness. According to Quran, Joseph has recounted to his father, the closest to him, a dream of the suns and stars: 'O my father, I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating themselves to me.' '"He said, 'My son, do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they devise against you, surely Satan is an evident enemy of mankind'".[190] The verse shows that Joseph's father knows about his sons' jealousy; thus, he has advised Joseph not to tell his dream to his siblings. The verse ends with Satan's luring of Joseph's brothers; their jealousy stems from the evilness of Satan. Afterwards, the brothers have decided to kill Joseph to get rid of the only person their father loves and trusts unconditionally. 'Kill Joseph, or cast him away into some land, so that your father's regard may be for you only, and thereafter you can become righteous people.'[191] His brothers want to kill him, assuming he is an obstacle in their way to becoming good and decent people. Finally, they have managed to get rid of him by throwing him down a well, telling their father that a wolf has eaten him. Despite their brutal attempt, Joseph has survived. His journey has begun with starting a life of his own. However, his beauty represents an impediment for him.

Joseph has started working for a Pharaoh King whose beautiful wife, Zuleika, has been charmed by Joseph's handsomeness and has fallen in love with him. Zuleika has attempted to seduce Joseph but failed. Her husband has sent Joseph to prison to save his image as a king. While in prison, Joseph has developed a reputation for being a dream interpreter. His fellow inmates are his only audience. Later, the king dreams of seven healthy cows and seven unhealthy ones, so he asks for Joseph's help. Joseph's precise interpretation of the dream has made him win

[190] *The Translation of the Glorious Quran*, Trans. Ahmad Zidan, and Dina Zidan, (Kuala Lumpr: A.S. Noordeen, 1995), 12:5.
[191] Quran 12:9.

the king's trust. The truth about his innocence is then revealed and everybody learns that the king's wife is mistaken. Joseph wins in the end, and his brothers lose their battle against him; ironically, the only one who saves the brothers is Joseph. The story's moral is that simple good intentions and deeds surpass evil.

Joseph's story fits Mahfouz's definition of idealism. For instance, in *Children of the Alley*, Adham wins his father's trust by exerting much effort to be a good and honest merchant whereas Idris loses a lot for being evil. However, Mahfouz's choice of a religious dimension in the novel to discuss sibling rivalry remains perplexing. Mahfouz believes the Egyptian society is religious by nature. In his first three novels, *Mockery of the Fates*, *Rhadopis of Nubia,* and *Thebes at War*, Egyptians are portrayed as religious in a moderate way. Secularism is not strongly emphasised. In addition, religious leaders occupy more than one profession; some of those leaders are also engineers or doctors, for example. Similarly, temples are places for intellect and pleasure, not only for religious purposes. That is to say, religion is integrated in everyday life and constitutes a common frame of reference.[192]

The same theme occurs in many of Mahfouz's novels, such as *Modern Cairo,* in which the protagonist Mahgoub Abdel Dayim, a pessimist nihilist, loses his battle with poverty. He is the only one in his group of friends who seeks money and lacks strong principles. He marries Ehsan, a poor, pretty girl, who is also his friend's girlfriend. Even though he is aware that she is in a relationship with the Pasha and that he is being used as a fake husband, he simply says, 'Who cares?' because he only cares about fulfilling his dream of wealth. However, the dream vanishes at the end when the Pasha's first wife finds out about the arrangement. In fact, the whole story

[192] Mohamed Ali Salama, Nmwḏğ ālšḫṣyh āldynyh fy rwāyāt (Cairo: Dār ālwfāʾ ldnyā ālṭbāʿh w ālnšr., 2007).

ends before Mahgoub becomes rich. In contrast, Ali Taha, the idealist socialist patriot and Ehsan's lover, abides by his principles till the end and stands in face of the British occupation. Even when Ehsan leaves him, Ali does not change.[193] Additionally, in *The Beginning and the End* (previously mentioned in chapter one), Hussein, the only idealist religious character in the novel, manages to survive despite the fact that the rest of his family choose to follow their instincts rather than their religious beliefs.

On another note, *Children of the Alley* starts with a narration of the alley and its history. At the beginning of the novel, Gebelawi is the God-like character who decides to arrange a meeting for all his sons: Idris, Abbas, Radwan, Gelil, and Adham. Every one of them is worried and frightened to meet his father. Mahfouz describes their fear as follows: 'With his great height and breadth, he seemed superhuman, a being from another world. They looked at each other wondering decision. They were worried because he was as despotic at home as he was outside, and in his presence, they were nothing'.[194] The description of Gebelawi, the father, justified the fear of the sons. It also shows how oppressive and tyrannical he is. Additionally, this scene is similar to God's meeting with the angels concerning Adam. With reference to the Quran, God informs the angels about His decision to create successors on Earth. The angels disagree:

> And when your Lord said to the angels, I am creating successors on the earth, they said, Will you create on it those who will spread corruption and spill blood although we celebrate Your praise and extol Your Holiness? He said, I know what

[193] Naguib Mahfouz, *Modern Cairo* (New York: Anchor, 2009).
[194] Mahfouz *The Children of the Alley* p. 5.

> you do not know. Then He taught Adam the names of everything, and He displayed them to the angels and said, Tell Me their names if you are truthful.[195]

The angels agree, then God tells them 'prostate yourselves before Adam'. All of them obey except for Iblis (i.e. Satan).[196] A similar scene takes place in *Children of the Alley* when Gebelawi decides to appoint his son Adham in charge of the former's estate. Adham is both a half-brother to the rest of Gebelawi's sons, and the son of the poorest lady in the family. They all seem angry but refuse to argue with their father. Idris, however, is the only one who disagrees: 'he's the youngest of us; give me one reason why you should prefer him to me?' 'Adham knows the tenants and most of their names. He also knows how to write and do sums', his father says.[197] This conversation assimilates to the one in Quran when Satan responds to God: 'he [Satan] declined and was arrogant, and so [he] was an unbeliever'.[198] In addition, this scene reiterates Freudian rivalry; the older sibling is jealous of the younger sibling. Mahfouz portrays the older sibling as Satan, and the younger sibling as Adam; in other words, Mahfouz depicts rivalry among siblings as a devilish act, not a human one. Although Mahfouz appears to disapprove of rivalry in compliance with his religious ethics, he considers it a psychologically intriguing and multi-faced phenomenon that is based on human nature.

Despite the recurrence of sibling rivalry in Mahfouz's work, he reinforces the idea that the sacredness of family bonds and the companionship of brothers supersede rivalry. For instance, in his two novels *The Beginning and the End* and *The Cairo Trilogy*, all brothers are friends. However, there is a sense of tranquil rivalry between Aisha and Khadiga in *The Cairo Trilogy*,

[195] *Quran* 2:3.
[196] *Quran* 1: 34.
[197] Mahfouz *The Children of the Alley* p. 6-7.
[198] *Quran* 1: 30.

where the latter is jealous of the former's beauty. Mahfouz pictures this rivalry as a child-like one. Everyone in the family is aware of this rivalry. Even though Khadiga, who is very expressive and frank, states that she wishes to have Aisha's beauty, she never harms Aisha in any way except for the times she criticises her laziness. Hence, Mahfouz never describes their relationship as based on rivalry. Moreover, a typical dialogue between both characters is based on minor quarrels and disputes, such as those related to house chores. Their mother, Amina, divides the work among the three sisters. While Aisha is always content, Khadiga is usually rebellious. For instance, Khadiga has once said to Aisha, 'I'll let you clean the house if you think washing the clothes is too much. But if you make a fuss over the washing so you can stay in the bathroom till all the work in the kitchen is finished, that's an excuse that can be rejected in advance'.[199] It seems that Mahfouz emphasizes that Khadiga's rebellious nature is stronger than her jealousy. She teases other members of the house, such as Yasin, her older half-brother. Khadiga and Yasin are both sarcastic; they both make sarcastic comments on each other's physical appearance. For instance, in response to Yasin's comment on the shape of her nose, Khadiga '[tells] him furiously, remember your own shortcomings before you allude to the defects of other people'.[200] Accordingly, the absence of evil in those scenes proves the absence of dangerous rivalry. To Mahfouz, rivalry has to have a strong destructive edge, which applies to neither *The Beginning and the End* nor *The Cairo Trilogy.*

In *Children of the Alley,* Adham – the father of Kadri and Hammam (Cain and Abel) –manages Gebelawi's estate and maintains good relationships with his father and all his siblings except for Idris who is determined to ruin Adham. Idris tries to banish Adham from their house in a similar

[199] Naguib Mahfouz, *Palace Walk: The Trilogy Volume I. Trans. Raymond Stock* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1996, p.32.
[200] Mahfouz, *Palace Walk,* p. 55.

vein with Satan's attempt to expel Adam from heaven. Hence, Idris encourages Adham to check the book which includes Gebelawi's will. Adham rejects the idea at first; however, when he discusses it with his wife, the matter seems to be easier than he thinks. He follows Idris' suggestion, which results in the expulsion of Adham from his father's property. This raises a question regarding Mahfouz's rationale behind choosing to make Satan and Adam siblings rather than strangers.

According to the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Satan is an angel who has become a devil by rebelling against God and choosing to make humans yield to his lure to destroy their lives. There is a striking resemblance between this story and *Children of the Alley*, as previously discussed, with an exception which is that the latter depicts evilness and righteousness as two sides of one coin (i.e. brothers). It is possible to argue that Mahfouz means that human beings can have two opposing sides for cultural and political reasons. The cultural reason is related to Mahfouz's previously discussed definition of rivalry, whereas the political one has to do with the timing of writing the novel. In Mahfouz's opinion, the story is a political one that advises Arab leaders, particularly the Egyptian President Abdel Nasser, to choose either the prophets' route or the thugs' one. The dichotomy between Adam and Idris, for instance, emphasises the reality of the time of Abdel Nasser. In addition to the religious allegories implemented in the story, this political message, which shall be further investigated, has led to banning the novel in 1959.

Mahfouz criticises Abdel Nasser's era in more than one novel, one of which is *Miramar* (1967). *Miramar* takes place in Alexandria during the 60s. It is about a motel where each guest personifies some social or political thought. For example, Sarhan is a socialist journalist who falls in love with Zohra, the housekeeper at the motel. She left her village to escape from an

arranged marriage. She hopelessly falls for Sarhan irrespective of her illiteracy whereas he is a journalist. He convinces her that there are no social barriers between lovers. After she believes him, he abandons her to marry a schoolteacher who belongs to a higher class than him. Zohra decides to marry someone – namely the newspaper seller – from a social class that is similar to hers.

Sarhan el-Buhayri represents the lower middle class and symbolises the 1952 Revolution which incarnates the conflict between beliefs and actions. For instance, he promises Zohra to marry her, then 'refuses to marry her, his social inferior.'[201] El Buhayri comments on his beliefs: 'what's the good of going into marriage if it doesn't give me a push up the social ladder?'[202]

Accordingly, both *Children of the Alley* and *Miramar* offer the same message: while some people believe in idealistic socialism, others pretend to be different by wearing the masks of purity and idealism. For this reason, Mahfouz addresses Abdel Nasser by proposing two approaches to lead a country: Idris's or Adam's.

Mahfouz is not the only one to discuss the repercussions of the 1952 Revolution; in his book *Al-Hukuma al-khafiya fei 'ahd Abd al-Nasser wa asrar masra' al-mushir Amer* (The Invisible Government during the Reign of Nasser and the Secrets of Field Marshal Amer's Death), Gamal Hammad (2008) argues that Abdel Nasser is not the only leader in the political scene of his reign. He introduces many names of ministers and politicians who have exercised their power over people. He discusses the lack of freedom of speech at that time, to the extent of recording the private phone calls of whoever those leaders choose. Hammad gives the example

[201] Hala Halim. '*Miramar*: A Pension at the Intersection of Competing Discourses'. *Approcahes of Teaching the Works of Naguib Mahfouz*. ed. Wail Hassan and Muaddi Darraj. Modern Language Association, 2012 pp. 184-202 p. 194.
[202] Naguib Mahfouz. *Miramar*. Trans. Fatma Moussa-Mahmoud. London: Heinemann, 1978 p.154.

of Sha'rawi Goma'a (The Minister of Internal Affairs) and Samy Sharaf (the President's Secretary) who impose censorship on people's lives. They seize their power to record for whoever might oppose their views whether the person they are spying on is in power or not. They place tiny microphones in different places in the person's house to record everything, including private conversations.[203]

Abdel Nasser's harshness and dictatorship are criticised by many writers of his time. A high percentage of those writers use symbols and allegories in an attempt to enrich their creativity and leave some room for readers to explore reality by themselves. One of the writers is Tharwat Abaza, the author of *Shai' Min Al-Khouf* (1967) (A Glimpse of Fear). In Abaza's novel, Attris, the protagonist, follows his grandfather's footsteps and becomes a dictatorial mayor in their small town. As a child, Attris has been vulnerable and innocent until his grandfather, who has a strong impact on Attris, makes him kill a bird. This incident not only crushes the boy's innocence and but also instils evil and mercilessness in the child's soul. The novel continues to emphasise the harshness that Attris uses in managing the town's matters. Hence, there is a striking resemblance between the reigns of terror of Attris and Abdel Nasser for the absence of freedom of speech, particularly toward the end of their regime.[204]

Gamal el-Ghitani is another Egyptian writer who resembles Mahfouz in disguising politics as fiction. His famous novel, *Zayni Barakat* (1974), tackles the tyranny of dictators. Like Mahfouz, Ghitani criticises Abdel Nasser in his work. His criticism addresses the last ten years of Abdel Nasser's rule, during which tyranny's true face appeared. Ghitani himself is a victim of Abdel Nasser's despotism – which is a reason for the former's imprisonment – for criticising latter's

[203] Gamal Hammad, *ālḥkwmhh ālḫfyh fy ʿhd Abdel Nasser* (Cairo: The United Company for Publishing, 2008) p.27-8.
[204] Tharwat Abaza, *šyʾ mn ālḫwf* (Cairo: dār āl mʿārf, 1960).

regime. In a recent issue of the Egyptian newspaper *Asharq al-Awsat*, Ghitani states that 'Nasser should have listened to Mahfouz', referring to how powerful writers can be in analysing political situations. He adds:

> Writers cannot be separated from the political reality. During the Second World War, Winston Churchill used to invite writers to his meetings to listen to their opinions. Reading literature and consulting writers help in predicting the future. Had Gamal Abdel Nasser read Naguib Mahfouz's novels, he would have been able to expect what was to happen during the Six Day War. Writers have a comprehensive and panoramic vision, while politicians focus only on details.[205]

The depiction of tyranny is not confined to *Children of the Alley*; Mahfouz describes the patriarchal tyranny in *The Cairo Trilogy* as well. As it was mentioned in the introduction, Al-Sayed Abdel Gawad, the protagonist, is a narcissistic tyrannical hypocrite who leads a double life: the first one as an austere obnoxious father and husband who imposes his power on his children to the extent of disallowing them from having meals with him. His sons follow him after he starts eating, but his wife and daughters are not allowed to join them until Abdel Gawad finishes. This peculiar family tradition that Abdel Gawad has established raises a feeling of superiority not only toward women, but also toward subordinate men (i.e. his sons). As for his second life, it is a hideous, disrespectful one which he prefers to hide from his family in fear of spoiling his image. He is a womaniser who constantly drinks and dances with his friends. He does everything that his children are not allowed to do. His double standards and secret life symbolise the tyranny of rulers. After finding out about the father's secret life, Kamal loses faith

[205] Safaa Azab, 'Gamal El-Ghitani: Nasser should have listened to Naguib Mahfouz.' *Ashraq Al-Awsat*, 7 Aug 2014.

in both God and his father. Kamal states the following: 'but it is not only you alone whose image has changed. God himself is no longer God as I worshipped Him in the past. I am sifting through His attributes to clean them from tyranny, despotism, coercion, dictatorship, and the whole gamut of human instincts'.[206] Kamal's words reflect Mahfouz's hope for the 1952 Revolution, which turns into despair after Abdel Nasser's imprisonment of a high number of writers and journalists. This despotic act contradicts Abdel Nasser's promise of freedom and prosperity.

Another example of a tyrant is the character of Kadri in *Children of the Alley*. In this novel, Mahfouz describes Kadri and Hammam as identical twins even though Kadri is portrayed as a heartless person who is blinded by rivalry. Their first appearance in the novel explores how different their characters are. The dialogue between them states:

> If this desert were ours, and we didn't have to share it, said Kadri with his mouth full, we could let the sheep graze all over the place and we wouldn't have to worry.
>
> But this desert is for shepherds from Auf, Kafr al Zaghari and al Husseiniya, and we can avoid trouble by being friends with them, Hammam said.
>
> In these dead-end neighborhoods, they have only one way of handling people who look for their friendship: they slap you around.[207]

As previously stated, the story of Kadri and Hammam is remarkably accordant with that of Cain and Abel; the former brothers fall in love with the same girl (i.e. Hind, their uncle Idris's daughter). Kadri, the ruthless one, according to Mahfouz's description of him, kills his brother

[206] Naguib Mahfouz, *Palace of Desire*, p. 412.
[207] Mahfouz, *The Children of the Alley*, p. 49.

with a rock and buries him in the desert. He returns home pretending that he does not know his brother's whereabouts. The story ends with the victory and survival of the evil brother; Kadri marries Hind and has children and grandchildren. In this case, Kadri's tyranny is analogous to Abdel Nasser's for the prevalence of injustice and the absence of sound judgment. This shows Mahfouz's utilisation of allegory in his work to reveal the essential role that literature plays in mirroring reality with its vices and virtues.

Allegory in Literature

In line with Stephen Slemon's paper *Post-Colonial Allegory and the Transformation of History*, allegory is a representation of the past or present in fictional text. Implementing it in post-colonial literature encourages readers to discover history. Allegory does not aim to demean or change history; it merely proposes new approaches to perceiving the past and the present. Slemon states: 'allegorical writing, and its inherent investment in history, provides the post-colonial writer with a means not only of presenting this proposition, but also of building it into the structuring principle of the fictional work of art'.[208] In this sense, allegory is the writer's means of exploring reality rather than an end in itself. It also enhances the concept of the 'other', the good/evil, the black/white, and the coloniser/colonised.

An exemplar of allegory in literature is George Orwell's satirical novella *Animal Farm (1945)*. Orwell focuses on the Russian Revolution and the reign of Stalin. The novel opens with Mr. Jones at Manor Farm who gets drunk before going to bed, and all the animals decide to hold a secret meeting. Old Major, a boar, wisely captures the other animals' attention by suggesting that they should seize power and expel Mr. Jones and all other humans from the farm. He argues that

[208] Stephen Slemon, 'Postcolonial Allegory and the Transformation of History', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Vol. 23, Issue 1, 1998.

animals should be the ones governing the farm simply because they are the ones who do all the work. Old Major adds that animals deserve to live freely and equally. However, even though his words mark the beginning of the animals' rebellion against the humans on the farm, Old Major dies without seeing his dream come true.

Two pigs named Napoleon and Snowball adopt Old Major's vision and urge the animals to unite in order to set themselves free and to fulfil their dream. Unable to accept Mr. Jones's cruelty, the animals eventually rebel against him, and throw him and his wife out of the farm. After the success of the revolution, the animals' lives flourish for a while, and the animals start to work harder with a stronger sense of belonging to the farm. They also decide on seven basic principles that act as a constitution everybody is obliged to abide by. Nevertheless, the animals encounter a problem, which is that two pigs often abstain from working.

Here lies the abuse that Mahfouz discusses in many of his novels: when an individual or group assume authority over others because the former is more powerful or wealthier than the latter. The ones who come to power are more inclined to satisfy their own needs more than the people's. An insatiable hunger for power haunts leaders. The two pigs, Napoleon and Snowball, fight over-power for different reasons, leaving the animals to struggle as in Mr. Jones's days. Napoleon eventually succeeds in excluding Snowball from the political scene without revealing how this has been done.

It is noteworthy that Orwell's characters are mapped in a similar allegorical way to Mahfouz's: Old Mayor represents Karl Marx who has introduced socialism as an ideal school of thought using words such as 'freedom' and 'equality'. Mr. Jones is Tsar Nicholas II, and the farm is Russia. The two pigs Napoleon and Snowball personify Stalin and Trotsky, respectively. Orwell's use of symbolism in the form of animals has had a strong impact on world literature.

It should also be noted that both Orwell and Mahfouz link socialism to idealism. The animals dream of a utopian society where social justice, equality and freedom prevail; similarly, Mahfouz's message to political leaders in *Children of the Alley* offers them a choice to implement the approach of thugs or the prophets. Accordingly, both novelists make use of symbolism to convey their political messages. While the readers are preoccupied with the details of the story, they crack the code of the political foregrounding. This implies Orwell's mastery of proposing allegories while addressing key historical events.

A third example is Tawfik al-Hakim's play *Fate of a Cockroach* (1966). This Egyptian writer tells the story of a troubled couple who find a cockroach in their bathroom. Having difficulty removing the cockroach, readers discover the manipulation of the husband by his wife in relation to the cockroach and its wife. Both males are helpless and weak. The husband fears his wife as the cockroach fears the swatter. The play opens with a dialogue between the cockroach and its wife about his weak performance as the king of the cockroaches.[209] Not only does their dialogue symbolise martial relationships, it also reflects the Egyptian political situation. Published in 1966, the play unravels the impact of the Nasserist regime on society through an allegory. El-Hakim has been Abdel Nasser's supporter until Abdel Nasser the imposition of strict regulations that restrain writers' freedom. Like Mahfouz and Abaza, the absence of freedom has resulted in El Hakim's misery and devastation; however, they have resorted to criticising the political affairs under the cover of allegory.

In this sense, allegory is a writer's means of encoding messages; that is to say, the writer relies on the image to deliver his/her message because mastering the image successfully decodes

[209] Tawfiq Al-Hakim, *Fate of a Cockroach: Four Plays of Freedom*, Trans. Denys Johnson Davies (California: Heinemann Educational Publisher, 1973).

the message. One thing reveals the other. According to Joanna Frueh's article 'Allegory: An-Other-World', allegorical works wear a mask. She states that 'allegory is a matter of belief, and it pictures the idea with a mask. The critic unmasks the idea'.[210] Thus, allegorical works are sometimes seen as a translation of the writers' beliefs. It is as if the writer speaks a different language; unfortunately, readers and critics might misunderstand this language. Messages can be misleading, which has happened in *Children of the Alley*. Many readers see the text as religious rather than political.

Furthermore, some writers use allegories to accentuate historical events and implement them into the present. It is a reminder to readers that history repeats itself, and that we have a chance to change the present. This is applicable in *Children of the Alley*, through which Mahfouz sends a message to the Arab leaders in the form of the prophets' stories. He resorts to the past to improve the present. In this regard, allegory revives history to save the present. Allegory is a strong tool for writers to canonise their stories. It also deciphers the hidden messages in their works.

One of the oldest prominent allegories is Plato's allegory of the cave. It is presented in his masterpiece *The Republic*. The renowned Greek philosopher explains allegory by offering a dialogue between Socrates and Plato's brother Glaucon. The dialogue is about a group of people who live chained to the wall of a cave. They see shadows of people and things projected on the wall as they pass in front of the fire behind them. A free person is a philosopher who has wisdom; however, his/her past can still haunt him/her. He or she can still be affected by the darkness. Socrates argues:

[210] Joana Frueh, 'Allegory: An-Other-World', *Art Journal*, Vol. 45, Issue 4, 1985.

> Suppose one of them was set free and forced suddenly to stand up, turn his head, and walk with eyes lifted to the light; all these movements would be painful, and he would be dazzled to make out the objects whose shadows he had been used to see.[211]

The importance of this allegory lies in reiterating how the past is capable of haunting the freed person. It makes the past serve as an alibi to the present. Interestingly, there is a common denominator between the allegory of the cave and other modern fictional works. For instance, *Children of the Alley* refers to religious history, which has a great impact on the Egyptian society, to strengthen the political message. Another similarity is the political message behind both allegories. Concerning *The Republic*, it discusses how important it is for learners or philosophers to be leaders. People who thrive on wisdom deserve to rule. To Plato and Socrates, philosophers symbolise of wisdom and idealism. Plato states: 'the life of a true philosopher is the only one that looks down upon offices of state, and access to power must be confined to men who are not in love with it, otherwise rivals will start fighting'.[212] However, to Mahfouz, the life of the prophets guarantees the welfare of the state. People who are hungry for power ruin their countries. Accordingly, Mahfouz believes that the society is idealised through divinity, and that is why he uses religious allegories in his works.

In Fredric Jameson's opinion, all third-world texts – such as Mahfouz's – are written as national allegories. He argues that third-world writers capture the culture and politics of their societies into their texts through the mundane routine of the characters. Jameson posits, 'the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third

[211] William Ebenstein, and Alan Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers: Plato to the Present* (London: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), p. 68.
[212] Ebenstein, *Great Political Thinkers*, p. 69

world culture and society'.[213] In other words, the writer of the 'third-world' text plays the role of a 'political intellectual'. This writer leads his readers down both political and cultural paths through his text. However, there is a sense of generalisation when Jameson states that 'all third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way'.[214] This generalisation does not exclude any third-world writer's text. Moreover, Jameson provides examples of several 'third-world' texts, one of which is Chinese. While Jameson uses strong language to describe 'third world literature', such as '[it] will not offer the satisfactions of Proust and Joyce', and describes Lu Xun's short story *Medicine* as 'a terrible little story', he still tries to defend himself at the beginning of his essay by stating that he uses the term 'third-world' as 'descriptive'. This defence is weak since his descriptions are general and demeaning.

Aijaz Ahmad's article 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the National Allegory' presents a counterargument against Jameson's views on third-world literature. Aijaz rejects the term 'third-world literature', and the fact that Eastern literature discusses nationalism or imperialism does not confine their works to mere national allegories. Ahmad argues that 'there are plenty of very good books written by African, Asian, and Latin American writers, which are available in English and which must be taught as an antidote against the general ethnocentricity and cultural myopia of the humanities as they are presently constituted in these United States'.[215] In the excerpt below, Ahmad gives examples of the superiority of the English language in metropolitan countries:

[213] Frederic Jameson, 'Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', *Social Text*, No. 15, 1986, p. 69.
[214] Frederic Jameson, 'Third World Literature', p. 69.
[215] Aijaz Ahmad, 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the National Allegory', *Social Text*, no. 17, 1987, p. 4.

> Witness, for example, the characterization of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in *The New York Times* as 'A continent finding its voice'—as if one has no voice if one does not speak in English. Or, Richard Poirier's praise for Edward Said in *Raritan Quarterly* which now adorns the back cover of his latest book: It is Said's great accomplishment that thanks to his book, Palestinians will never be lost to history.[216]

In defence of his viewpoint, Al Aijaz argues that not all Eastern literature symbolises national allegories by giving names of Eastern literary works that include a variety of subjects. One of these examples is Meer Hadi Hassan Rusva, the Urdu writer who discusses women of 'upper chambers' whose primary interest is in life's pleasures, namely literature, music, and relationships with men.

Another example of the national allegory is the 19th century Spanish novel *Fortunata y Jacinta* by Benito Perez Galdos. The writer describes the political situation at that time through the male protagonist and his relationships with two women who come from different classes. In addition, Senegalese novel *Xala* by Ousmane Sembène is one more example of using male and female relationships in terms of allegory. The male protagonist is a nationalist, and his sexual impotence problem is another allegory for the 'failure of the independence movement' in Senegal at that time.[217] It is important to note that there are many other examples of 'national allegory', such as from Latin America, Kenya, and Cuba.

Accordingly, Mahfouz is a third world writer who plays the role of a narrator of people's miseries and struggles, not just nationalism. With reference to Richard Jacquemond's paper titled

[216] Al Aijaz, 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness', p. 5.
[217] Aijaz, 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness', p. 7.

'Revolutionary Fiction and Fictional Revolution', the beginning of *Children of the Alley* resembles *One Thousand and One Nights* in structure and in the description of the characters. Jacquemond argues that the reason the narrator is asked to write the stories of the alley at the beginning of the novel is to transfer his beliefs to reality. This raises the question of the importance of the role of the writer, particularly in this novel. The novel's structure is similar to that of folktales, in which the narrator plays a significant role of the enlightened which is no less important than that of the protagonist. Moreover, the folktale narrator is the messenger of the people; he or she concentrates on their miseries and obstacles. This is very much similar to the role of the writer which Mahfouz plays efficiently. Mahfouz states that his first job as a governmental employee has made him aware of people's problems. He says that his 'profession was to write complaints for the needy and wronged' (my translation).[218] In fact, *Children of the Alley* is not the first novel to enlighten the masses and to bridge the gap between form and content. This type of narration has existed since the 19th century in Arabic literature.

Another hidden message that underlies Mahfouz's choice of prophets to symbolise political leaders is the common incompatibility of politics and religion. A combination of the two is only successful in ancient times. For instance, Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is a strong resilient political and social leader. One of his unique traits is altruism. He works for the people to address their needs, not for himself to meet his own. Mahfouz depicts the qualities of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) through Qassim in *Children of the Alley*. Qassim is altruistic, noble, and helpful. Being a noble leader (like prophets), he has many followers. In contrast, humans tend to lack nobility; in other words, greed substitutes altruism. In this sense, Mahfouz conveys a new

[218] Richard Jacquemond, 'Revolutionary Fiction and Fictional Revolution: A Reading of the Children of the Alley' (*Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics, 2003*), p.120.

message, which is that politics is about rivalry, and religion is about altruism. Both do not walk down the same path. To Mahfouz, brotherhood as a social term necessitates harmony, companionship and sacrifice. As stated in the first chapter, Mahfouz believes that siblings should be friends, not rivals. However, Mahfouz has an opposing opinion when defining brotherhood in politics, such as his opinion of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Mahfouz is against the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood. He states, 'the ones I hated from the beginning were the Muslim Brothers'.[219] The reason behind Mahfouz's hatred is the fact that he comes from a religious family. Having been taught Quran at the *kuttaab* in his childhood, he has learned much about religion before even going to primary school.[220] To him, the Muslim Brotherhood is only interested in seizing political power, not in practising religion as they claim. This is perspective is evident in *The Cairo Trilogy*. Kamal's nephews, Abdel el-Moneim and Ahmed, adopt different ideologies: the former is a fundamentalist and the latter is a socialist. Mahfouz describes Ahmed as a daring successful nationalist whereas Abdel el-Moneim is a rigid fundamentalist. Although both go to prison for different reasons, Ahmed finds his way after being released and fights for it. He is portrayed as more resilient than his fanatic brother – who represents the Muslim Brotherhood from Mahfouz's perspective –. [221]

***ālāḫtyār* (The Choice): Another Exemplar of a Sibling Rivalry**

Destructive rivalry is also shown in the film *ālāḫtyār* (The Choice) (1970). Naguib Mahfouz and Youssef Chahine, the director, co-wrote the story of the film between the late 1960s and the beginning of 1970, during which the film was released. Based on Ibrahim Fawal's book *Youssef*

[219] Gamal al-Ghitani, *The Mahfouz Dialogs*, Trans. Humphrey Davies, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007, p. 117.
[220] El Enany, *Mahfouz: His Life and Times*, p. 11.
[221] Ibid, pp. 88-9.

Chahine, 'Mahfouz wrote the first draft himself and showed it to Chahine. When he finished reading it, Chahine scribbled on the cover, "this is the best script I've read in years"'.[222] There is no clear reason behind Chahine's admiration for the script; however, it might be Mahfouz's anger and disappointment at the 1967 defeat and his brilliant talent that have aroused Chahine's interest and made the script a gripping one.

The Choice (1970) is the first film in what critics call the 'Trilogy of Defense': *The Choice* (1970), *The Sparrow* (1972), and *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (1976). All three films discuss the loss and despair that Arabs feel, particularly the Egyptians, after losing the war with the Zionists in 1967. Mahfouz calls this defeat 'the earthquake' because it has shaken the Arab region. Three years after the defeat, Abdel Nasser died, which is another catastrophe to most Arabs.[223] The timing of writing *The Choice* is highly significant as it is during the period of 'no peace, no war' – between the 1967 defeat and the 1973 victory –.

The Choice discusses the relationship between the twin brothers Mahmoud, the flamboyant hideous sailor, and Sayed, the famous wealthy schizophrenic writer, which is only discovered at the end of the film. The film focuses on the massive differences between both brothers in terms of attitude, behaviour, education, and profession. Sayed visits Mahmoud sporadically in order to enter his gypsy world to write about him and his friends. Sayed sits for hours observing a community of outsiders including belly dancers, lovers, drug takers, fugitives, and sometimes painters. The play Sayed writes is mainly about Mahmoud whom he describes as a happy sailor by choice. Although, Sayed seems to be successful on many levels, he is the only one who

[222] Ibrahim Fawal, *Youssef Chahine (World Directors*) (London: British Film Institute, 2001), p. 89.
[223] Malek Khouri. *The Arab National Project in Youssef Chahine's Cinema*. (Cairo: The American University Press, 2010) p.81.

suffers in secrecy. He looks up to his daring brother who does not fear the society. Sayed wishes to have Mahmoud's insouciant life, living with gypsies, the poor, and the outlaws – such as prostitutes –. He breathes his brother's life while writing a play about him, portraying him as an audacious resilient sailor.

The Plot and the Analysis of the Film

Mahfouz and Chahine depict the extreme gap between the siblings during the first half of the film. Both characters appear at the port where Sayed is in the middle of a circle of fans and journalists. He is standing beside the ship while his wife, feeling lonely and neglected, watches him from behind. Mahmoud arrives on a Vespa. Both brothers exchange glances. Mahmoud seems relaxed and happy while Sayed's facial expressions change from pride to anxiety after seeing his brother. Viewers can easily notice the differences between them; it shows in their clothes, their body movements, and their language.

The film criticises a society that forces people to wear a mask to veil their realities in order to feel accepted. In times of crisis, such as the aftermath of the 1967 defeat, people might lose balance and act differently without feeling it. This idea is similar to that of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, except the one in *The Choice* (1970), the twins have opposite personalities; however, in some parts of the film, Sayed pretends, though not from the beginning, to be Mahmoud as a scapegoat.

The film also discusses a severe kind of schizophrenia that Sayed exhibits. After he kills Mahmoud out of jealousy, a great sense of guilt grips Sayed, so he chooses to pretend to his deceased brother to convince the police that Mahmoud is alive. In fact, this lie gives Sayed the chance to live the life he desires (i.e. his brother's) without being judged by the society he fears

and abhors. It is worth mentioning that Sayed and Mahmoud are in love with the same woman: Sherifa (Sayed's wife); however, there is no reference to a love story between Mahmoud and Sherifa before marrying his brother. Accordingly, this is another example of deadly rivalry between brothers, which is similar to that of Cain and Abel.

With reference to Rene Girard's book *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, imitation is linked to desire. Girard introduces the origin of desire. He states that 'what distinguishes the human being among animals is our greater capacity for imitation'.[224] Children tend to like what the other children have. Happiness is visible in their eyes; therefore, adults wish to feel the same. The child, who the children imitate, is the mediator to others' inner desires. Girard adds that this notion is extended to adulthood. Having observed children at the playground, Girard defines the mimetic desire as follows:

> They desire what the other child desires; one child becomes the mediator of desires to another, whence Girard's name of mimetic desire. Mimetic desire can also be known as triangular desire because instead of the straight line of a subject that desires an object there is a triangle of subject, mediator and object.[225]

Sayed desires everything Mahmoud has; however, Mahmoud never desires anything that belongs to Sayed except his wife, who loves him in return. Mimetic desire creates rivalry since the mediator becomes an 'obstacle'. The subject suffers from the ravenous craving that he or she cannot satisfy. In this case, tension is the outcome, and violence is expected. This is why rivalry between siblings can lead to death in some cases.[226]

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[224] Rene Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1966), p. 82.
[225] Girard, p. 117.
[226] Girard, p. 118.

The film begins with a short scene of the police investigating a crime scene, then a longer scene of a conversation between Sayed and his wife, Sherifa. Sayed is dreaming of working in the UNESCO in France and of publishing a new book, while Sherifa is picturing her life in Paris as dull and useless. She drinks some wine, throwing herself on the ground in a seductive way. Sayed is not interested in her as much as he is interested in her father's connections. This scene introduces two things: the weak state of their marriage, and Sayed's rigid, shallow, and ambivalent attitude towards life. He is serious about his work as a writer. He discusses important and profound topics; however, he is very superficial, only caring about his societal image. While Sherifa is trying to complain about her dull life as a wife of a writer, he abruptly asks her about her father: 'have you told your father about your opinion?' The only thing that he captures from her speech about boredom is that she may tell her father. He does not want to arouse his father-in-law's anger, since later we discover that he is an important connection for Sayed.

Sayed's spontaneous plan makes him live a double life in which he plays two roles. Some days he pretends to be Mahmoud by going to gypsy gatherings hosted by Sayed's friend Bahia, an ex-belly dancer, at her house. Other times, he changes his outfit and returns to his lifestyle. Sayed claims that he has to travel to attend conferences to cover up for his absences while pretending to be Mahmoud. When Sayed meets his wife Sherifa as his brother, he discovers that Mahmoud has sacrificed his love by abandoning her, which makes him feel guilty for murdering his brother.

Cheating is one of the main motifs behind the murder. On the night of the murder, Sayed sees his wife running hastily in a half-torn dress from his brother's house, covering her breasts with her hands. Sayed waits for Mahmoud's friends to leave and then he enters to kill his brother. The truth is that Mahmoud, the honourable sailor according to Mahfouz's description of him in the film, has asked Sherifa to act like the gypsies to prove her love. While she refuses to do so,

Mahmoud persists in urging her to act like one since she is in love with him. He tears her dress to frighten her. She slaps him and escapes. Mahmoud's aim is to show Sherifa that she can never be a gypsy. He also abstains from betraying his brother even though Mahmoud is deeply in love with Sherifa; his values and his loyalty to his brother are stronger than his love for her. Despite appearing to be hideous and careless, Mahmoud follows his principles no matter what. It is something that Sayed has always envied. Sayed only cares about his image, not his principles, assuming that satisfying the society is more important than adopting principles because the former does not see what is in people's souls as much as it judges them based on appearance. The society categorises Sayed as the indecent sailor and Mahmoud as the renowned respectable writer.

As for Sherifa, the mediator between the poor and the rich, is torn between the two brothers – the husband and the lover –. Lost like her husband, Sherifa finds herself in the middle of two worlds: detached from her own society and longing for another. She chooses her husband when her lover rejects her. Later, she goes to Mahmoud to thank him for not taking advantage of her physical and emotional needs, and for trying to repel her. To Sayed, thinking that both his wife and his brother are in an affair is enough justification to kill his brother whom he considers as a rival. At the beginning, the police think that Mahmoud, the sailor, has killed his rich famous brother out of jealousy. The police officers believe that a successful, intellectual writer can never be jealous of a drug addict and a womaniser who travels the world aimlessly. Their stereotypical thinking portrays how judgmental the society is, and how it reacts to wealth and fame. Wealthy people who are members of the high social class are not accused of being criminals; only the poor and lower social class members are suspects. This rationale is evident in the dialogue between the officers; the old officer feels that Sayed is pretentious and abnormal, while the

young one defends Sayed, calling him an important man with money and prestige. This is an issue that Mahfouz tackles in many of his works: social class struggle.[227]

The ending of the film is quite significant, not only because it shocks the viewers by revealing the real murderer (i.e. Sayed), but also because it introduces the success of Mahfouz and Chahine in co-writing the story. Both fans of Mahfouz and Chahine can realise the resemblance of Sayed's failure to escape from the police to Chahine's famous film *Bab el-Hadid*, in which Qinawy, performed by Chahine, suffers from a mental disorder and loses control over his actions. Qinawy escapes, assuming that no one will find him. However, his godfather does find him, and he convinces Qinawy that the latter is going on a trip, not to an asylum. Similarly, Sayed loses control and suddenly acts like Mahmoud, running and going to Bahia, Sayed's escort, calling her name like Sayed does. Bahia convinces the police that she should talk to him.

Mahfouz also ends *The Thief and the Dogs* with a similar finale. The thief Said Mahran is a fugitive who lives with a prostitute, Noor, who adores him. He neglects her love at the beginning, and then he feels attached to her for being the only loyal person in his life. When the police come to arrest him for various crimes, the only person who is able to convince him to turn himself in is Noor. Noor and Bahia symbolise the notion of female outlaws with 'hearts of gold'. It is a recurring trope in the works of Mahfouz and Chahine. In Mahfouz's *The Beginning and the End*, Nefissa is a prostitute who still cares and sacrifices for her family; nevertheless, she chooses this profession to satisfy her needs, not her family's. She never stops working as a seamstress to cover the house's expenses. Moreover, in *Love under the Rain* (1973), university students Aliya and Sanaa choose prostitution to buy what they desire, such as clothes, makeup,

[227] *ālāẖtyār*.Dir. Youssef Chahine, Soad Hosni, and Ezzat El Aliely, āflām mṣr ālʿālmyh. 1970.

and books. They cover their own expenses in order to be independent, thinking they are a burden to their families. As for Chahine, outlaws and gypsies are depicted as altruistic, kind, and supportive people in his film *ālmṣyr* (The Destiny) (1997). Manuela, the gypsy dancer, and her singer husband open their house to lovers. They do not consider themselves pimps. To them, leading a spontaneous and hideous life is better than the pretentiousness of the lives of upper-class people. It is a direct attack by Chahine against society for depriving people of the freedom of being themselves. Chahine blames society as much as he blames Sayed. In his book *Youssef Chahine: Hayah Lil-Cinema* (2001) (A Life for Cinema), Walid Shmeit, an art critic, argues that the society manipulates people and turns them into stereotypes. Chahine believes that oppression, lack of freedom and defeat are capable of changing a society into a weak, pretentious one. He expresses his opinion as follows:

> What kind of society is this? It is a bourgeois, sickening, and defeated system, which is built on oppression, forcing people to act double-faced. In this society, the individual does not act like him-/herself; he/she is a follower of society's beliefs, ethics, and the mentality of the common class. In this case, one has no place like Sayed. Therefore, Sayed faces a dilemma; he searches for a role, and in order to play this role, he has to be someone else. He struggles in both cases: the first struggle is between the original self that strives for freedom and liberation, and the second one is with the counterfeit social self that is forced to act in a certain manner (my translation).[228]

[228] Walid Shamit, *Yusuf Shahine: Hayah Lil-Cinema* (Beirut: Riyad Al Rayyas Lil Kutub Wa-Al Nash, 2001), p. 59.

Hence, both Mahfouz and Chahine believe that Sayed who represents the Egyptian society as a whole at the time of the 1967 defeat suffers from schizophrenia. It appears to a post-traumatic disorder that the Egyptians have suffered from as a result of the defeat. Thus, it is important to better understand the definition of schizophrenia as a social illness, which is discussed in detail in the following section.

Defining Schizophrenia as a Social Illness

Schizophrenia is defined as 'a brain disorder that affects the way the person acts, thinks, and sees the world. People with schizophrenia have an altered perception of reality, often a significant loss of contact of reality'.[229] The causes of this illness vary. Sayed has many common symptoms of schizophrenia, one of which is solitariness. Throughout the film, Sayed is surrounded by journalists and work accomplices; however, he is not seen with a friend or a relative.

According to Dr. Andrew Croyden Smith's book *Madness and Schizophrenia*, some artists suffer from schizoid, a type of schizophrenia, which leads them to prefer isolation to company. In the fifties, the American theory of schizophrenia introduces the importance of family relationships and the origins of the illness. It is different from the European definition, which relies on the physical origin.[230] Many American psychiatrists discuss the theories of communication in the family. One of their proposals is that 'schizophrenic reactions are a type of withdrawal from social interaction, and the thought disorder is a specifically schizophrenic means of withdrawal.[231] The patient feels the urge to escape and create his or her own cocoon. Lidz (1973) argues:

[229] Andrew C. Smith, *Schizophrenia and Madness* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 9.
[230] Smith, *Schizophrenia and Madness*, p. 106.
[231] Smith, p. 109.

> The schizophrenic patient escapes from irreconcilable dilemmas and unbearable hopelessness by breaking through these confines (i.e., the meaning and the logic of his culture) to find some living space by using his own idiosyncratic meanings and reasoning, but in so doing impairs his ego functioning and ability to collaborate with others.[232]

Sayed has his own world, which is unintentionally created by him and his brother. He observes his brother and his friends to write real life stories about them even though he rarely interacts with them. He lives rigidly in his office, writing and reading. There is no single scene with his young son. Most of the conversations between him and his wife are about his work and future. This detachment encourages creativity and novelty of thoughts.[233] In the last part of the film, Sherifa complains about Sayed's lack of attention and his isolation. Perplexed, he leaves his book on the desk because she has never complained before. It is the first time for her to express herself, yet it is noticeable that she is usually sad and seeks the attention of both strangers and relatives, such as his brother. Sherifa and Mahmoud have had a short relationship that Sayed knows about. This proves that Sayed is not keen on reading signs because he is self-centred and too busy with his own goals.

Schizophrenia affects patients' intimate relationships, particularly the sexual ones. It is clear from the opening scene that Sayed avoids touching and having intercourse with his wife, who uses every chance to seduce him. Sayed gets married and has a son out of duty to complete his social image. His brother Mahmoud describes him as follows: 'Sayed has never touched a girl; he barely got married and he barely has a son. He acts uptight like a dried prawn.'[234] The

[232] Theodore Lidz, *The Origin and Treatment of Schizophrenia Disorders* (London: Basic Books, 1973), p. 23.
[233] Smith, p.143.
[234] *ālāḫtyār*. Dir. Youssef Chahine

description is linked to isolation and lack of intimacy, even with the closest people. A second symptom is impaired sympathy and emotional detachment. Sayed shows no sign of emotional links to any of the characters. He works dutifully. Unlike his brother who laughs, hugs, and kisses most of his friends, Sayed only nods or shakes hands with most of the people. A third symptom is the rigidity of the mental set. Sayed is a very unbending character. He is described at the beginning of the film by the police officers as an organized, successful man who has written more than seventeen plays and numerous papers and articles in a short period of time. He is mostly at work or in his office at home. He is very keen on attending the rehearsals of his plays, despite his busy schedule, to guarantee the accuracy of every word said in the play. He treats actors like students, and he acts like a teacher at a school play. Changing or even arguing about changing a word in his play is not negotiable. The fourth significant symptom of Sayed's disorder is an unusual or odd style of communication. Sayed describes his brother as cold and peculiar as a cold dried prawn. The word 'prawn' usually refers to wealth and high social class, because prawns are usually expensive in Egypt. In Mahmoud's eyes, Sayed is cold, rigid, and arrogant like the upper class, which Sayed wishes to belong to.

Chahine: His Life, Work and Relation to Mahfouz

Youssef Chahine is one of the most famous film directors in the Arab region. He has significant contributions to the Egyptian cinema that cover half a century of thirty-four features and six documentary films. He is the recipient of the Cannes Film Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996. His work reflects Egypt's multi-faceted culture. Many critics described his work as abstruse and vivid. Born in Alexandria in 1925 to a middle-class family – whose lifestyle is similar to that of aristocrats –, he has lived between Alexandria and Cairo until his death in 2008. Two of his schoolmates at Victoria College School are Omar el-Sherif and Edward Said.

Chahine has finished his three-year acting course in Pasadena Playhouse in California is in twenty- seven months only. Later, he returns to Egypt to start his film directing career, and the first of which is *Papa Amin* in 1951.[235]

Chahine is multi-talented; he can sing, dance, and write. He is also highly influenced by American musicals, particularly those with Gene Kelly. Although Chahine is affected by Western cinema, his only concern is depicting Egypt in his films, particularly colonial Egypt. In his book, *Youssef Chahine* (2001), Ibrahim Fawal says that 'Chahine's concern about postcolonial Egypt brings to mind the similar concerns of Satyajit Ray and Ousmane Sembène regarding postcolonial India and Africa respectively'.[236]

According to a number of critics, the depth and obscurity of Chahine's films require reading and interpreting them rather than watching. The ambiguity lies in Chahine's portrayal of the reality that humans live in. When Chahine is asked about the peculiarity of his films and the transitions of the scenes from happiness to sadness, and from dancing to mourning, he says: 'there's interplay between everything. That's why, in the same film, you might see a scene that is totally fantastic, and two seconds later, they're dancing, and six seconds after that, they're doing something else. This happens to me every day. This is life'.[237]

Sometimes, Chahine is linked to Mahfouz. Many critics say that Chahine has mastered the Egyptian cinema the way Mahfouz has mastered Egyptian fiction. Fawal claims that 'as an influential voice of modern Egypt, the internationally acclaimed Chahine is to Arab cinema what the Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz is to Arabic Literature'.[238] However, this is not the only

[235] Fawal, *Youssef Chahine*, p. 28.
[236] Fawal, p. 2.
[237] Ibid, p. 194.
[238] Ibid, p. 1.

resemblance between the two artists; Mahfouz and Chahine are both affected by Egypt's political events. The 1952 Revolution, which is also known as the 'bloodless revolution', has massively affected Chahine's work two years after the start date of his film career. Like Mahfouz, Chahine has been hopeful until this hope has vanished after the appearance and prevalence of tyranny. The Revolution's impact on Chahine is clear in his third film, *ṣrāʿfy ālwādy* (1954) (A Struggle in the Valley). The main goal of the 1952 Revolution is to achieve equality among citizens, and to destroy the concept of social class, by distributing the properties of the rich among the poor. In addition, the film discusses a love story between a poor young man and a rich girl. They suffer from class conflicts and the society's rejection. The obstacle of the impossible love story lies in the lover's father who is sentenced to capital punishment although he is innocent. Ibrahim Fawal describes this film as follows:

> Chahine again dramatized the exploitation of the Egyptian *fellah*. And for the first time in Egyptian cinema, Chahine shocked the audiences by showing the hanging of an innocent man and by suggesting that the taboo of a marriage between a boy and a girl from two different classes could be broken.[239]

Around the same time, Mahfouz decides to return to writing after his last novel *The Beginning and the End* in 1950. He is back with *The Cairo Trilogy*. Although not explicitly political, this masterpiece gives a panoramic view of the Egyptian history from the beginning to the middle of the 20th century.

Moreover, Chahine and Mahfouz have co-written other films such as *ālārḍ* (The Land) in 1969. The film is an adaptation of *ālārḍ* (The Land) (1959) by the renowned Marxist writer, who is

[239] Fawal, p. 40.

also Chahine's friend, Abdel Rahman el- Sharkway. It portrays the Egyptian peasants' struggle against colonial officers. Those peasants fight for their own right to keep their land. The last scene in which the main character – an old peasant – is dragged by the officers is a significant one in Egypt's cinema history. Chahine describes the scene as follows:

> It is realistic to see Abu Swaylim (the main character) fall and be dragged forcibly by a horse, but it is not realistic to see him plough the earth with his fingers. When the idea occurred to me I used it and didn't think of anything else.[240]

Both Mahfouz and Chahine highlight political issues and freedom of speech in their works; they aim to unravel the society's misery in face of dictatorships, social inequality, abject poverty, ignorance, to name only a few. Hence, the writers share the same vision towards their country. It is also noteworthy that Chahine is also called the 'conscience of the nation'.[241] According to Nick Bradshaw's paper 'Youssef Chahine: An Appreciation: Egypt's Most Acclaimed and Most Mysterious Director', Chahine focuses on political circumstances in Egypt, such as imperialism. Bradshaw adds: 'he took on imperialism and fundamentalism alike, celebrated the liberty of body and soul, and offered himself warts and all as an emblem of his nation. Egypt's modern history is etched in his life's work'.[242] Hence, Chahine plays an intellectual role in the Egyptian society. Many Egyptians consider him an icon and a messenger who pictures their troubles in his films, usually highlighting political and social issues. An example of Chahine's role as an intellectual is his film Salah el Din, where he portrays the Arab heroism in the 12th century. Bradshaw states:

[240] Fawal, p. 203.
[241] Nick Bradshaw, Youssef Chahine: An Appreciation, *The Guardian*, 28 Jul 2008.
[242] Bradshaw, 2008.

> Salah el Din (1963), a project Chahine inherited, proposed the 12th century Sultan's defence of Jerusalem against the Christian crusades as an epic allegory of Nasser's pan-Arab nationalism, though the Catholic Chahine and his leftist writers also cast Salah el Din as a paragon of peace and religious tolerance. Chahine's relationship with the past-colonial authorities soon turned more critical.[243]

Written the mid-50s, Mahfouz's *The Cairo Trilogy* narrates his life as a child and as a young man through one of the protagonists, namely Kamal. Mahfouz dedicates the volume II – *The Palace of Desire* – of *The Cairo Trilogy* to Kamal who embodies Mahfouz's own experience during his adolescence and manhood. Commenting on the link between him and Kamal, Mahfouz states: 'there's a large part of me, embodied in the character Kamal'.[244]

Kamal is a semi-autobiographical character that identifies with Mahfouz in many situations. One example is Kamal's arguments with his father about his first article on Darwinism, which the latter disapproves of. While Kamal's father, Abdel Gawad, has a spiritual, religious background that concludes that Adam is the father of mankind, Kamal advocates Darwinism. In addition, when Kamal chooses to pursue a teaching degree rather than a degree in law, his father strongly objects. He says that while the maid's son is pursuing a prestigious degree in law, Kamal, his own son, who comes from a wealthy family, is pursuing a far less prestigious degree in teaching. The story is very similar to Mahfouz's confession about his father's rejection of his choice to study philosophy at the university level.

[243] Bradshaw, 2008.
[244] Al-Ghitani, *Mahfouz's Dialogs*, p. 104.

It should be noted that writing a semi-autobiographical character gives a glimpse into reality and adds authenticity to any novel. For instance, Kamal is a salient character in Mahfouz's work due to the themes that he depicts. Similarly, many writers have portrayed themselves in their fictional works. Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) features the protagonist, Henry Frederick, who portrays Hemingway him at war with an exception of minor differences between both of them.[245] As for the difference between Mahfouz and his character Kamal, they are even smaller and less significant; for example, Mahfouz's number of older siblings (six) is different from Kamal's (four). Another minor difference is Mahfouz's first love and its link to Kamal's. Mahfouz argues that he has never spoken about his love interest, whereas Kamal speaks about his on some occasions.

In contrast, Chahine is more direct than Mahfouz when it comes to writing films about his life in his trilogy: *Alexandria…Why?* (1979), *An Egyptian Tale* (1982), and *Alexandria Again and Forever* (1989). When Chahine is asked about whether the trilogy is fictional, he replies: 'no, it used fiction as little as possible and only in keeping with dramatic necessity. Most scenes were real and lived'.[246]

The first film *āskndryh lyh* (Alexandria…Why?) tackles Chahine's childhood and youth. It portrays his family as a happy middle-class one that tries to live an aristocratic lifestyle. The film touches on many hurtful experiences for Chahine, such as the death of his older brother, Albert. In this scene, the nine-year-old child Chahine sadly listens to his grandmother while mourning the loss of his older brother. She screams, 'why didn't the younger one die instead?'[247] The scene is very vivid, reflecting the depth and strength of a real-life event in Chahine's childhood. Later,

[245] Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (London: William Heinemann, 1929).
[246] Fawal, p. 117.
[247] Fawal, p. 123.

in the film, Chahine's attempts to become a performer and an actor as a teenager are highlighted. He stands in the middle of the class and recites a long part of *Hamlet* through which he confronts his mother. Seen by one of his teachers, Chahine's talent spreads around his school, which boosts his self-confidence. The film ends with Chahine going to America to study acting. On the ship, he cries because he is leaving his family. The last scene describes the statue of liberty as 'toothless and painted like a whore.' It is a political message that talks about the illusion of the American dream, particularly for Arabs. Ibrahim Fawal summarises Chahine's message to the Arabs as follows:

> This skepticism toward America is unwarranted and could not have been felt by the boy on the ship's deck. In 1947, America had not yet tilted her might against the Arabs. There was no Israel to nurture and spoil at her neighbors' expense. This is the older and embittered Chahine speaking, and it is a moment that is gratuitously grafted onto his evocative memoir.[248]

The second part of the movie, *ḥdwth mṣryh* (An Egyptian Tale), is a flashback of the period during which Chahine has been a famous, middle-aged director. He focuses on some of his works and his relationship with his wife, which is in a serious conflict due to Chahine's excessive hours of work. Chahine adds Egypt's story to the story of his life. He starts the film with a national song:

> We don't accept letting people crush each other
>
> Who is sane among us, and who is crazy?

[248] Fawal p. 125-6.

Who is the victimizer, and who is the victimized?

Who sells his conscience and buys destruction?

I care about the human being.

Egypt, I am worried about you.

O bewildered masses!

This is the story: the Egyptian story.[249]

The third part of the film is *āskndryh kmān w kmān* (Alexandria Again and Forever). It portrays Chahine's obsession with *Hamlet*. The film is not a direct adaptation of the play; Chahine has made changes to create an Egyptian version. The names of the characters have been changed from Western to Egyptian. The film starts with Yehia (the name Chahine calls himself in his trilogy). Another significant relationship is the one between Chahine and Amr (a new actor), whom Chahine admires, but the latter leaves the show. A flashback is shown in later scenes about the development of their relationship. As for having a reputation for directing ambiguous films, Chahine jumps to visualising the actors' union hunger strike in response to the oppression of the government during the late eighties. The film ends happily when the strike is over.[250] Accordingly, Chahine's trilogy resembles Mahfouz's not only in defining their personal life experiences, but also in imposing political events and opinions. To both, art and politics are interwoven and indispensable. In the next section, 1967 defeat will be presented.

[249] Fawal p. 131.
[250] Fawal p. 142.

1967 Defeat:

As stated in the introduction of the film in this chapter, the main reason behind writing *ālāẖtyār* (The Choice) (1970) is to emphasise the impact of the 1967 defeat on shaping modern Egyptian society. Both Chahine and Mahfouz have chosen to write about siblings to emphasise the hesitation and division the Egyptian society has gone through. In response to questions about the film and its themes, Chahine states the following:

> Who killed whom? Are Mahmoud and Sayyid two brothers and one killed the other, or are they two people who physically resemble each other? When the film was made it was necessary both politically and socially to tell the story in this manner. We were exhausted and very confused (referring to the 1967 defeat) and the film had to be similarly constructed.[251]

Three weeks before the defeat, precisely in mid-May, Sadat, then the speaker of the national assembly went to the former Egyptian President, Abdel Nasser, and Marshall Amer to inform them that Egypt's ally, the Soviet Union, told him that Israel would invade Syria. The documentary titled *Six Days in June: The March to War* states that Abdel Nasser's Arab nationalism has urged him to consider being an ally to Syria.

Sadat rushes into Nasser's office with the news. He finds him there with his military Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Amer. In a region where countries are struggling to get out of poverty, Egypt is said to be the most powerful. It has a mutual defence treaty with Syria, and

[251] Khouri p. 82.

in fact tensions are high these days between Israel and Syria. The Soviet warning about the Israeli attacks seems believable. [252]

Both Abdel Nasser and Marshall Amer have ordered the army to mobilise, but the army is not ready for such a war after fighting in a guerrilla one in Yemen. The soldiers are mostly young, untrained peasants. In commentary on Egypt's intervention, former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat argues in his autobiographical book *The Search of An Identity* that the reasons behind the defeat have been clear since April 1967. Sadat refers a conversation that took place between him and Abdel Nasser two months before the defeat about the critical situation concerning the hidden powers and conspiracies. Abdel Nasser's words about the crisis are:

> Anwar, the country is ruled by a gang (referring to the ministers), and I cannot go on like this, because in this case I will be responsible. Amer works as he desires. It is better for me to resign and only rule the Communists' Union and let Amer be the president. I'm ready for interrogation concerning the time I was president.[253]

The six-day incessant shooting – from June 5 till June 11 – has resulted in the loss of Egyptian soldiers whose corpses have been disposed of in the Sinai Peninsula. Hence, Abdel Nasser's announcement of resignation on television after the defeat has not surprised Sadat and some of the former president's friends. It is an act of apology to the Egyptians and to the Arab region. Massive groups of people have marched the streets all over Egypt asking Abdel Nasser to change his mind, calling him 'our leader'. Abdel Nasser has decided to surrender to the people's will by remaining in office till his death in September 1970. From 1967 to his death, the Egyptian

[252] *Six Days in June: The March to War*, Dir. IIan Ziv (Paris, Ill-de France: Point du Jour International, 2007). < https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C1779516?ssotoken=anonymous> [Accessed Mar 2018].
[253] Anwar Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (London: Harper Collins, 1978), p. 230.

military has been getting ready to attack Israel. Sadat, Abdel Nasser's successor, has continued the preparations for the victorious 1973 war.

The Impact of the 1967 Defeat on Egyptian Cinema: Chahine and Mahfouz

The Egyptian cinema has a long history that dates back to 1869 in Alexandria where the first movie screening started. Later, production has focused on short films and documentaries till 1923. The director of the first full feature film, *Amun*, is Mohamed Bayoumi.[254] Rafik El Sabban, an Egyptian-Syrian film critic describes the Egyptian cinema as follows:

> Egyptian cinema in its evolution illustrates that cinema, more than any other art form of the twentieth century, is a true reflection of society, revealing both defects and qualities. The vibrant cinema industry that flourished in Egypt between 1936 and 1967 mirrored the desires and dreams of its Arab audience, capturing their hearts and minds and imposing an Egyptian cultural hegemony that continues to resonate.[255]

The 1967 defeat has left an imprint not only the Egyptian people but on the Egyptian cinema as well. According to El Sabban, cinema is a reflection of the society; thus, the Egyptian film industry has been unstable for a while. Censorship is imposed on cinema production due to the authorities' fear of enabling freedom of expression. They believe that films represent a strong tool that could be utilised to analyse the defeat and simplify it for the masses. One of the films that have suffered from censorship is. *Shai' Min Al-Khouf*. (A Touch of Fear) (1969), by the writer Tharwat Abaza and the director Hussein Kamal. As mentioned previously in this chapter,

[254] Rafik El Sabban. *ālsynmā kmā rāythā*. Cairo: ālhyʾh ālʿāmh lqṣwr ālṯqāfh, 2012 p. 8.
[255] Ibid, p. 12.

the story of the film describes the tyranny of the Egyptian President Abdel Nasser. Some films, such as *The Unethical,* cite the bureaucracy of the government and bribery as reasons behind the defeat. However, the 1970s have witnessed the beginning of a wave of weak comedy films; unfortunately, some of the Arab audience prefer this genre, believing that serious ones would remind them of the current critical situation. In other words, they resort to such films as an opiate to forget about the defeat. After the Corrective Revolution of 1971 during which a number of ministers have been sacked by Sadat because of their plot against him, a new wave in cinema industry has emerged. This wave, whose founder is Chahine, is called 'the New Egyptian Cinema' by critics. It aims to criticise the 1960s. Two significant films of this wave are *ālāẖtyār* (The Choice) (1970) and *āl ʿṣfwr* (The Sparrow) (1972).[256]

Turbulence in Egypt means turbulence in Chahine's life and work. Chahine argues that his strong bond with, and love for, Egypt affects his work immensely: 'I make my films first for myself, then for my family, then for Alexandria, then for Egypt. And if the Arab world likes them, *ahlan wa sahlan* (welcome). And if foreign audiences like them, they are doubly welcome'.[257] In this case, Chahine makes films to portray and analyse the defeat. His films 'Trilogy of Defence' – *ālārḍ* (The Land) (1969), *ālāẖtyār* (The Choice) (1970), and *āl ʿṣfwr* (The Sparrow) (1972) – mirror the six years of 'no war, no peace' till the victory in 1973. In commentary on the defeat, Chahine advocates transparency and confrontation:

> Confrontation – there must be confrontation: confrontation with the self. Where has all this started? How have we come to this? How have we been deceived and put in the wrong? How and where have we erred? Only then can we begin to

[256] El Sabban. *ālsynmā kmā rāythā*.
[257] Fawal p. 199

> settle the account with ourselves, so that we could possibly begin to accept a necessary precondition for others for others to accept us.[258]

As for Mahfouz, he describes the defeat as an 'earthquake'. Mahfouz who is known to be a 'prolific' writer has not written for over a year. One critic describes his isolation as follows: 'he shut himself away in silence, broken only by a few symbolic stories, and the story of *ālāẖtyār* (The Choice) was typical of this reclusive period'.[259] Moreover, Mahfouz's focus has been shifted to writing short story collections after the defeat. One of those stories is *Under the Bus Shelter*. The focus of the story is the link between reality and rationality. Mahfouz informs the readers that this story dates to October and December of 1967. It represents his first response to the defeat. As for the story itself, it is about an act of absurdity: a group of people waiting for a bus. While waiting, many crimes take place: murder, theft, car crashes, and adultery on streets. A policeman watches in amusement. When the people ask him for help, he puts the blame on them, 'asking them for illegal assembly'.[260] Mahfouz means the ill-rationality that the Egyptian society has experienced, particularly after the defeat. Everything seems confused and shattered.

Mahfouz's first novel after the defeat is *Mirrors* (1972); it is basically about the Egyptian society from the beginning of the century till the start of the 70s. The central characters are real people Mahfouz meets in his life; they are 'fifty-five personality sketches which only in most general way relate to a common theme'.[261] His second novel, *Love in the Rain,* is about the loss

[258] Nouri Bouzid, and Shereen El Ezaby, 'New Realism in Arab Cinema: The Defeat-Conscious Cinema'. *Alif Journal of Comparative Poetics*, No. 15, 1995, p. 243.
[259] Khouri, p. 81.
[260] El Enany, *Mahfouz His Life and Times*, p. 140.
[261] James Roy King, 'The Deconstruction of the Self in Naguib Mahfouz's Mirrors'. Journal of Arabic Literature, Vol. 19, issue 1, Jan 1988 pp.55-67, p. 56.

and humiliation that has led people to dream of emigration, drug addiction, and prostitution. The novel is about the downfall of the Egyptian society.[262]

In conclusion, Mahfouz introduces the definition of sibling rivalry within the context of Egyptians' religious teachings and culture. To him, rivalry results from evil, because in Egypt, siblings are raised to be friends rather than rivals. Rivalry is strictly categorised as a social sin. Mahfouz also presents rivalry in two works of art: the controversial novel *Children of the Alley*, and the film *ālāẖtyār* (The Choice) (1970), which is co-written with the Egyptian director Youssef Chahine. In the novel, rivalry is allegorised through religious icons to conceal the political messages he aims to convey. Although the film is considered to be a political one, the allegory is a social as it has to do with relationships among twins.

In *Children of the Alley*, rivalry is a destructive trait that leads to murder such as the story of Cain and Abel. Another type of rivalry is the one between Idris and Adham. Mahfouz presents Idris, the personification of the devil, as an older brother to the first person in history (i.e. Adam). It is an interpretation of the difficulty of human nature, where evil and virtue can live together. Moreover, in *ālāẖtyār* (The Choice) (1970), the representation of rivalry is linked to society's rigid rules that cause humans to suffer because they obliged to obey. It offers a panoramic look at the Egyptian society during the time of the 1967 defeat to express people's confusion and exasperation. Both works identify the role of the intellectual, which Mahfouz plays successfully throughout his life.

For many scholars and writers, the intellectuals – including Mahfouz – act as the torch of a society. In colonial societies, people rely on writers to foresee the future, which also happens in

[262] Samia Mehrez. *Egyptian Writers between History and Fiction: Essays on Naguib Mahfouz, Sonallah Ibrahim, and Gamal al-Ghitani*. Cairo: AUC Press, 1994 p. 28.

times of oppression. Intellectuals play the roles of mediators between the people and the leaders. Oppression and lack of freedom of speech are obstacles in Mahfouz's career; however, they could not stop him from playing the intellectual role that people admire. The two works of art depict the political situation in Egypt during Abdel Nasser's era, particularly in the 1960s, when opinion, hope and despair have overlapped, in Mahfouz's point of view.

Chapter Three: The Only Child Case

This chapter analyses the only child syndrome apparent in Mahfouz's novels and novellas. Specifically, the novels are *The Search*, *The Mirage*, *In The heart of the Night*, *The Travels of Ibn Fattouma* and *Respected Sir*. These five works all underscore the Egyptian understanding of only children, which Mahfouz adopts. The only children novels operate as a type of negative dialectics to Mahfouz's interest in the importance of sibling relations. Furthermore, the intention is to present Mahfouz's notion of the role of the individual in the community. This relates to Mahfouz's love of Sufism where Sufism is often associated with solitude.

This chapter explores Sufi solitude in relation to Sufi sociality in Mahfouz's novels along with the unexpected political role that Sufis occasionally play. Mahfouz's love of Sufism is clear in many of his works and, given that solitude is valued in Sufism, the solitary nature of the only child is of relevance to the question of spiritual orientations. According to Ibn Arabi, the Andalusian Sufi and philosopher, solitude is a crucial part of practicing Sufism. He explains:

> Your heart will not become clear of the mad ravings of the world except by distance from them. And everyone who withdraws into his house yet opens the door to people visiting him is a seeker of audience and esteem, driven from the door of God. Protect yourself from the deceit of the self in this station, for most of the world is destroyed by it. So shut your door against the world, and thus the door of your house will be between you and your people.[1]

[1] Ibn Arabi. *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*. Trans. Rabia Terry Harris. (New York: Inner Traditions, 1981) p.56.

Solitude strengthens the relation between the Sufi and God, which is a major goal in Sufism. Agha Shahid Ali, a Sufi poet, sees God everywhere he goes. He writes:

> If we gaze, it is upon Him, if we use our intelligence, it is towards Him; if we reflect, it is upon Him; if we know it is Him. For it is He who is revealed in every face, sought in every sign, worshipped in every object of worship, and pursued in the invisible and the visible. The whole world prays to Him, prostrates itself before Him and glories His praise; tongues speak of Him, hearts are enraptured by love for Him, minds are bewildered in Him.[2]

Additionally, the Mahfouzian novels that feature only children are mostly linked to spirituality; however, there are also links to politics and religion. *The Mirage* has a psychological tone and explores a new understanding of the Oedipus complex. *The Search* re-inscribes Oedipal motifs in a more political way, while the other novels serve to clarify Mahfouz's views on Sufism.

Mahfouz's rejection of solitude is idiosyncratic. He adopts the view of an 'only child' in relation to Egyptian socio-religious traditions, where sibling relationships are sacred, and being alone is a syndrome to be prevented. Therefore, the novels that present only children are influenced by culture; they enhance the Egyptian traditions' essence that Mahfouz masters. According to Victor G. Cicrielli's studies on the cross-cultural sibling relations, these connections are fundamental in Eastern societies. He states:

> In comparing sibling relationships in industrialized (Western societies) and non-industrialized (Eastern societies), perhaps the basic difference is that sibling

[2] Rosemary M. Canfield Reisman ed. *Critical Survey of Poetry: Asian Poets*. (Massachusetts: Salem Press: A Division of EBSCO Publishing, 2012) p.130.

> relationships in industrialized societies tend to be discretionary while in non-industrialized societies they are obligatory. Discretionary sibling relationships are based on the siblings' desire to behave in certain ways toward one other or remain involved in one another's lives throughout the life course. Conversely, obligatory sibling relationships are based on the constraints imposed by cultural norms that siblings should behave in certain ways toward each other. Overall, in non-industrialized societies, sibling relationships are of fundamental importance in determining successful family function and their adaptation to the larger society, with sibling cooperation essential to attain marital and economic goals. In contrast, in industrialized societies, sibling relationships are secondary to spousal and parent-child relationships and do not have a major effect on family function or adaptation to the larger society.[3]

There are two opposing tendencies in defining the only child. The first, which is adopted by many psychologists, posits that an only child is just as responsible as a child with siblings. The other view, which Mahfouz holds, argues that an only child is dependent and fails to achieve his dreams and goals. Mahfouz does not only rely on social traditions and heritage; metaphysics also plays a strong role in his work. These engagements with transcendental journeys feature in several of Mahfouz's novels, where the protagonists lead their lives in search of God or an unknown truth. The only novel, amongst those discussed, that is hardly mystical is *The Mirage*. According to many critics, it is a prototypical psychological novel in which Mahfouz presents his own understanding of the Oedipus complex. *The Search* contains a blend of cultural norms and

[3] Victor G. Cicirelli. 'Sibling Relationships with Cross-Culture Perspective'. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol.56, Issue 1, 1994 p.17.

Sufi beliefs. *In the Heart of the Night* and *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma* are influenced by Sufism; however, Mahfouz does not abide by the Sufi rules of solitude. He prefers to define Sufism in terms of companionship.

From a psychological point of view, only children are generally no different from their sibling peers apart from arguably being more independent. Pitkeathley states, 'I get irritated at the tired old stereotypes about only children. They are not necessarily doted on or spoilt any more than other children. Conversely, they are not freaks to be pitied'.[4] On a social level, an only child performs effectively like other children, perhaps even better. American psychologists in the mid-seventies tested the negative stereotypical characteristics of only children with respect to social, psychological and emotional needs in comparison with children who had siblings. The results showed that only children are no different in any marked negative way; in fact, their educational and occupational attainments are higher. The results were as follows:

> Compared to other first borns with siblings, and with individuals of higher birth orders, only children were found to have higher educational levels, occupational status… the data thus do not support the notion that only children are more emotionally or personally handicapped by their lack of siblings.[5]

Only children have always been good subjects for psychologists, psychoanalysts and sociologists to study. The character of an only child can be extroverted and introverted at the same time. The fact that they rely on themselves and their ability to interact socially makes them develop both sets of characteristics. People who are able to do so are called 'ambiverts'; however, not all

[4] Jill Pitkeathley, and David Emerson. *Only Child: How to Survive Being One*. (London: Souvenir Press, 2011) p.2.
[5] Denise F. Polit, et al. 'The Only Child Grows up: A Look at Some Characteristics of Adult Only Children.' *Family Relations*, Vol. 29, no.1, 1980 p.99.

psychologists agree on using this term in regard to only children. According to Alissa D. Eischens's 'The Dilemma of the Only Child', an only child has a special persona. She explains this as follows:

> However, the term 'ambivert' is not accurate in describing only children. To call an only child introverted, extraverted, or ambiverted would be to imply that the child developed into its natural tendency toward that certain personality type with little influence from its environment. Thus, only children are caught in a dilemma. Although environmental influence is not the sole influence in personality development, only children must develop their personalities in unique environmental situations, which force them to act against their natural tendencies in order to function normally. These 'only-verts' then must always at times be acting in ways against their natural tendencies. Perhaps this struggle helps explain some of the common characteristics that emerge among only children, such as the tendency to not participate in many activities but leading the ones in which they do participate or learning to be comfortable being 'loners' by learning to retreat within themselves.[6]

According to Adler, an only child is usually spoiled because of his/her parent's intensive caregiving and attention. This seems like a stereotypical image that many writers and the masses followed. Another similar study on only children has been done by paediatrician M. Kappelman, who has stated that 'only children do not easily assimilate into large groups, and when they do they tend to dominate'.[7]

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[6] Alissa D. Eischens. 'The Dilemma of The Only Child.' *Personality Papers*, 1998.
[7]Murray Kappelman. *Raising the Only Child*. (New York: BookThrift Co., 1975) p.55.

It is possible to apply this psychological theory to Western literature; for example, the English novelist Charles Dickens presents only children similarly. In *Great Expectations,* Pip, the protagonist, is raised as an only child by his older sister, whom he considers a mother; he lives with her and her husband. Although Pip behaves immaturely in some parts of the novel, he demonstrates his ability to improve himself on educational, moral and social levels as he strives to increase his status in society, thus confirming his sense of progress and ambition. The characters in Mahfouz's works who are only children lack ambition, because they are dependent and lost. Another Dickensian example of an only child is David in *David Copperfield*. David's imaginary world, in contrast to that of Mahfouz's character Kamel in *The Mirage*, helps him construct a stable life, rather than causing him to escape life by daydreaming as he fails to confront reality. David's inner dialogue is the following: 'how much of the histories I invented for such people hangs like a mist of fancy over well-remembered facts! When I tread the old ground, I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity, going on before me, an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things'.[8] David's only source of protection is his imagination, and he gains confidence by creating his own world. He has the mental and psychological ability and tolerance to survive his difficult childhood; his survival and strength are two of the main themes in the novel.[9] Estella, an orphan who was raised as an only child by her surrogate mother Miss Havisham, seems arrogant and cold; she was taught to be. Miss Havisham was left on her wedding day, so she raised Estella to be a heart breaker and to torture men. In this case, she is a victim who failed to achieve in life. Estella does not seem weak; on the contrary, she seems proud and unconquered. She is more similar to

[8] Charles Dickens, and Andrew Malcolm. *The Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield, the Younger Charles Dickens* (1812-1870). (London: Dent Rutland, 1993) p.154.
[9] Dickens *David Copperfield* p. 135.

Mahfouz's only child characters than Pip; however, none of Mahfouz's characters who are only children seem arrogant or abusive. Yet the similarity lies in the fact that both Estella and Mahfouz's characters fail to achieve. Miss Havisham teaches Estella to be harsh with men remarking 'break their hearts, my pride and hope, break their hearts, have no mercy.'[10] Another Dickens' character, Sydney Carton, in *A Tale of Two Cities* is an only child. At the beginning of the novel Carton seems lazy and sloppy, but later he establishes heroic traits when acquitting Charles Darnay.[11] Relying on the physical resemblance that they share, he sacrifices his life for Charles. They switch places, and Sydney is executed. Although Carton's character seems weak at the beginning and somehow abject, he turns his misery into bravery, an assertive act that seems implausible of many of Mahfouz's only child characters. These three characters are not handicapped emotionally or doomed to fail. Moreover, there is no direct reference to the fact that they are only children. In other words, being an only child is not an obstacle in Western literature, particularly in Dickensian novels.

Mahfouz prefers Galsworthy's works, particularly *The Forsyte Saga*. El Enany observes that 'he lists Galsworthy, however, among the authors he has read. Equally interesting is Mahfouz's dismissal of Charles Dickens as an author he could not read, in spite of the affinity observed by many critics between a novel like *Midaq Alley* and the typical Dickensian world'.[12] Mahfouz writes about only children in the manner that he does due to the influence of his culture. It may be argued that Dickens has no direct influence on Mahfouz, and that is shown in their respective definitions of only children. Each writer views only children from a different perspective.

[10] Charles Dickens. *Great Expectations*. (London: Barnes Noble, 1994) p.93.
[11] Charles Dickens. *A Tale of Two Cities*. (New York: Random House, 1989).
[12] Rasheed El Enany. *Naguib Mahfouz: His Life and Times*. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007) p.20.

In Islam, the relationships between siblings enhance each other's well-being. Primarily, Moses and his older brother Haroun were indispensable to each other. Haroun was the spokesman for the kings in Ancient Egypt. He was more eloquent than Moses, but Moses had a finer share of wisdom. According to the Quran, God asked Moses to meet the callous Pharaoh King to convey God's message and prophecy. Moses asked God to accompany his brother Haroun, as he was more eloquent. The verse states as follows:

> Go to Firaun! Verily, he has transgressed … O my Lord! Open for me my chest. And ease my task for me. And make loose the knot from my tongue. That they understand my speech. And appoint for me a helper from my family, Harun, my brother; increase my strength with him.[13]

For Mahfouz, being an only child is an obstacle in his characters' lives. It is a fact that Mahfouz appreciated the role of sibling experiences. As was discussed in Chapter One, *Altruism among Siblings*, Mahfouz appreciates the significance of the role of siblings, particularly in *The Beginning and the End*. The idea that brothers act as companions more than rivals helped create Mahfouz's definition of an only child. In other words, the fact that Mahfouz rejects solitude in most cases, makes him underestimate an only child's abilities. In *The Mirage*, Kamel is an archetypal lost and lonely soul without siblings, and he has a strong attachment to his mother. Overall, Kamel may be read as emotionally and socially impaired.

Unfortunately, because sociological studies on only children in Egypt are limited,[14] this study refers to other writers – Mahfouz's contemporaries and those who have followed him – who

[13] *The Translation of the Glorious Quran*. Trans. Ahmad Zidan, and Dina Zidan. (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 1995) (20: 25-9).
[14] See the reference to the interview on Chapter one Mohamed Mohieddin. The Interview.

share his perception of only children. Mahfouz is not the only writer of Egyptian literature who adopted this extreme definition of an only child. Some writers believe that the immaturity of the only child can lead him or her to be evil and ruthless. For instance, in Ehsan Abdel Quddous's *lā ānām* (Sleepless), the protagonist Nadia Lotfy lives with her father after her parents' divorce. Her mother remarries, and Nadia does not visit her mother frequently, especially as a child. Her father raises her as an only child. The novel opens with a letter from Nadia to the writer, Abdel Quddous, who is narrating her story. She starts the letter confessing that she is an evil person, stating that she has failed God as a believer. She enjoys being evil, and it allows her to gain confidence and feel powerful; then she feels guilty and cannot sleep.

She is an unstable character and hates to see others feeling happy and accomplished. As a conventional only child, she relies on her parent for almost everything. When her father decides to remarry, she devises an evil plan to ruin the marriage, although she has not yet met her potential stepmother. Nadia's thoughts about her relationship with her father are revealed in a letter she sends to the writer. She states 'you do not understand. I was not only his daughter. I was his friend and companion. I opened my eyes and found myself with him. After my parents' divorce, my mother left me and remarried. I was only two years old' (my translation).[15] Nadia is similar to Mahfouz's characters in terms of failure. Throughout the novel, Nadia fails to achieve any goal as she puts all her energy into destroying her father's marriage.

Nadia is rebellious, maltreated and immature. Abdel Quddous and Mahfouz share similar assumptions of only children. Abdel Quddous's *La Totfe' Al Shams* (The Sun is Always Shining), which was discussed in previous chapters, demonstrates that having siblings creates a greater

[15] Ehsan Abdel Quddous. lā ānām. (Cairo: dār ālmṣryh āllbnānyh, 2015) p.22.

sense of security and discipline. Although the characters in the novel face many obstacles, Abdel Quddous emphasizes the warmth of the family. The next section examines the character of Kamel, who is an only child, in *The Mirage.*

Kamel in *The Mirage*

The Mirage takes place in the Manial district, a middle-class neighbourhood. It is an unusual district in comparison with the districts that Mahfouz usually chooses, such as Al Midaq or Al Gamalia. The work is a psychological novel.[16] Kamel Ru'ba Laz, the protagonist, narrates his story from an introverted point of view; he 'immerses himself in a daily dreamscape to escape a stifling reality and a pathological attachment to his mother'.[17]

The protagonist narrates his life from birth up to the age twenty-eight when his life takes a tragic turn as both his mother and his wife die on the same day. Kamel's story starts by describing the failure of his parents' arranged marriage. His mother was pregnant while she and his father got divorced. Deprived of her older children, who were under her husband's legal custody, Kamel's mother views Kamel as her possession and the only object of her affection. Kamel describes his mother's attachment to him stating 'my mother would snatch at memories of my sister and brother with a tearful eye and a broken heart, and she yearned passionately to see them if only for an hour. And since, in her sorrow, she found no solace but me, she would set me in her lap and not want me to leave it. Indeed, she would have liked me to make it my entire world'.[18] According to Abraham Brill's *The Basics of Psychoanalysis*, an only child's attachment to

[16] Rasheed El Enany. *Naguib Mahfouz: The Pursuit of Meaning*. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1993).
[17] Omnia El Sharky. *The Arabic Freud*. Princeton University Press, 2017 p. 3.
[18] Naguib Mahfouz. *The Mirage*. Trans. Nancy Roberts. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2009) p.17.

his/her mother is a challenge; Brill states: 'one of the most handicaps the only child has to cope with is his abnormal attachment to the mother, what we call his fixation upon the mother image. As we have said before, every parent puts her stamp, her image on the child'.[19]

Kamel lives in an over-protective environment in that his mother does not allow him to have friends. His only sexual encounter is with his maid, and his mother finds out, which leaves him feeling guilty for the rest of his life. His shyness causes him to leave university because he cannot deliver a speech, and it adversely affects his academic performance. Kamel describes his academic situation as follows: 'on the academic plane, I learnt nothing whatsoever. I suppose the only thing I mastered at Roda National Primary School was the art of measuring time by watching the sunlight move down the classroom walls as I counted the seconds before the bell rang'.[20] His maternal grandfather finds him a post in the government. The time spent at the new job is again humiliating, similar to his school and university days. People do not accept his shyness and find him to be an unusual person. Kamel marries his wife after loving her in silence for a while, and he discovers his impotency days after their wedding. His impotency ends when he meets an unattractive prostitute who reminds him of his maid. His sexually frustrated wife has an affair with her cousin, and she becomes pregnant. Her cousin is a doctor who attempts to perform an abortion for her; however he fails, and she dies during the surgery. After her death, Kamel discovers the circumstances of his wife's death and confronts his mother, blaming her for the first time in his life. On hearing this, Kamel's mother dies immediately, and Kamel must deal with the most important people in his life dying on the same day. Kamel describes his crisis: 'I know nothing about the long hours I spent in a complete coma. However, there were other times

[19] Abraham Arden Brill. *The Basics of Psychoanalysis*. (New York: University Press of America, 1985) p.238.
[20] Mahfouz. *The Mirage* p.31.

in which I would grope about in a darkness that lay somewhere between consciousness and unconsciousness. It was a strange, shadowy world interspersed with dreams. I would get the feeling I was alive, yet so weak and helpless, I was more like the living dead.'[21]

As discussed above, the novel is psychological in tone; and Kamel's strong attachment to his mother is clearly Oedipal in nature. A brief reference to the Oedipus complex was made in Chapter One when discussing altruism. This chapter introduces Freud's and Mahfouz's definitions of the Oedipus complex and highlights the cultural differences in redefining this psychoanalytical term. According to Freud, who coined this term – particularly in his book *Totem and Taboo* (1913) – the Oedipal complex concerns a child's intense desire towards the parents of the opposite sex, particularly sexually. Freud proposed many examples of the Oedipus complex, one of which was Little Hans. Little Hans was a five-year-old boy who feared horses. Initially, Freud did not work directly with Hans, since Hans's father was sending information about Hans to Freud. When Freud met the child and asked him about the horses he feared, Freud realized that the boy feared a certain feature of the horses, namely the black spots on the horse's mouth. According to Freud, these spots bore a resemblance to Hans's father's moustache. Freud concluded the following: 'the boy was afraid that his father would castrate him for desiring the mother'.[22] Freud's interpretation was that the horses in the phobia were symbolic of the father, and that Hans feared that the horse (father) would bite (castrate) him as punishment for the incestuous desires towards his mother'.[23] In contrast to Freud, Adler's definition of the Oedipus complex removes the sexual element. Adler defines the Oedipus complex as follows:

[21] Mahfouz *The Mirage* p. 379.
[22] Sigmund Freud. *Totem and Taboo, and Other Works (1913-1914)*. (London: Hogarth Press, 1995) p.128.
[23] Freud *Totem and Taboo* p. 128-9.

> The Oedipus complex could appear only in a child who wished to occupy his mother's whole attention and get rid of everyone else. Such a desire is not sexual. It is a desire to subjugate the mother, to have complete control of her and to make her into a servant. It can occur only with children who have been pampered by their mothers and whose feeling of fellowship has never included the rest of the world. In rare cases, it has happened that a boy who had always remained connected only with his mother, made her the center also of his attempts to meet the problem of love and marriage; but the meaning of such an attitude would be that he could not conceive of cooperation with anyone but his mother. No other woman could be trusted to be equally subservient. An Oedipus complex would thus be always an artificial product of mistaken training. We have no need to suppose inherited incestuous instincts, or, indeed, to imagine that such an aberration, in its origin, has anything to do with sexuality.[24]

This psychoanalytical theory has some objectors including Deleuze and Guattari who co-wrote *Anti-Oedipus* (1975). They present a critique of the theory of the Oedipus complex, interpreting it in terms of social and capitalist views. Their theory makes the case that an 'Oedipal complex is a colonizing force. The Oedipal framework colonizes and represses the desires of the members of the society, and moreover, capitalism has an integral role'.[25] Their theory is based on one main factor: parents acting as masters and the child acting as the worker. According to *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari agree with Bergson's notion of open society. Bergson first coined the term 'open society' in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1935) in French in 1932;

[24] Alfred Adler, Alan Porter ed. *What Life Should Mean to You*. (London: Unwin, 1961) p.96.
[25] Gillies Deleuze, and Felix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus*. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013) p.129.

then it was translated into English in 1935. Bergson perceives an open society with its base of freedom and human rights as the model for the development and improvement of mankind. The notion of an open society encourages individuals to play an active role in it. Like Mahfouz, Bergson believes that the necessary role of intellect is namely acting , as he writes, 'to transform matter into an instrument of action'.[26] Deleuze and Guattari explain the impact of the repression of the family on society: 'It is one and the same movement that the repressive social production is replaced by the "repressing" family, and that the latter offers a displaced image of desiring production that represents the repressed as incestuous familial drives'.[27] The implication is that Freud deflects a consideration of social oppression through his model of psychic repression.

It is worth noting that Henri Bergson also had an impact on Mahfouz's works. Bergson's notions are found in many of Mahfouz's novels. El Enany states 'Bergson's influence on Mahfouz was indeed tremendous. The philosopher's most telling impact on Mahfouz's thought was probably in the sphere of his ideas on time and memory. Bergson's notion of "duration", of time as a continuum, a perpetual flux, lies at the very foundation of *The Trilogy*.'[28] El Enany adds 'another Bergsonian notion active in Mahfouz's creations is perhaps that of the "two moralities". Bergson defines two sources for morality, one based on "intelligence"and the other on "intuition". It is the second one that is of concern here since it finds "its expression not only in the creativity of art and philosophy but also in the mystical experience of the saint"'.[29] Mahfouz, like Bergson, believes in 'the mystical experience of the saints'. Even Kamel, the character who does not rely on religious beliefs, tends to act as a Sufi in one or two scenes in *The Mirage* .

[26] Henri Bergson, et al. *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. (New York: Doubleday, 1956) p.145.
[27] Deleuze *Anti-Oedipus* p. 130.
[28] El Enany *Mahfouz: His Life and Times* p. 17
[29] Ibid, p. 17.

Michel Foucault wrote the preface of *Anti-Oedipus* and he states, '*Anti-Oedipus* shows first of all how much ground has been covered. But it does much more than that. It wastes no time in discrediting the old idols, even though it does have a great deal of fun with Freud. Most important, it motivates us to go further'.[30]

Anti-Oedipus introduces a life without fascism. Referring to the conformity that the work confronts, Mark Seem comments that 'such a set of beliefs, Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate, such a herd instinct, is based on the desire to be led, the desire to have someone else legislate life'.[31]

Seem adds that 'the term "oedipalization" creates a new meaning for suffering, internal suffering, a new tone for life: the depression tone. The Depression and Oedipus are agencies of paranoia, agencies of power, long before being delegated to the family. Oedipus is the figure of power, long before being delegated to the family'.[32]

According to Seem's 'To Oedipalize Or Not To Oedipalize, That is The Question', 'to be anti-Oedipal is to be anti-ego, willfully attacking all reductive psychoanalytical and political analyses which remain caught in the sphere of totality and unity, in order to free multiplicity from the deadly oedipal. For Oedipus is the figurehead of imperialism, Oedipus is colonization'.[33] In the light of this, it could be claimed that Kamel has been colonized; he is trapped by his mother's strings, and he wishes to free himself. He never admits his desire for liberation; however, readers can sense his desire from his inner dialogues and developed imagination. He is torn between obeying and pleasing his mother and being independent. He

[30] Deleuze *Anti Oedipus* p. 17.
[31] Mark Seem. 'To Oedipalize or Not to Oedipalize, that is the Question. *Substance*, Vol. 4, no. 11/12, 1975.
[32] Seem p. 166.
[33] Seem p. 167.

demonstrates his independence by insisting on marrying the girl he admires, while he still attempts to follow his mother's instructions on how to be a strict husband in order to satisfy his mother. This causes a dilemma for him and mixed emotions since he loves and hates his mother simultaneously. Kamel confesses his feelings of love and hate towards his mother in this passage:

> My mother and my life were one and the same. My mother's life in this world has ended, but it still lies hidden in the depths of my own. Hardly can I think of any aspect of my life without her beautiful, loving face appearing before me. She stands ever and always behind both my hopes and my sufferings, behind both my love and my hatred. She gave me more happiness than I could ever have hoped for, and more misery that I could ever have imagined.[34]

The next section considers the representation and significance of the Oedipus complex.

Oedipus Complex in World Literature

Freud coined the term the Oedipus complex after he was inspired by the Greek tragedy *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles. The story is about Oedipus who becomes King of Thebes. He foresees a prophecy that he will kill his father and marry his mother. Fulfilling this prophecy leads to his disastrous end.[35] The tragedy is an important one in Greek mythology. Many writers worldwide have written about Oedipus, changing some aspects of the legend. According to Ernest Jones, Freud's colleague and friend, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* may be read in this light. In Jones's work *Hamlet and Oedipus*, Hamlet is a good and wise character similar to Oedipus the King. Hamlet's

[34] *The Mirage* p. 4
[35] Sophocles. *Oedipus the King*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949).

refusal to kill his uncle who killed Hamlet's father and replaced him is a sign of repression. He cannot kill his uncle because of his intense repressed love for his mother. In Egyptian literature, the Egyptian playwright and novelist Tawfik Al Hakim wrote a play entitled *King Oedipus*. Al Hakim is a pioneer of what is known as the 'theatre of the mind'; this was a brave writing step for Al Hakim.[36] This term was used to emphasize the difficulty of acting his plays on stage. He explains in an interview: 'today I'm creating a theatre of the mind. I'm turning actors into ideas moving into symbols, wearing the masks of symbolism. Therefore, the space between the stage and I is widening, and I have no place for my ideas except in the publishing sector'.[37]

Mahfouz's Definition of the Oedipus Complex

Mahfouz redefines the formation of the Oedipus complex. He highlights the sacredness of the roles of both parents throughout *The Mirage*, giving the mother a significant role while presenting the absent father as the main cause for the complex. As discussed above, Kamel's mother is the core of his life. At the beginning of his teenage years, his first sexual attempt with his maid ends tragically. His mother reacts dramatically by beating him and calling him a sinner. This incident enhances his sense of shame and shyness and causes him to become isolated. Kamel and his mother share one bed until he reaches the age of twenty. His maternal grandfather insists on putting a separate bed for Kamel in the same room. His grandfather cynically disapproves of his daughter's behaviour. He mocks Kamel most of the time, adding some humour to the house.

[36] Tawfik Al Hakim. *Plays, Prefaces and Postscripts: Theatre of the Mind*. Trans. W.M. Hutchins. (Three Continents Press, 1981).
[37] Al Hakim p. 21.

Kamel experiences three stages of humiliation: the first one starts in school when his colleagues mock him for being absentminded and extremely shy. He completes primary school only at the age of seventeen because he keeps repeating school years. He rarely concentrates in class and prefers to daydream of a better life. Some of his dreams include his mother and others reject her presence. He sits in the back of the class to hide. The second stage of humiliation starts in university, where he finds it difficult to deliver a speech in law school. At that age, he starts to have sexual fantasies of the maid who seduced him in the past. He uses this fantasy to alleviate his own tensions and stress. The third stage lies in deciding to marry the girl of his dreams. For Kamel, marriage is another way of fantasizing, thinking that he will escape his mother's prison. According to Julia Kristeva, the first encounter with 'abjection' starts with the separation of the child from the mother. Kristeva explains 'the abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or law: but turns them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them'.[38]

One's deep devotion to one's mother is almost religious. According to the Prophet Mohammed the most important person in a Muslim's life is one's mother. He repeats the word 'mother' three times for emphasis, and then he ends his saying by mentioning the father. The saying states that 'a man came to the prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and asked him, "who amongst his near one had the greatest right over him?" The prophet replied, "your mother". The man then asked, "Who after that?" to which the prophet replied again, "your mother." Asked who is next? The Prophet replied, "your mother"; when the man asked who after that, the Prophet said, "your father"'.[39]

[38] Julia Kristeva. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) p.15.
[39] Abdul Raheem Kidwai. *Daily Wisdom: Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad* (Leicestershire. Kube Publishing Ltd, 2010) p. 5.

Another saying is ‘heaven lies under the feet of your mother’.[40] Although, the role of the mother seems to be incomparable, the father's role is still not a weak one. According to Islam, the word ‘orphan’ is only linked to the father’s death and means the ‘deprived’.[41] For Mahfouz, he presents the role of the father as important in many of his works. For instance, the novel *The Beginning and the End* starts with the death of the father as a beginning to the death of the family. The father is described as caring and lenient. In *Khan El Khalili*, the father does not play a strong role as the older brother replaces him in many situations, which helps in building the unity of the family.

Although many critics believe that *The Mirage* is a psychological novel, El Enany argues that the novel has both social and intellectual aspects. He comments: ‘I would argue that, read at a deeper level, *The Mirage* will fall well within the mainstream of Mahfouz's social and intellectual concerns. It should not be difficult to see in Kamel's psychological illness a metaphor for a whole society fixated on its cultural past, and too impotent to free itself from it’.[42] El Enany believes Mahfouz is introducing the dichotomy between old and new for the third time. He firstly discusses this dichotomy in The *Khan El Khalili* and *Midaq Alley* as the struggle between old and new traditions in an increasingly scientific world. According to Fatma Osman’s thesis twẓyf ālṣwfyh fy lārwāyh ālmṣryh (Engaging Sufism in the Egyptian Literature), Kamel is considered to be a semi-Sufi character. She bases her argument on one of Kamel’s inner dialogues during his recovery phase following the death of his mother and wife.[43] Kamel states,

[40] Kidwai *Daily Wisdom* p.345.
[41] Jafar Hasan. ‘Orphans in Islam.’ *Ahlulbayt Islamic Mission*, 9 Jul 2014. < http://www.aimislam.com/orphans-in-islam/> [accessed 1 March 2018].
[42] El Enany *Mahfouz: His Life and Times* p. 61.
[43] Fatma Osman. twẓyf ālṣwfyh fy lārwāyh ālmṣryh. (Masters thesis. Mania University: 2004).

> But where was I to find such happiness? And on what basis could I hold out such false hopes? I hadn't been made for any of this. Rather, I'd been made for Sufism. It was strange to find this word inadvertently coming to mind. Yet it wasn't long before I'd taken hold of it, albeit with astonishment and uncertainty. Sufism? I wasn't even sure exactly what it was. However, I did know that it involved solitude, abstention, and contemplation. And how badly I needed those things. Strange…hadn't I complained of too much solitude throughout the time I'd been bedridden? The fact of the matter, however, is that I hadn't been complaining about the kind of solitude I'd been accustomed to throughout my life. Rather, the kind of solitude I'd been familiar with before, I craved it badly. First of all, though, I would have to cleanse my body both inside and out, then devote my heart to heaven. For in reality, I'd been created a Sufi, but life's desires and attachments had led me astray.[44]

It seems that Kamel has a dream of a Sufi rather than being a Sufi. In other words, his isolation, which is the only common trait between him and Sufism, is an act of shyness more than worshipping God. For a Sufi, isolating oneself is a purification act based on surrendering to God rather than a rejection of the world. Kamel treats Sufism as a crutch, not as a way of life.

The Search: **Another Aimless Only Child Character**

Mahfouz starts introducing Sufism into his work Zaabalawi in Dunyat Allah, a collection of short stories. The character is a loner who leaves everything to pursue a transcendental journey. The collection was published in 1963, a year after *The Search* was published.[45] *The Search* is a

[44] Mahfouz *The Mirage* p. 389.
[45] El Enany Mahfouz: *His Life and Times* p. 97.

blend of socio-religious traditions and Sufism. In *The Search*, the protagonist Saber is looking for his father; this could be a metaphor of searching for God or any other goal. Mahfouz also includes this theme in another novel *The Beggar* (1965): Omar El Hamzawi, a successful lawyer, decides to change his route from a materialistic to a metaphysical one. He asks the ultimate question, 'don't we live our life knowing full well that it is going to be taken away by God?'[46]

According to Mamdouh El Naby's '*Waiting for Godot* ālṣādq) w tʿdd ālrwy fy ālsrāb (the honest and the Multiplicity of the Visions in *The Search*'), Saber is searching for God and the father he longs for is divine. He is looking for God, and, at the same time, he believes that God will come to him. El Naby states 'when Saber is asked about coming to Cairo from Alexandria, Saber says "I'm here to look for a man, who I consider everything in my life." He describes the man as follows: "I'm looking for Sayed Sayed El Rahemy." The name comes from mastery and the last name "Rahemy" comes from mercy'.[47] The name thus includes two divine traits.

Saber falls for two women at the same time, Elham and Karima. When talking to the latter about their love affair he states, 'our love is worthless without my father'.[48] Raised as a child in a wealthy environment, Saber is a symbol of hedonism. His belly dancer mother tried to prevent him from living an immoral life. Saber is uneducated and spends his time enjoying the pleasures of life. In the opening scene of the novella, Saber is burying his mother Basima. He seems lost in a circle of wailing women; he experiences the meaning of loneliness. Mahfouz describes his state of sadness as follows: 'he decided that as of today he would know life as it really was. He was lonely, without friends, work, or family, and he was left with nothing but a dreamlike hope. He

[46] Naguib Mahfouz. *The Beggar*. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1987) p.9.
[47]Mamdouh El Naby. 'Waiting for Godot (ālṣādq) w tʿdd ālrwy fy ālsrāb. (dwryh Naguib Mahfouz, 2010) p.46.
[48] Naguib Mahfouz. *The Search*. Trans. Mohamed Islam. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000) p.19.

must as of this moment fend for himself; that was previously his mother's domain, and he had been free to enjoy life to the fullest'.[49] The night before his mother's death, after she was released from the prison, Saber accompanies his mother Basima to their house. She tells him for the first time about his father who is still alive. He hears this version of his father's story in shock, since he was told as a child that his father had passed away before his birth. His father comes from a wealthy family who rejected his marriage to Basima, since she was a poor belly dancer. His father paid no attention to his family's advice and married Basima. Basima, who describes herself as young and reckless, left her husband and escaped with a bully who lived in their alley.

While Saber searches for his father, he meets two women; for Mahfouz this means two paths, one good and the other bad. Although Saber never fully lived in his mother's corrupted environment, he chooses the bad woman who resembles his mother. The first woman is Karima. She is the wife of the inn's owner, an old man in his seventies. The second woman is Elham, a decent young journalist who helps Saber find his father by making a newspaper ad. Saber enjoys Elham's company as she presents him with a new trait, innocence, which he has yet to experience with other people; however, he is addicted to Karima, particularly physically. The descriptions of both women emphasize the gap between them. Elham is described as 'slim and elegant', while Karima is described as 'vulgar'.[50] Karima visits him in his room every night. He agrees to kill her husband for money and love especially after he begins to lose hope of ever finding his father. Saber dreams of both Elham and Karima; in the dream Elham is his sister and Karima his lover. Mahfouz suggests that a pure and good fate is forbidden for Saber; he is instead destined for a

[49] Mahfouz *The Search* p. 3.
[50] Mahfouz *The Mirage* p. 22.

criminal path. Saber expresses his inner thoughts about both women: 'Elham. You're nothing but a constant torture pain. As for Karima, you are linked in a bloody tie that will be broken only with death. Your need for her is like a maddening hunger that keeps you in a constant hell. You'll find a way of contacting her. You must!'[51] He then proceeds to kill Karima's husband while simultaneously maintaining his belief that his father is going to save him both from his fate and from his prison cell.

In relation to the above, Saber is like Bernard Shaw's character Higgins in *Pygmalion*. Higgins sees his mother in most of the girls he meets. Here is a short dialogue between Higgins and his mother.

> Higgins: I have picked up a girl.
>
> Mrs. Higgins: Does that mean that some girl has picked you up?
>
> Higgins: Not at all. I don't mean a love affair.
>
> Mrs. Higgins: Will you never fall in love with anyone under forty-five years? When will you discover that there are some rather nice-looking young women about?
>
> Higgins: I cannot be bothered with young ones. My idea of a woman is someone as much like you as possible; some habits lie too deeply to be changed.[52]

This example can be easily applied to Saber. He chooses someone like his mother. Kamel and Saber are characters doomed to fail as they are both fixated on their mothers. The father role, although non-existent imposes itself in its absence as the idealized figure of the father. For Kamel, it is a shock to hear about his father's attempt to kill his grandfather; he never discusses

[51] Mahfouz *The Mirage* p. 111.
[52] George Bernard Shaw. *Pygmalion*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2003) p.51.

this with anyone. He does not even confront the matter himself, but he reveals the story to his older brother when their mother dies. He suddenly remembers the story and states, ‘our family is inflicted with the "parent killing syndrome"! Our father tried to kill our grandfather and he failed. Then I tried to kill our mother, and I succeeded. And thus, you can see that I was more successful than my father’.[53] For Saber, his father’s existence creates confusion, hope and despair. His father is the core of his life. Saber strives to meet his father in order to maintain his luxurious lifestyle. It could be argued that there is a resemblance between Saber and Oedipus Rex in that both characters commit crimes during their quests. Both fail to rely on their fathers. They bemoan for their fathers' disappearances and presences at the same time. As for the mothers, who are fundamentally different from each other, they still play the strongest parts in the lives of Saber and Oedipus.

Saber refuses to look for a job as he believes that the search for his father is the goal. Elham is a hard-working journalist who refuses to contact her father after he abandoned her and her mother. She finds that her job replaces her father. This is the question that Mahfouz puts to society about the relationship between the individual and the community: what is the right balance between being independent and being an active member in the society? Saber is looking for the tripartite of ‘freedom, dignity and security.’ He refers to them many times throughout the novel, and he expects that it is the father’s duty to provide them. There is also symbolism here that relates to the politics of 1960’s Egypt. El Enany comments:

> Its protagonist's futile search for ‘freedom, dignity and security’ is no different from the national quest of modern Egyptians. But one must be careful not to read

[53] Mahfouz *The Mirage* p. 377.

> too much politics into this novel. In fact, of all the 1960's novels, this is the one with the least direct bearing on the political reality of the day. It is only in *The Search* that the above tripartite quest is transplanted from its habitual socio-political context to a metaphysical one.[54]

In the previous chapters, Mahfouz's resentment of Nasser's regime in the sixties was discussed; however, *The Search* is the only novel that clarifies what Egyptian society needed in this era. It is an indication that the people, who mostly supported the 1952 revolution, were still looking for a way to search for this tripartite; they too felt a sense of displacement like Saber. Mahfouz's opinion of Nasser's regime particularly during the mid-sixties is concerned with the downfall of people's expectations. In 1983, Mahfouz published his book *Before The Throne: A Debate with Egypt's Men From Menes to Anwar Sadat*. The book discusses Egypt's political history starting from 5,000 years ago, the time of Menes, the great King of the first dynasty. Osiris, King of Egypt is responsible for the judgement of the leaders. Similar to Dante, Mahfouz divides the afterlife into hell or purgatory and heaven or 'eternity'. Mahfouz's anger at Nasser's regime, particularly the involvement in the Yemen war, is clear in Nasser's trial in the book. The Yemen war began in 1962 and ended at the beginning of 1968, almost the same time as the publication of *The Search*. El Enany narrates the trial:

> A good example is the trial of Nasser, for whom Mahfouz evidently has more rebuke than praise. According to the regulations of Osiris's court, rulers accorded a place in heaven automatically occupy a seat as members of the jury, as it were, and are involved in trying subsequent rulers. Thus, we have Mustafa al Nahas, the

[54] El Enany *Mahfouz: His Life and Times* p. 97.

> great Wafdist leader was thrown into oblivion by Nasser after a quarter of a century at the head of the Egyptian national struggle before 1952, railing at Nasser, you did away with freedom and human rights. I do not deny that you brought security for the poor, but you were the destruction of the intellectuals – the vanguard of the nation. They were detained, imprisoned and killed indiscriminately until they lost their sense of human dignity and initiative. If you were only more moderate in your ambitions! Developing the Egyptian village was more important than adopting the revolutions of the world; sponsoring scientific research was more important than the Yemen campaign; fighting illiteracy was more important than fighting international imperialism. Alas! You have lost the country an opportunity which it had never had before.[55]

The Yemen war was controversial because many Egyptians supported Nasser's decision to engage in the war while others were violently against it. Sami Sharaf (the president's secretary)believes that the Yemen war was not a mistake and the number of losses were fewer than people thought. Sharaf adds that Egypt's involvement voluntarily aimed to help Yemenis in fighting the tyranny of Yemen's king and the colonizers.[56]

With respect to the above, Mahfouz perceives Egyptian society as being similar to Saber: lost and searching for a new way. He chooses to use an only child character to depict this, since, for Mahfouz, he or she is a lost soul aimlessly searching for a path. In relation to this, given Mahfouz's association of Sufism with an only child character, one may wonder whether his definition of Sufism is social, political or both.

[55] El Enany *Mahfouz: His Life and Times* p. 47-8.
[56] ' Sami Sharaf ywḍḥ: msʾwlyh ḥrb ālymn ʿn hrb 67 wʿn dywn msṛ'. ālwʿy ālʿrby Magazine, 21 Mar 2018.

As his novels demonstrate, Mahfouz was fond of relating social life to politics. He relies on socio-economic and political circumstances to develop the characters and the story. Mahfouz believes that members of society should be equals and not model themselves on a parent-child relationship; accordingly, Mahfouz's definition of Sufism may be read as a social political one. Mahfouz perceives society as one body that must work to confront the social political upheavals. For instance, in his works oppression is seen in the family, particularly in *The Trilogy*: Abdel Gawad, the father, brutally abuses his power, and he treats his family members as prisoners. Mahfouz is not just a didactic writer. His novels do not only address his personal views; rather, they engage in an intellectual conversation and raise questions for the reader. As discussed in the introduction, Mahfouz's works can be perceived as examples of Bildungsroman in many cases.

When a colonized society gains independence, the outcome of freedom can be chaotic. According to Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, 'to wreck the colonial world is henceforward a mental picture action which is very clear, very easy to understand and which may be assumed by each one of the individuals which constitute the colonized people. To break up the colonial world does not mean that after the frontiers have been abolished lines of communication will be set up between the two zones. The destruction of the colonial world is no more and no less that the abolition of one zone, its burial in the depths of the earth or its expulsion from the country'.[57]

The identities and values of the colonized are ruined and buried; therefore, leaders who rule the countries after decolonization or liberation have incomplete missions. They are affected by colonizers unintentionally. They fought the enemy but still the enemy's values and practice of power are still in the minds of those who are colonized. Fanon states that 'the native intellectual

[57] Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. (London: Penguin, 2001) p.121.

has clothed his aggressiveness in his barely veiled desire to assimilate himself to the colonial world. He has used his aggressiveness to serve his own individual interests'.[58]

Fanon adds the following:

> Let us take, for example, the case of the governments of recently liberated countries. The men at the head of affairs spend two-thirds of their time watching the approaches and trying to anticipate the dangers which threaten them, and the remaining one-third of their time working for their country. They also look for allies to support them in their ruthless ventures into sedition. The atmosphere of violence, after having colored all the colonial phase, continues to dominate national life. It is true to say that independence has brought moral compensation to colonized peoples, and has established their dignity. But they have not yet had time to elaborate a society, or to build up and affirm values.[59]

Therefore, the violence practiced by the native leader is an act of patriarchy, which infantilizes the people. It is a system Mahfouz rejects, since the natives are as lost as the only children in his works. Abdel Nasser, who is seen as a nationalist hero by many, has practiced oppression, particularly when denying people the freedom of speech, which was discussed in previous chapters. Thus, the independence of the only child character is a matter of the independence of the nation. In other words, it is arguable that the state of the only child characters is similar to the state of the colonized, where they struggle to stand on their own. They spend their lives relying on others, and when they finally gain their independence, they lose balance.

[58] Fanon *Wretched of the Earth* p. 122.
[59] Fanon *Wretched of the Earth* p. 124.

Defining Sufism

It seems difficult to define Sufism because it is entirely related to faith in God and the prophet Mohammed, and while some people believe in both, they still do not call themselves Sufis. According to many Sufis, a Sufi is 'a traveller on the path back to his maker'.[60] It is about the complete devotion to God and surrendering to His will, leaving many life desires aside. A Sufi is not a person who feels complete by practicing the main rituals of Islam; he is one who seeks a deep connection with God. Ibn Arabi, one of the main theorists of Sufism, posits: 'you are obliged to seek out more than this. After this comes "work", greater attentiveness, asceticism, and trust. After these stations only may come the fruits of holiness: performance of miracles and revelations. These gifts will not be granted typical seekers'.[61] According to Ayman El Desouky's *Khalil Gibran: An Illustrated Anthology*, Gibran believes that the devout believer has one goal: seeking God. Gibran writes: 'the soul seeks God even as heat seeks the height, or water seeks the sea. The power to seek and the desire to seek are the inherent properties of the soul'.[62] It is possible to apply this to a Sufi: his only source of satisfaction is reaching God.

In order to highlight the role of alienation and solitude, a Sufi scholar states: 'the aim of Sufism is the elimination of all veils between the individual and God. Traveling the path, one acquires knowledge of reality. God is the ultimate reality, not this phenomenal world of multiplicity'.[63] In Sufism, self-knowledge assists in the exploration of God. The Sufi philosopher Al Ghazzali has commented, 'real self-knowledge consists in knowing the following things: what are you in

[60] Mark Sedgwick. *Sufism: The Essentials*. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2003) p.5.
[61] Ibn Arabi *Journey to the Lord of Power* p. 50.
[62] Ayman El Desouky. *Khalil Gibran: An Illustrated Anthology*. (Grove: Spruce, 2010) p.59.
[63] James Fadiman, and Robert Frager. *Essential Sufism*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1999).

yourself and where did you come from? Where are you going and what purpose are you tarrying here a while?'[64]

In order to be a Sufi, there are some rules and rituals one must know and follow, starting with a discussion of the doctrine or creed of faith. According to James Fadiman's *Essential Sufism*, the doctrine of faith and stages of Sufism are:

> The creed of faith:
>
> The Islamic creed of faith includes the fundamental beliefs that are basic tenets of Sufism:
>
> I believe in God,
>
> And in God's angels,
>
> And in the Holy Books,
>
> And in God's messengers,
>
> And in the Day of Resurrection,
>
> And in destiny,
>
> That all good and bad come from God,
>
> And that there is life after this life.[65]

Although love is one of the basics of Sufism, for Mahfouz it is not a highlight in his spiritual novels. None of Mahfouz's only child characters search for love. Most of them search for

[64] Fadiman p. 11.
[65] Fadiman p. 16.

identity and security, with the exception of Jafaar in *The Heart of the Night*, and Ibn Fattouma in his travels. Each of these characters has a strong interest in learning about life and its secrets. The reason that Mahfouz ignored the role of love in his spiritual novels might be that generally in Mahfouz's works, love is a secondary theme. Mahfouz once stated his preference for politics: 'you will find politics in everything I write. You may find a story that is devoid of love, or anything else, but not of politics, because that is the axis of all our thought. The political conflict is always there'.[66] In addition to this, Mahfouz defined Sufism in a social context, in terms of its significance and benefits to the society. Mahfouz sees the good will of Sufism as beneficial to wider society.

The life of a Sufi seems to be predicated on an idealism that some might consider unrealistic. We find stories that capture the essence of the love of God, for instance the Bedouin story that states: 'a Bedouin was once asked how he could believe so strongly in a God he could not see. The man replied, "if you see the tracks of a camel in the desert, do you have to wait to see the camel itself before believing it exist?"'[67]

The Sufi believes that his or her vocation is to feel peace of mind and to follow the path of God. Fadiman argues 'the task of the Sufi is to polish the mirror of oneself so that it can catch the reflection of heaven during life-unmisted, undistorted, and in all its glory'.[68] A Sufi's love creates a sense of sacrifice and altruism for the sake of pleasing the other. One of the Sufi stories states 'a thief entered the house of a Sufi and found nothing there to steal. As he was leaving, the dervish, sensing his disappointment, threw him the blanket on which he had been lying'.[69] It is

[66] Gamal al-Ghitani. *The Mahfouz Dialogs*. Trans. Humphrey Davies. (Cairo: AUC Press, 2007).
[67] Fadiman p. 106.
[68] Fadiman p. 26.
[69] Fadiman p. 119.

highly unusual in our world to think in this way: to feel pity for a thief, instead of hate and disgust. But this is how a Sufi perceives the sinner. He follows intuition instead of making moral judgments. The Sufi feels empathetic towards the sinner and thinks of him/her as a lost soul who needs assistance and not as criminal who deserves punishment.

Valerie J. Hoffman's *Sufism, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt* explains the pleasures the Sufi feels towards practicing Sufism: 'If a servant of God dies to his passions and the desires of his soul, and his desires follow the teachings of the Prophet, he is continually elevated in this world and in barzakh (where the spirits of the dead wait the resurrection of the body) and in the next world. Acts of worship and good deeds are a pleasure and honor for him, not an onerous duty. This is the true Sufi'.[70]

According to Hoffman, Sufism has played a crucial role in Egypt for centuries. Starting in the twelfth century, Sufi orders controlled many aspects of Muslims' lives. For instance, Shaykhs had more than a titular role, since they were counsellors and healers. Modern Islamism was popularized by a well-known and controversial scholar named Mohamed Abdou. Abdou, who rebelled against the traditional educational system of Al Azhar, believed that there is a wide breach between western intellectualism and Islamic traditions.[71] He argued that the Quran could be a guiding text for modern society, but that it needs to be studied differently. He thought that Islamic scholars should concentrate on the spiritual and scientific sides of the Quran to help Egyptian society flourish. Abdou's argument was not acceptable in Al Azhar; however, many intellectuals and scholars have adopted his theory. Abdou's theory encourages thinking similar to that of Al Akkad. As discussed in Chapter One, Al Akkad states that thinking is obligatory in

[70] Valerie J. Hoffman. *Sufism, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009) p. 1.
[71] Hoffman *Sufism, Mystics, and Saints in Modern Egypt* p. 6.

Islam. Abdel Halim Mahmoud refers to many Quranic verses to support his argument. These kinds of scholars have shaped the new modern Sufism that Mahfouz admired. It seems that there are two schools of Sufism: the traditional one, where Sufis abide blindly to the Sufi orders and completely leave all their desires aside; and the second kind, where the concept of thinking is dominant. The next section examines Mahfouz's understanding of Sufism.

Mahfouz's Perception of Sufism

According to Ayman El Guindy's 'ālṣwfyh fy āʿmāl mḥfwẓ ālādbyh' (Sufism in Mahfouz's fictional work), Mahfouz experienced a Sufi journey himself; this is clear in many of his works until he wrote *The Travels of Ibn Fatouma*. El Guindy writes that, 'Naguib Mahfouz's hesitation completely ends when he writes *Ibn Fatouma,* which is about a pious traveller who leaves home angry at the misconceptions of Islam on the part of certain Muslims to Islam. When he hears el azan happily after an extended period of estrangement, it is a strong symbol of faith (2012) (my translation).[72]

The question arises: why is it that the only child in each work is the only character that undergoes a Sufi journey in Mahfouz's writings? Traditionally, Sufism's main theme is solitude, which Mahfouz rejects, and therein lies the reason behind the failure of most of the characters who are only children in his works. The less interactive the person is, the less successful he/she becomes in many aspects of life – socially, intellectually, ethically and sometimes even physically. It is difficult to analyse the only child syndrome in Mahfouz's works without including *The Mirage*. It is not a Sufi novel but still presents a detailed work that focuses on the

[72] Ayman El Guindy. 'ālṣwfyh fy āʿmāl mḥfwẓ ālādbyh.' ālmṣry ālywm. Aug 2012.

only child character and his relationship with his mother. It is a typical psychoanalytical novel in which Mahfouz redefines the Oedipus complex as my analysis has shown.

Hussein Hammoda, Arabic professor at Cairo University, argues that Mahfouz's novels that deal with the 'only child syndrome' are metaphysical rather than political. Most of the protagonists in the novels are undergoing a spiritual journey to find themselves and to find God. During an interview, the question arose as to why Mahfouz links solitude to one's inner journey rather than politics; Hammoda suggests that politics and society are intertwined for Mahfouz, and society cannot be built on solitude. Hammoda argues 'Mahfouz believed the sense of individualism and solitude were never highlighted in the Egyptian society except when people started to follow political parties. The political parties may seem as an idea of connecting people; however, for Mahfouz, it is the beginning of individualism, which did not last for long in Egypt. In addition, I believe this theory of Mahfouz about solitude and transcendent journeys raises these two questions: what is the relationship between society and the individual? And what are the limits of this relationship?'[73]

For Mahfouz, long-term solitude is rejected. An individual needs society as much as society needs him/her. In *Echoes of an Autobiography* (1994), Mahfouz offers a clear example of the compatibility of companionship with Sufism by introducing the character of Abd Raboh Al Taha. He is a Sufi with an interactive role in his alley. His name means the lost slave of God. It is a direct message from Mahfouz that the divine journey is endless, and no matter how much a person might believe he has reached somewhere or something, he will suddenly realize that he is lost again. Mahfouz's definition of Sufism is linked to the needs of the individual but not to the

[73]I interviewed Hussein Hammoda, a professor of Arabic Studies at Cairo University. The interview took place at the Opera house on the 4th of February 2015. Hammoda publishes an annual journal in Arabic entitled 'The Cycle of Mahfouz'.

individual in isolation. It is about impartiality and sublimation and concerns a balance of independence and social integration. He puts forward a new concept of Sufism allows the Sufi to engage with the non-Sufi, similar to how different religions engage with each other in society. Being part of society means accepting the 'other', which Mahfouz longed for. According to Kumiko Yagi, Arabic professor at the University of Tokyo, in her book *Naguib Mahfouz's 'Socialistic Sufism": An Intellectual Journey from the Wafd to Islamic Mysticism*, accepting the 'other' is a main factor in socialism. Yagi explains the term as follows:

> Socialistic Sufism is an ideology that maintains that the strong spirituality of individuals brings about and sustains a righteous society and offers the specific possibility that people of different religious traditions can live together as Egyptians, mutually respecting the right of 'others' to differ in religion, while it recognizes that Egypt is a society where Islam is dominant.[74]

Clearly, the definition states that 'accepting the other' is a socialistic trait. There is no need to attach such a trait to socialism; in other words, the concept that people of different religious traditions can live together in harmony can be identified in the Islamic faith before it became prominent in socialism. According to the Quran, Surat Al Hujarat (The Rooms) states 'O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other not that ye may despise each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you. And Allah had full knowledge and is well acquainted will all things'.[75]

[74] Kumiko Yagi. *Naguib Mahfouz's 'Socialistic Sufism': An Intellectual Journey from the Wafd to Islamic Mysticism.* (Harvard University, 2001) p.35.
[75] *The Translation of the Glorious Quran* (49:13).

The next section discusses the effects of religion on secularism, particularly for Mahfouz.

Mahfouz's Views of Secularism in Egypt

Mahfouz's vision of Sufism and the role of religion raises questions regarding the effect of secularism on Middle Eastern societies, particularly in Egypt. In a crisis, hesitation plays an important role in one's identity, since people question everything, even their belief in God; however, this is not entirely unacceptable in religion. According to the Quran, all humans are sinners and hesitant, and the favoured are the ones who seek atonement. Two verses discuss forgiveness in Surat Al Shura as follows:

> It is he who accepts repentance from his servants and pardons evil acts.[76]
>
> Ask forgiveness for their bad actions and who can forgive bad actions except Allah.[77]

Since Mahfouz humanized God and wrote about the prophets, he has been viewed as a largely secular figure. It is easy to demonstrate that Mahfouz believed in secularism. Some of his novels, such as *The Trilogy*, encourage critical thinking and freedom of speech. Kamal's struggle is clear: his father's dual life causes Kamal's uncertainty about his faith in God. These kinds of characters led many critics to argue that Mahfouz was a secular writer; however, there is a clear aspect of Mahfouz's literary works where Mahfouz's appreciation for the interference of religion in the daily lives of Egyptians is clear. One example is the character of Hussein in *The Beginning and The End.* As was discussed in Chapter One, Hussein is the only strong believer in the family and the only survivor at the end of the novel. Mahfouz's interest in the impact of religion can also be found in the character of Amina in *The Trilogy*; she is a symbol of purity. Mahfouz

[76] *The Translation of the Glorious Quran* (42:25).
[77] Ibid (42:135).

describes her as a religiously devout mother. Although he concentrates on the negative submissive part of her character, she is still described as a good, devoted mother. There is a clear distinction between Amina and her husband Sayed as parents. Sayed is a harsh and selfish figure, and he views religion as a duty. On the other hand, Amina is a merciful mother who surrenders not only to her husband but, moreover, to God first. For instance, every morning Amina has an inner dialogue with God in which she recites Quranic verses and prays to her family. She smiles while remembering His divine authority and mercy.

Mahfouz's vision of Sufism and the role of religion raises the question of the effect of secularism on the Middle Eastern societies particularly the Egyptian. Sami El Deeb interviewed Mahfouz in 1977 and asked him his opinion on secularism in Egypt. When El Deeb asked Mahfouz to define secularism, Mahfouz stated that 'to understand secularism we must put into consideration that there are two kinds of secularism: the aggressive one, which opposes religions and the second kind which is the Western liberal one, which encourages the separation between the religion and state' (my translation).[78] El Deeb then asked 'what do you think of secularism?' Mahfouz stated we should harness secularism for happiness. Secularism only exists to achieve both happiness and dignity for humans. If one is able to achieve both happiness and dignity through religion, there is no need to search for secularism. However, if happiness and dignity cannot be achieved by religion, then in this case one searches for secularism. When asked about the need of secularism in Egypt, Mahfouz replied 'in Egypt, it is not necessary to apply secularism. Even those who want to apply religious laws want minority rights to be respected. The happiness of man is thus realized without secularism' (my translation).[79] At the beginning of

[78] Samy El Deeb. 'mqāblh mʿ Naguib Mahfouz' ʿām 1977. ālḥwār ālmtmdn,19 July 2015.
[79] El Deeb 2015.

his career, Mahfouz was strongly affected by Salama Mussa, a well-known Egyptian secularist and socialist writer. Mussa helped Mahfouz publish his first novel, *The Mockery of the Fates*, which discusses the effects of the 1919 revolution and enlightenment. Mussa was not a typical secularist; however, his concern with freedom and socialism made some critics and writers believe that his affinities were secularist. The next section discusses the third novel under consideration in this chapter, *In the Heart of the Night*, in order to explore a secularist only child character who was raised in a religious environment. His hesitant nature influences his decisions and leads him to failures in life similar to those experienced by the other characters in Mahfouz's works who are only children.

Heart of the Night* and *In the Time of Love

The third examined novel in this chapter is *Heart of the Night* (1975). Published in the mid-seventies, *Heart of the Night* is similar to *Children of the Alley* in terms of mystic symbolism and the presentation of a semi-divine authority such as Gabalawi's. Jaafar El Rawi's grandfather practises his authority on both his family and his alley. In addition, unlike *Children of the Alley*, *Heart of the Night* has a direct reference to Islam for approaching religion in a more symbolic way.

In the first half of the novel, Jaafar, the protagonist, tells his life story in the form of a long conversation. His grandfather is described by the protagonist as 'peaceful' with a long white beard that reaches right above the man's chest. The devout Sufi grandfather is curious to know the religious teachings of his grandchild. The dialogue starts with the grandfather's question 'who created you?' then continues as follows:

> God.

Who's the Prophet?

Prophet Muhammad.

Do you pray?

No

What have you memorized from the Quran?

Say: He is God, the One.

Haven't you memorized the Fatiha?

No

Why haven't you started with '*say, He is God, the One*?'

Because of its power to control the jinn' I said.

Do you deal with the jinn?'

Yes. Many of them live in our storeroom and they fill Margush by night.'

Have you seen them live in our storeroom with your own eyes?' he asked.

Often, I said.

Don't lie Jafaar. I do not like lies.[80]

In fact, this dialogue is a depiction of the grandfather's appreciation of the essence of Islam in terms of faith, practices, sincerity and rituals. It is also essential to note that good manners are

[80] Naguib Mahfouz, *Heart of the Night*. Trans. Aida A. Bamia (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2011), p. 22.

part and parcel of Muslims' faith in God. This is evident in Prophet Muhammad's saying, 'the most perfect believers, in the sight of faith, are the most well-mannered'.[81] Accordingly, the base of Islam is good manners. The grandfather, thus, warns his grandchild against lying. Moreover, the grandson adds, 'we exchanged a glance, and I did not see anything frightening on his part. He appeared quite old to me but had a noble and distinguished demeanor. He looked like a worthy owner of that fascinating garden'.[82] The description of the grandfather implies having an awe of serenity that the grandson admires.

In his commentary on *Heart of the Night*, El Enany argues that this novel is the second allegorical work by Mahfouz where the first is *Children of the Alley*:

> *Heart of the Night* is another allegory of a mystical figure. The novel is nothing but a condensed allegory of the spiritual evolution of mankind. Since this was well-trodden ground for Mahfouz, it is no surprise that he found it convenient to borrow some of the symbols be had already used in his earlier allegory on the same subject, ex. *Children of the Alley.* So here too we have a rich and powerful God-like father living in near-seclusion in a fortress of a house standing in the middle of a paradise of a garden surrounded by high impenetrable walls.[83]

Hence, the novel is similar to *Children of the Alley* not only for being allegorical but also for sharing a number of themes including tyranny, patriarchy, marriage, to name but a few. Concerning the plot of *Heart of the Night*, it is mainly about Jafaar's visit to the Waqf Ministry

[81] Kidwai, *Daily Wisdom*, p. 368.
[82] Mahfouz, *Heart of The Night*, pp. 20-1.
[83] El Enany *Mahfouz: His Life and Times* p. 106.

to demand his right to the house of his late grandfather.[84] Jafaar is the storyteller, whereas the narrator is the employee that the former meets at the Ministry. The dialogue between both characters introduces Jafaar as an only child who has been raised by his wealthy grandfather following his parents' death. The narrator listens to Jafaar's story throughout the novel to help him claim his grandfather's estate which has become a waqf for charitable purposes. For Jafaar, this property represents the last sum of money he can receive from his late grandfather after being excluded from the latter's will.

The opening scene of the novel highlights the narrator's initial thoughts about the protagonist: 'I looked closely at him and said "I remember you very well." He bent over my desk, his foggy sight fixed on me. His proximity, his roaming look, and his efforts to see clearly, revealed his weak eyesight. Seeming unaware of his closeness to me and the small size of the quite room, he said in a harsh, high pitched tone, "you do! I do not trust my memory anymore, and on top of that I do not see very well"'.[85] This scene summarises the deterioration of Jafaar's socioeconomic status despite his high sense of pride. When the narrator asks Jaafar about his name, the latter says it proudly. The narrator comments on this pride by saying, 'I was blind to the pride he felt in saying his full name. There was a strong contradiction between his miserable look and his proud tone'.[86] Accordingly, Jaafar strives to give an impression of belonging to a social standard that is not compatible with his miserable appearance.

Following his parents' death, the grandfather – who has opposed his son's marriage – welcomes his grandson. The grandfather's figure, according to El Enany's description, is the

[84] Waqf ministry is one of the ministries in the Egyptian government. It is responsible for religious financing and funding. Individuals usually donate a plot of land, hospital or any other building that can be a benefit for the community.
[85] Mahfouz, *Heart of the Night*, p. 1.
[86] Ibid, p. 1.

'God-like figure'. [87] He is firm yet merciful, which has made Jafaar love him at the beginning. Nevertheless, this love has not stopped Jafaar from following his father's path. What is common between his destiny and his father's is that both of them are doomed to fail, ending in misery and poverty.

Jafaar marries Marwana, the gypsy who comes from a lower social level, and lives with her and her family. After having two children, Jafaar feels confusion and resentment. He has difficulty tolerating the wildness and aggression of Marwana and her family. She is also blamed for being lenient and weak. In explanation of her departure, Jafaar says, 'Marwana was the symbol of the past life, and an excuse to live a normal life without goal. When she left, I found myself adrift; I had to rethink my life. It was at this critical time that I met Huda Sadeeq'.[88] Huda Sadeeq is Jafaar's second wife; she symbolises modernity and intellectuality. She is also a rich lady with powerful connections. Jafaar's opinion of Huda shows in his words, 'I was struck by Huda's beauty, her conservative but elegant dress, and a certain pride that remained within the boundaries of politeness. She was enveloped in a halo of serious charm, but her feminine beauty was all in her eyes and her round face. I was certain that she was in her forties'.[89] Jaafar's depiction of Huda unravels her class and maturity, which is almost the opposite of his description of Marwana as quite physical and juvenile. Jafaar compares the two women to the narrator as follows: 'I found myself comparing Marwana and Huda, two very different women. Marwana was a genius in the games of the body, whereas Huda was raised the body to the level of the heart. Her passion was not fiery, but it provided me with a sense of security, of stability and

[87] El Enany, *Mahfouz: His Life and Times*, p. 108.
[88] Mahfouz, *Heart of the Night*, p. 61.
[89] Mahfouz, *Heart of the Night*, p. 62.

endurance'.[90] While developing from inexperience, impulsiveness, immaturity and instability from one end, to knowledge, experience, maturity and wisdom at the other end, Jaafar embarks on a journey of self-exploration with Huda. He starts to learn more about philosophy, religion and politics from her intellectual weekly salons.

From another perspective, Masry Hanoura (2008) presents an opposing view that is dissimilar to Mahfouz's; he does not perceive the protagonist as a failure or immature. Hanoura argues that Jafaar is a fighter who has a clear vision in life. In fact, he is assertive, independent, peaceful and persistent. He is gifted with special qualities that make him strong enough to challenge his circumstances. Hanoura adds that Jafaar sometimes alienates himself to create his own cocoon. This is not a sign of weakness; it enables Jafaar to have his own space where he gets to live independently and contemplate life. This space allows him to face countless complicated stages in his life.

When asked in an interview by one of the Egyptian channels to analyse the philosophical message that Jafaar carries in *Heart of the Night*, Hanoura states that Mahfouz's message is almost identical of Jafaar's for sharing an 'integration between socialism, democracy and religions'.[91] All humans desire attaining freedom, achieving fairness, and practising spiritual ethics. Mahfouz's work is intended to send the Egyptian society a message, which is that rebellious people, as in Jafaar's case, are victims in the Arab world where people usually expect conventional behaviour from one another. Hanoura rejects this way of thinking and adds that most of the manmade rules and rituals are both questionable and changeable. Jafaar's character is not a hideous failure; it is a creative one that aspires to change the world for the better.

[90] Mahfouz, *Heart of the Night*, p. 70.
[91] Masry Hanoura, *Naguib Mahfouz w fn ṣnāʿh ālʿbqryh* (Cairo: dār ālšrwq, 2008), p. 222.

Accordingly, *Heart of the Night* is a philosophical novel, and Jafaar possesses a complex character that is as deep as Kamal Abdel Gawad in *The Trilogy*, Arafa in *Children of the Alley*, Said Mahran in *The Thief and the Dogs*, Sarhan in *Miramar* and Ibn Fattouma in *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*.

For Mahfouz, complex characters usually have philosophical visions that are attained through alienation. In an interview by Hanoura after the publication of *Heart of the Night*, Mahfouz states that Jafaar is a contradictory character with a mission. He comments on Jafaar's theory of happiness as follows: 'most of the theories related to happiness fail, which conforms to the famous Egyptian proverb "take wisdom from the mouth of madmen"' (my translation).[92] Mahfouz adds that Jafaar has not alienated himself from his past and present. Like any visionary messenger, Jaafar feels estranged from his people. Moreover, when asked about the similarities between Jafaar's message and his own, Mahfouz says there may be some, 'and if you check my work as a whole, you will probably find the same message, which is "freedom, fairness and religion"' (my translation).[93]

Concerning the Sufi dimension of the novel, it is essential to note that isolation is one of its manifestations; in other words, with reference to Abdel Kader El Gelany (an Iraqi Sufi), isolation is one of the main pillars of Sufism. Additionally, there are two sides of it: the apparent and the hidden. In his book *ṭālby ṭryq ālḥq* (The Seekers of Justice), El Gelany defines the apparent as the idea of separating oneself from the people and preventing their disputes. In this sense, a true Sufi is peaceful and never harms a soul. He or she strives to curb desires including those of food and clothes. All his/her actions are dedicated to pleasing the Creator, not himself/herself or the

[92] Hanoura, *Talent*, p. 28.
[93] Ibid, p. 29.

people. On the other hand, the hidden is about fighting and suppressing the instincts and needs of oneself such as desiring money.[94] El Gelany supports his argument with Prophet Muhammad's saying, 'the miserly never enters heaven even if he is a worshipper or ascetic'.[95] This means that generosity, which is an indication of good manners, a prerequisite for heaven.

Another novel featuring an only child is Mahfouz's *In the Time of Love*. It features a child wanderer who fails in his life. According to El Enany, *In the Time of Love* is similar to *Heart of the Night* content-wise; he states, '*In the Time of Love* was nothing more than a repetitive recasting of *The Heart of the Night*: another simple allegory about the rebellious flight from God, followed by a remorseful and painful return'.[96] *In the Time of Love*, the protagonist Izzat is a rebel by nature, living with his Sufi altruistic mother Ain. Mahfouz's choice of her name is immensely symbolic as it means 'an eye' in Arabic. Mahfouz describes her as the wisest woman in the alley, and the seer of the place. Her husband dies when her son is a toddler. Her devoted and dedicated nature allows her to raise her son without feeling any burden. Her son, on the contrary, sees himself as a player, who does not understand the altruistic nature of his mother and her desire to help others. Izzat is raised with his neighbours Sayyida, Hamdoun and Badriya, whose lives are interwoven through decades.

Moreover, the only-child characters in Mahfouz's works are usually loners, particularly children, except in the *Heart of the Night* and *In the Time of Love*, as both have been raised with company. Jafaar and Izzat share the same destiny of the other only children; they are doomed to fail. It can be argued that Mahfouz believes that relatives, neighbours and friends are incapable of substituting siblings despite the vital roles they play. However, if it is possible for them to

[94] Abdel Kader El Gelany, ṭālby ṭryq ālḥq (Baghdad: ālmrkz ālʿrby llṯqāfh w ālʿlwm, 1990).
[95] Kidwai, p. 76.
[96] El Enany, *Mahfouz: His Life and Times*, p. 107.

substitute to siblings, only child characters in Mahfouz's works will not feel lost and confused. In the next section, Othman, another only child character that has unfulfilled cravings in *Respected Sir* (1975), is presented.

***Respected Sir*: Only Child Social Cravings**

Othman strives to have a better life. He is another unsatisfied soul that seeks perfection through his career as a governmental employee. He is an only child; all his siblings died tragically at a very young age. His father is a carter who wants Othman to do the same, but Othman prefers to finish his studies. His mother supports his dream of finishing his degrees. After his parents' death, Othman becomes a governmental employee. He studies and does translation work to impress his superiors. He dreams of becoming the Director of the Archives Department in the future. He 'lives the life of an ascetic with one focused attention, for which all else must be sacrificed.'[97] It is Othman's conviction and ultimate goal to be a governmental official under the assumption that it is the most prestigious career. Mahfouz describes Othman's credo as:

> He also told himself that 'government official' was still a vague concept inadequately understood. In the history of Egypt, an official occupation was a sacred occupation like religion, and the Egyptian official was the oldest in the history of civilization. The ideal citizen of other nations might be a warrior, a politician, a merchant, a craftsman or a sailor, but in Egypt it was the government official. And the earliest moral instructions recorded in history were the exhortations of a retiring official to his son, a rising one. Even the Pharaohs themselves, he thought, were but officials appointed by the gods of heaven to rule

[97] Samia Mehrez. *Egyptian Writers between History and Fiction: Essays on Naguib Mahfouz, Sonallah Ibrahim, and Gamal al-Ghitani*. Cairo: AUC Press, 1994 p. 30.

> the Nile Valley by means of religious rituals and of administrative, economic and organizational regulations.[98]

Othman's ambitions and cravings are never fulfilled. Mahfouz comments on Othman's incomplete sense of happiness as: 'he was drunk with happiness for a day. But days went by. What then? Would everything be swallowed up in silence? Nothing happened.'[99] Othman attempts to compensate for his humble background by working hard to gain prestige in the society; nevertheless, most of his attempts are in vain. As Lacan states 'our desires are not our own, they are the others. Firstly, that desire is essentially a desire for recognition from this other; secondly that desire is for the thing that we suppose the other desires, which is to say, the thing that the other lacks.'[100] In other words, individuals tend to crave what others have to be approved of as an equal by the latter.

Othman seeks bureaucratic promotion and alienates himself. He lives in an emotional exile by choice. Pursuing the promotion is Othman's presumed path to gaining prestige in the society. He sacrifices his love for his neighbour, Sayyida, to follow his dreams. Lacan explains, 'the fact that his desire has been premised on the Other's desire means that there will forever be a world of difference between what he desires and what he actually wants. The two will never be in the same place at the same time'. In fact, Othman has never dreamt of having a family at an early age. His ambitions have been his utmost priority, and everything else is a minority. Othman falls in the trap of work, leaving no room for pleasure or having a proper personal life. After losing his second love, Onsiyya, he pushes her away by claiming that he is ill. When she gets engaged,

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[98] Naguib Mahfouz, Trans. Rasheed El Enany. *Respected Sir*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1987, p. 110-1

[99] *Respected Sir*, p. 37.

[100] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Four Fundamental Concept of Psychoanalysis (Vol. Book XI) (The Seminar of Jacques Lacan)*. W.W. Norton, New York, 1998.

he comments in relief, 'now I can mourn for my lost love with my mind at rest and no apprehensions to bother me. I can drink out of the will of anguish until it runs dry and I gain my freedom. And in this I'm an expert'.[101] Hence, her engagement has liberated him from the burden of getting committed to a relationship that delays pursuing his ambitions, particularly getting promoted. Furthermore, shortly after Othman receives a promotion, his satisfaction, happiness and pride fade away. His life is a series of attempts for a better prestigious work status. The only time he feels content and satisfied is when he gets married to his second wife, Radiya, the young employee.

It can be argued that Othman's goal is to be respected in the eyes of the society, to compensate for the feeling of coming from a humble background (i.e. the low social standard of his parents). Hence, his desire to receive promotion at work reflects the desire to be perceived as a prestigious citizen. The desire of a happy family is overshadowed. What he desires is what the society desires and expects from him. Others' desires overlap his. According to Lacan, one sometimes clones others' desires thinking they are his/hers. One tends to ask himself/herself, 'what do I want?' which means 'what others want from me?'[102] Lacan posits, 'our desires are not our own, they are the Other's. Firstly, that desire is essentially a desire for recognition from this "Other"; secondly that desire is for the thing that we suppose the Other desires, which is to say, the thing that the Other lacks'.[103]

In Othman's case, has no friends by choice; he is a miser and a loner who rejects social gatherings and outings. In the end, he realises his need for having a family. His first marriage at

[101] Ibid, p. 103.
[102] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (Vol. Book XI). Seminar XI*, New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1998, p. 235
[103] Ibid, p. 235.

an old age is to his lifelong escort Qaddriya. The only joy he feels is when he meets her. This marriage is described by Mahfouz as 'a feeling of anxiety, almost of terror, took hold of him and tore him apart and he prayed that the unknown might intervene to rescue him from this nightmare.'[104] Othman feels hesitant about his marriage. He asks himself, 'what have I done with myself?' 'What is the meaning of married life without real love, a spiritual bond, the promise of posterity, or even mew human companionship?'[105] Interestingly, his on-going sense of unfulfillment makes him want to marry the young employee, Radiya, who seems different from his wife. Mahfouz describes her impact on Othman as follows: 'gentle nature and the mellow look in her eyes, captivated him.'[106]

Othman's character is similar to other Mahfouzian ones. The first one is Saber in *The Search*; both of them are torn between two different women, namely the innocent and the wild. Saber never marries but Othman chooses to marry both. After he gets married to Radiya in secrecy, he feels 'overwhelming happiness, he forgot how old he was and how totally bogged down were his hopes of the director-general's position'.[107] The second Mahfouzian character that Othman is similar to is Dawood Pasha's in *The Morning and Evening Talk*. Dawood is a young child who gets kidnapped by the French forces in the French occupation period in Egypt. Despite the absence of authentic historical sources that document such incidents, the novel claims the kidnap of young children and sending them to France for educational reform. Mahfouz states that, during Mohamed Ali Pasha's reign, the French forces agreed to educate the youngest generation in France in order to enhance the educational level and adopt the European lifestyle. Dawood is

[104] *Respected Sir*, p. 120.
[105] Mahfouz, *Respected Sir*, p. 129.
[106] Ibid, p. 133.
[107] Ibid, p. 139.

an intelligent man who succeeds in obtaining his law degree from the Sorbonne University. He sees his family in his twenties for the first time after the kidnap. He experiences a cultural shock which persists until he dies at the age of seventy.[108]

The only difference between Dawood and Mahfouz's other only-children characters is the fact that Dawood is prestigiously accepted in the society, which is what Othman seeks passionately. He manages to have a reputable education and a successful career. In his fifties, he decides to marry his maid, Gohar, and quits his work as a doctor. Dawood, as stated, is successful; however, at the end, he loses balance like the rest of the only-children characters in Mahfouz's work.

It is important to note that Dawood's character assimilates to the cases of the six Jewish German war orphans from the Bulldog Banks – an adoptive home in West Sussex during 1945-6 –. The six were diagnosed by Anna Freud and Sophie Dann. All of them lost their parents before, or immediately, after birth, and lived at refugee camps in Vienna. According to Dr. Coles's book *The Importance of Sibling Relationships in Psychoanalysis*, the six orphans exhibited wild behaviour to outsiders. Coles states, 'when they first arrived at "Bulldogs Bank", they were wild, noisy, broke the toys provided and were hostile to all the adults'.[109] Cole adds:

> They seemed to behave like wild animals, as they spat at and bit the grown-ups, and the first six months of their stay was a turbulent time. The children's emotional moods would swing between extreme states of passivity or violence. But while they displayed this aggressive and inconsistent behavior to the adults,

[108] Naguib Mahfouz. *Morning and Evening Talk*. Trans. Christina Phillips. (Cairo: AUC Press, 2007).
[109] Prophecy Coles, *The Importance of Sibling Relationships in Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac Books, 2003), pp.72-3.

> within their tightly knit group they behaved with great concern for each other. They could not bear to be separated. One of the remarkable characteristics about this inseparable group was that there seemed be no rigid leadership, but instead an extreme sensitiveness to each other's needs and feelings. There was also a complete lack of jealousy or rivalry within the group, where they never had to be exhorted to share or take turns. They acted towards each other with generosity and pleasure, even when it came to mealtimes. They seemed to take more pleasure from sharing their food than in eating it themselves'.[110]

Similarly, Dawood has lived without his parents for about twenty years, taking orders from instructors or leaders at a French camp in France while growing up. His hesitant, wild behaviour has shown at an old age more than in his childhood. Coles analyses the children's cooperation within their circle as follows:

> Freud and Dann concluded that the cooperative behavior that these six children showed for each other was unheard of, and the direct result of the total absence of any adult to whom they could become attached. They were each other's most important loved object, and they preserved the love through all vicissitudes. The lack of parental love in their internal world meant that the children were without the normal feelings of sibling rivalry. One little girl who had known some sort of attachment to an adult in the concentration camp, was the one who had least integrated into the group. Freud and Dann seem to be suggesting that sibling

[110] Coles, p. 73

> rivalry and attachment to an adult, go hand in hand, or that extreme sibling/peer attachment is linked to the absence of a parental figure.[111]

Living without a direct attachment to parental authority, Dawood is never jealous of his older brother Yazeed when they meet in their youth after a long separation period. Dawood is similar to the six orphaned children in the way they seek attachment through strengthening their relations with their teachers in the camp or with each other. Unlike the other orphans, he has a family and a brother; nevertheless, Dawood shares a common ground with them, namely estrangement.

It is noteworthy that Dawood finds comfort in his relationships with women – initially his aristocrat wife and then the maid –. He abandons his wife to marry the maid because the latter gives him her undivided attention and attachment that he longs for. In contrast, the six-orphaned children have found parents to adopt them, but they are not satisfied due to their constant feeling that something is missing. In other words, they kept comparing their relationships with people to their relationships to each other. The six orphans have such a strong bond that has resulted in their failure to form subsequent bonds with the ones they meet later in their lives. They are as lost and alienated as Dawood throughout the novel.

Moreover, Othman and Dawood attempt to gain confidence and balance through work and prestige yet they do not feel satisfied. Although Dawood belongs to a social status that is higher than Othman's, the former struggles more than the latter. Dawood has developed a sense of misplacement because of his troubled childhood which was devoid of love and familial guidance. In contrast, Othman's childhood is normal to some extent. Mahfouz comments, 'sacred too was

[111] Coles, *The Importance of Sibling Relationships in Psychoanalysis*, p. 74.

the memory of his parents. And on every religious occasion he would visit their grave'.[112] In the end, Othman's destiny is more hopeful than Dawood, as he is content to die to meet his Creator.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier in this chapter, Sufism has played a central role in Othman's life. Growing up as an only child and feeling alienated despite having company, Sufism has immensely affected Othman's character. This is evident in Othman's words to God and about God in many incidents. Mahfouz comments on Othman's religious sense as follows: 'he made no distinction between religion and life. Religion was for life and life for religion'.[113] The following are some examples of Othman's strong beliefs in God, Sufism and his career. He describes the importance of his beliefs to his young wife Radiya: 'a government position is a brick in the edifice of the state, and the state is an exhalation of the spirit of God, incarnate on earth'. [114] Othman's words mirror a strong link that he has established between his faith and work. He also says to his love interest, Onsiyya Ramadan, 'I'm a man whose interest is in carrying out his duty and who finds his heart's content in worshipping God'.[115] This implies that Othman's mind is to a great extent occupied with believing in God and pleasing Him. Hence, his goal of life is 'the sacred path', and he finds 'an element of divinity in every situation'.[116] Another example of Othman's reliance on God is his dialogue with the Old Chief. This dialogue reflects Othman's genuine faith and acceptance of God's will:

> Old Chief: 'without the existence of God life would be a losing game with no meaning to it'.

[112] *Respected Sir* p. 9
[113] Ibid p. 9
[114] Ibid p. 143.
[115] Ibid p. 74.
[116] Ibid p. 76.

> Othman: 'It's lucky for us that He exists, and that He knows what He's doing better than we can".[117]

On top of that, Othman's strong faith in God has created a sense of hope and security for him. After reaching an old age with his health deteriorating, Othman feels his life has moved at a fast pace that has prevented him from enjoying important moments and experiences. It is hurtful for him that 'everything went on without any attention being paid to him: appointments, promotions and pensionings, love, marriage and even divorce'.[118] To his disappointment, attaining his dream promotion as a director general is short-lived; the doctor has informed Othman that it is not possible for the latter to accept the post. Nevertheless, the authorities have decided to promote Othman. Overwhelmed with devastation and remorse, he suspects that they have merely done so out of 'charity'.[119] At the end of the novel, some hope is sensed in Mahfouz's description of Othman's state. The latter decides to buy a tomb in hope of taking a step towards God: 'maybe it was as well that the new tomb out there in the sunlight had given him such pleasure'.[120] Othman's end, thus, unravels his strong abidance by his faith in God and his desire to get closer to Him. It also proves the impact of Sufism on his character development. Accordingly, *Respected Sir* is an example of Mahfouz's presentation of connection between Sufism and alienation, and their influence on only child characters.

[117] Naguib Mahfouz. Trans. Rasheed El Enany. *Respected Sir*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1987, p. 55.
[118] *Respected Sir*, p. 154
[119] Ibid, p. 153.
[120] Ibid, p. 154.

***The Journey of Ibn Fattouma*: An Unconventional Sufi**

The fifth novel that this chapter examines is the closest one to Mahfouz's definition of Sufism. The protagonist of this novel is Qindil Muhammad al-Innabi; he is a devout Muslim who seeks perfection and expects his people to follow God righteously. Qindil is known as Ibn Fattouma, which is close to the name of a famous traveller called 'Ibn Battuta'.

A clear link is drawn between both names and characters by El Enany who argues that 'the novel evokes the atmosphere and format of medieval Arabic rihla or travel literature, particularly the journeys of Ibn Battuta, the illustrious 14th century Arab traveler, as recorded in his famous book *Rihlat Ibn Battuta*, of which Mahfouz's novel is by and large a parody'.[121] The similarity between both works lies in emphasising the universality of Mahfouz's message in Ibn Fattouma, namely the search for the ideal society.[122] Interestingly, Qindil's teacher advises him to leave and travel to the land of Gebel (the Mountain City). When Qindil asks about the significance of the land, the teacher says, 'you will hear a lot about it; it is like a miracle. It is the perfection everyone desires'.[123]

Having lost hope in marriage after his love interest marries another someone else, Qindil decides to depart. He travels to seven cities – each of which symbolises a different way of life – in search of the land of Gebel. First, Ibn Fattouma goes to the land of Mashriq (City of Sunrise) where people live freely without following any ethical or religious principles. He gets married and has children. When Qindil tries to raise his oldest son as a Muslim, the people of the Mashriq force him to leave. Second, Ibn Fattouma travels to the land of Haira (City of

[121] El Enany, *Mahfouz: His Life and Times*, p. 133.
[122] Ibid, p. 133.
[123] Naguib Mahfouz, *The Journey of Ibn Fattouma* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 1997), p. 9.

Bewilderment). This place is dependent on the strength of its ruler; that is, the masses do not play a major role in governing themselves. There, Ibn Fattouma remarries, but the ruler of the city shows interest in the former's wife. In vain, Ibn Fattouma fights to save his wife but ends in prison for twenty years. Later, the people rebel against the ruler, and Ibn Fattouma gets released. Third, Ibn Fattouma heads towards the land of Halba where the Halbans practise their freedom to the fullest. He admires their way of living, and he stays there for a long time. Ibn Fattouma forms a new family; however, his innate will to find perfection makes him leave again to travel to the land of Aman (the City of Security) where people value justice. Shortly afterwards, Ibn Fattouma travels and resides in a new one called the land of Ghoroub (the City of Sunset). At this stage of his journey, Ibn Fattouma manages to purify himself from his innate desires. He chooses to stay with people and develop a sense of attachment to the community. He keeps his dream of visiting the land of Gebel clinging to his mind without a dire need to be there. Even though the ending may seem like an open one, the idea of choosing to join a community is the appropriate closure for a Mahfouzian novel that tackles Sufism.

Mahfouz's idea of Sufism is influenced by a number of scholars, such as Abdel Halim Mahmoud and Abbas Mahmoud Al-Akkad, who shape its modern practise. Mahfouz argues that Quran could be a text of guidance for a modern society; it merely requires a different approach of studying. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter One, Abbas Mahmoud Al-Akkad puts forward a theory about thinking in Islam.[124] Al-Akkad states that thinking is obligatory in Islam. Abdel Halim Mahmoud, a Sufi Islamic scholar, argues in his book *Al-Islam wal-ʻAql* (1973) (Islam and the Mind) that Quran is the book of the mind.[125] Like Al-Akkad, Mahmoud

[124] ʿbās Mḥmwd Alʿ Qād. *Altfkyr Fryḍh Aslāmyh*. Alqāhrh: Nhḍh Mṣr, 2002).
[125] Abdel Halim Mahmoud. *ālāslām w ālʿql.* (Cairo: ālršād llnšr w āltwzyʿ, 2009).

refers to many Quranic verses to support his argument. Hence, Mahfouz summarises his relation to Sufism as follows:

> There is something called Sufism, and there is another thing, the love of Sufism. I am one of those who favor the other thing, the love of Sufism, that love whose demands are not too heavy and that does not distance me from social concerns. Sufism plays the leading role in society, and it is the role to which I grant my greatest care in all of my creative works. I reject the sort of Sufism that blinkers the mind and effaces individual qualities. My Sufism is that care about human concerns and social issues.[126]

In this respect, Mahfouz's argument clearly revises the essential part of traditional Sufism which is isolation. Despite his love of Sufism, Mahfouz is in favour of engaging with society and avoiding isolation. Like Mahfouz, Ibn Fattouma is a Sufi who does not apply the conventional definition of Sufism. While typical Sufis think worshipping God is more important than interacting with society, this novel shows that worshipping God and interacting with others are indispensable.

The Similarities and Differences of Ibn Fattouma and Hayy Ibn Yaqzan

As previously discussed, Ibn Fattouma typifies Mahfouz's definition of Sufism. The protagonist fails to find virtue except in the last destination, where he belongs to human society. The human interaction creates a sense of gratification for him. He prefers interaction to isolation. In contrast, a typical Sufi would argue that true Sufis reach the ultimate stage of spirituality through isolating

[126] Ziad El Marsafy, *Sufism in the Contemporary Arabic Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 26.

themselves from the outer world because humans influence each other and arouse life desires instead of suppressing them. The preference of isolation over interaction with people was first presented through Hayy Ibn Yaqzan.

Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzan is one the most ancient Sufi characters in world history. It is 'the story of the progressive development, alone, on an equatorial island of an individual human soul'.[127] The protagonist prefers to be in the company of God rather than humans. According to Lenn E. Goodman, a Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University and the translator of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan, Hayy's allegorical tale relies on the question of 'how can a man attain fulfillment?'[128] While Ibn Fattouma prefers to be with people at the end of Mahfouz's story, Hayy chooses solitude. The ways of the two seekers may differ; however, the initial goal is to be with the Creator. That is, the two travellers are similar in their desire to please God.

On the one hand, Ibn Fattouma is a reformist who plays an interactive role in the society while seeking idealism. According to Mahfouz, 'nobody's determination weakened, and we all decided to venture forward. I thought about myself and those I had left behind, and about the circumstances I would meet'.[129] Thus, Ibn Fattouma represents Mahfouz himself as an admirer of Sufism and an important member of socio-political scene. The protagonist's search for an ideal society reflects his identity as an untraditional political Sufi. He searches for the goodness of the true worshippers of God after developing much agony because of people's false ways of worshipping Him. Although Ibn Fattouma never returns home and his journey never really ends, he feels grateful to be in the company of a group of people.

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[127] Ibn Tufayl, *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzan: A Philosophical Tale*. Trans. Lenn Evan Goodman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 7.
[128] Ibn Tufayl, p. 7.
[129] Mahfouz, *Ibn Fattouma*, p. 147.

In spite of the fact that a typical Sufi prefers his connection to God 'without any degree of positive or concrete contribution to politics', there are still examples of politically-active Sufis.[130] It is problematic and challenging for Sufis to play both roles: purifying their souls, fighting the social chaos and pursuing reality. Sufis do not seek political power; however, some of them rebel to seek harmony and balance in the society. Egypt, as a case in point, has witnessed a political side of Sufism that targets liberating the nation.

Political Sufism:

The political role of Sufis, which is not highlighted in many scholarly texts, started in Salah el-Din's era.[131] He worked with the Sufis and 'used them as an intellectual tool in his political campaign against the Fatimids'.[132] Salah el-Din wanted to enhance the role of intellectuals in the Egyptian society because it was deteriorating at the time of the Fatimids.[133] Moving to recent incidents, during the rise of the 1952 Revolution, the number of Sufis increased, and Abdel Nasser's government successfully gained Sufis' encouragement and support. Sufis collaborated with Abdel Nasser to resist Muslim Brotherhood's emerging power.[134]

In 2011, Egyptians decided to confront the deteriorating political situation and social conditions, which sparked the 25th of January Revolution. The people galvanised one another for a common cause with the aim of overthrowing Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian President at that time, and reforming Egypt. Moreover, the revolution is referred to as the 'Social Media Revolution',

[130] Tarek Ladjal and Benaouda Bensaid, 'Sufism and Politics in Contemporary Egypt: A Study of Sufi Political Engagement in the Pre and Post-Revolutionary Reality of January 2011'. Journal of Asian and African Studies 2015, Vol. 50 (4) , pp. 468-485, p. 470.
[131] Saladin was the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty (1174-1193) and was the first sultan of Egypt and Syria. Stephen R. Humphreys. *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus 1193-1260*. State of University of New York Press, 1977 p. 29.
[132] Tarek Ladjal. 'Sufism and Politics in Contemporary Egypt' p. 470.
[133] Ibid p. 470
[134] Ibid p. 473.

because Egyptians set a date to meet at Tahrir Square via Facebook and Twitter; however, some protestors do not agree with naming this revolution a 'social media' one. One of the protestors argues, 'it was about much more than those who had access to Twitter and Facebook. If it was not for the working class and the marginalized thousands this revolution would not have happened'.[135] Another protestor described this revolution as,

> A time of great human beauty demonstrated in the solidarity and collectively putting life at stake for that idea of a better tomorrow. On the other hand, it brought a very graphic reality of the system's violence and how far a human being can go.[136]

The love which the Egyptians share for their country is what brought citizens from all walks of life together to take action and enhance their lives, which shows that the revolution would not have been effected, without the collective effort. To the Egyptians' disappointment, the outcome of the protests was not satisfactory for many of them, particularly after the Muslim Brotherhood seized the power to rule for the first time in Egypt's history. However, those initial repercussions did not stop Egyptians from reuniting as one and fighting again shoulder to shoulder.

Two years later, only one year after his inauguration, Egyptians decided to oust the Muslim Brotherhood President, Mohamed Morsi. Millions of Egyptians protested against Morsi. People marched to Ittihadiya Palace where the President stays in the north east of Cairo.[137] Interestingly, the protestors in this revolution outnumbered the previous one. One of the protestors observed

[135] Meave Shearlaw, 'Egypt Five Years On: Was It Ever a "Social Media Revolution"?' *The Guardian*, Jan 2016
[136] Meave Shearlaw, 'Egypt Five Years On: Was It Ever a "Social Media Revolution"?'.
[137] Patrick Kingsley, 'Protestors across Egypt call for Mohamed Morsi to go', *The Guardian*, Jun 2013.

that ‘the scenes of protests are unprecedented in size and scope, and seemingly surpass those during the 18-day uprising that toppled Mubarak’.[138] For the second time, the Egyptians succeeded in ousting their President, specifically on the 30th of June, 2013.

While some Western commentators have interpreted the uprisings in terms of a call for Western-style democracy, others such as Caroline Rooney and Jack Shenker have seen them as protests against neoliberalism and their socially divisive effects. Furthermore, a number of scholars believe that 2011 Revolution had a spiritual Sufi atmosphere. It was more of a *mulid,* which means ‘birth, where this is a matter of anniversaries (saint days) but also more widely a question of seasonal renewal as well as of deliverance on a spiritual level’.[139] This idea is commented on by Samia Mehrez in her essay ‘Mulid al Tahrir: Semiotics of a Revolution’:

> Anyone who has been in Tahrir during the initial memorable eighteen days and later through the following months will no doubt have noted the festive, creative, uplifting ambience that has dominated the midan. They will also have noted how the general dispositions of the actors in the midan bore many traces of the mulid celebrations, a popular form of carnivalesque festivities that has been celebrated in Egypt for hundreds of years and whose rituals…were marshaled, politicized and revolutionized during the massive protests and sit-ins to sustain and transform the impetus and impact of revolt.[140]

[138] Kingsley, 2013.
[139] Caroline Rooney, ‘Sufi Springs: Air on an Oud Spring’, Edinburgh University Press, 2015 pp. 38-58 p. 53.
[140] Sahar Keraitim and Samia Mehrez, ‘Mulid al Tahrir: Semiotics of a Revolution’, in Samia Mehrez ed, *Translating Egypt’s Revolution: The Language of Tahrir*, Cairo: AUC Press, 2012, p. 30.

Accordingly, the overriding festive spirit among protestors boosted their will and empowered them with determination and courage. In addition to this, the Sufis' did contribute to that atmosphere even though their efforts were not 'visible' at the beginning of the 2011 Revolution. For instance, in February 2011, Sufis formed the coalition of Egyptian Sufis.[141] Mustafa Zayed, the leader of this coalition, comments on the purpose of forming by positing that, 'over the last few years, leaders of Sufis orders could neither defend the call of Sufism nor repel the onslaughts against its shrines throughout the years'.[142] Perhaps, these are the collective efforts that Mahfouz expected of the Sufis who were mostly preferred to withdraw from the society.

Hence, Mahfouz's works embrace a clear interest in the only child case and the contributing factors to his/her development. Some critics may argue that Mahfouz is intolerant of the only children phenomenon in Egypt whereas he merely explores a vision of the society through the symbolic dimensions of only children. His defence relies on cultural, social and political reasons. From his perspective, family represents the core of society. Nevertheless, multiple novels by Mahfouz include the notion of the only child to emphasise the role of the individual in the society. The idea of community is strong in Mahfouz's works because, for him, a stable society is only built on collaborative effort.

In Mahfouz's texts, the only child undergoes a complicated spiritual journey that usually fails. The company of siblings forms a more stable personality. Mahfouz may be subjective in analysing the only child because he believes that an only child is someone who needs and seeks guidance. Mahfouz rejects the western view of the only child, which typically believes that they

[141] Tarek Ladjal, 'Sufism and Politics in Contemporary', p. 478.
[142] Ibid, p. 478.

are as responsible as the ones with siblings. For instance, Dr. Coles believes that the only child case is a dream for every child with siblings, stating:

> I believe that there is a tendency in us all to wish that we could be the only child. The only one having tea with our mother. We hold fantasies that this would be a world without conflict, a world in which we would inherit all our parents' possessions. We would know, more surely, that we were the most loved child.[143]

Furthermore, Mahfouz's definition of Oedipus Complex is shown in *The Mirage*; it does not depend on cultural factors. The loss of the father's role, not his presence as Freud posits, is what creates the complex, not the father's presence like Freud believes. More specifically, in Freud's theory, the son's rivalry with the father over the mother's affections is central, whereas in Mahfouz's work the absence of the father figure leads to son's attachment to the mother figure. This suggests that the problem is not of only children but of isolated ones; only children are not necessarily isolated. The child cannot be only invested in one person (usually the mother) but needs to be separated from the first caregiver in order to be able to form bonds with others.

In conclusion, Mahfouz presents the only child characters in relation to Sufism to highlight the importance of community in society. According to Sufism, isolation leads to closeness to God, which is the main goal of Sufi believers. Mahfouz suggests another journey for Sufis to be undergone. He argues that Sufis need to be with, and around, people to spread the former's message. It is noteworthy that the only child characters in Mahfouz's works are usually incapacitated and lost. A Sufi's isolation deprives him/her of his/her focus and identity. In contrast, Mahfouz postulates that sibling relationships help create individuals' identities and

[143] Coles. *The Importance of Sibling Relationships in Psychoanalysis* p. 1

personalities. He highlights the transcendental aspiration in terms of social interaction, giving Sufism a new definition. He believes that interacting and sharing one's wisdom is the key to a stable and healthy community. For Mahfouz, one cannot possibly isolate himself/herself and expect to have a communicative society. This explains the reason why the protagonists in his five novels, namely *The Mirage*, *The Search*, *Heart of the Night*, *Ibn Fattouma* and *Respected Sir*, lose faith in themselves, and then try to regain it through family members. While encountering failures on their personal journeys, there is a glimpse of hope for all of them when they start to focus on others rather than themselves.

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Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to clarify the significance of sibling relationships in Egyptian society. The research has not aimed to present a comparison between Western and Eastern perceptions of sibling relationships. However, the dissertation has made reference to Western culture and literature in its account of the impact of the sibling bond in the East. Despite the importance of the sibling bond in the East, and in Egyptian society in particular, the reasons behind its significance have not been adequately analyzed in other previous research.

Sibling relationships are crucial to the definition of selfhood. This thesis has discussed ingrained notions in Egypt regarding siblings, including the idea that the evil and the good in people can be assessed with reference to relationships with siblings. This evaluation assumes that good people sacrifice for their siblings and act altruistically while evil people compete with their siblings and put themselves first. While Egyptian literature addresses such perceptions, it extends our understanding of the political, social and cultural contexts of the ethical questions at stake.

It has been necessary to draw on many disciplines, and especially on psychoanalysis, to analyze established ideas on sibling connections. Many recent studies have emphasized the importance of this bond, including Marc Desautels's clinical psychology research on the impact of emotional regulation on sibling relationships. Desautels has argued that the ability to 'regulate our emotions in an effective manner enables us to interact with other people and develop friendships and relationships with them'.[1] It can be argued that the sibling bond, in particular, is

[1] Marc Desautels, *Sibling Relationships* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2008), p. 13.

crucial to our well-being. Desautels has observed that emotional regulation is entirely linked to our relationships with our siblings and is not an 'individual process'.[2]

Egyptians rely on this bond and tend to believe that they are obliged to sacrifice for each other. Brotherly love is perceived as the power to resist any kind of oppression. According to Prophecy Coles in *The Importance of Sibling Relationships in Psychoanalysis*, learning from experiences with siblings is beneficial. She has described how,

> Our emotional and imaginative capacities made what they could out of these experiences and they are very different. I learned some things at my mother's knee, and I learned other things with my siblings. These other things I learned with my siblings, and then my peers, are an important part of who I am today.[3]

The importance of the sibling bond is emphasized in Naguib Mahfouz's novels. Mahfouz is an Egyptian novelist and Nobel Prize laureate (1988). This thesis has discussed eleven works by Mahfouz, which all consider the role of the family and culture. The discussion of the novels has focused on two main aspects: how Mahfouz perceives the brotherly and sisterly bond and how psychoanalysis tends to neglect this bond. Melanie Klein and Anna Freud are exceptions in relation to this neglect and have, instead, dedicated their work to emphasizing the role of the sibling bond in the formation of the individual.

Born in 1911, Mahfouz witnessed many political upheavals and crises including the 1919 revolution. Writing on the impact of the 1919 revolution on Mahfouz, El Enany has observed that

[2] Ibid, p. 13.
[3] Coles, p. 96.

> His political awareness started blossoming, as we have seen, at the rather early age of seven with the eruption of the 1919 revolution. This awareness must have matured during his high school and university years in the late 1920s and early 1930s.[4]

This sense of nationalism and 'political awareness' means that Mahfouz references politics in most of his works. He realized that to write about modern Egyptian society, he must not neglect the political events in the country since they affect people's lives and decisions. Mahfouz's works are influential and his readers learn from them about society in both modern and ancient Egypt, since his first three novels are concerned with that earlier period.

Mahfouz's work defines the nation and the Arab region. He is able to capture the essence of Egyptian culture in his writing. The effectiveness of Mahfouz's body of work is based on many aspects, one of which is his talent for presenting the socio-economic and political situations in Egypt through the setting, which is usually Old Cairo and other districts nearby. Old Cairo, particularly al-Gamaliya, had an impact on Mahfouz and his writings. He was attached to the place although he only lived there until he was 12. According to Gamal al-Ghitani's article, 'Naguib Mahfouz and the Old City', Mahfouz and Ghitani toured al-Gamaliya together as Mahfouz reminisced, finding that some places had changed such as his school building, which had become the Azhar Administrative.[5] Some of Mahfouz's characters were created in the buildings and houses of Old Cairo. Al-Ghitani recalls,

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[4] Rasheed El Enany. *Naguib Mahfouz: His Life and Times*. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007) p.23.

[5] Gamal Al Ghitani, 'Naguib Mahfouz and the Old Cairo', in *The Cairo of Naguib Mahfouz*, ed. by Britta Le Vie (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), p. 3-9 p. 5.

> We continued across Suq al-Nahhasin, the coppersmiths' market, where Mahfouz pictures Ahmad Abdel Jawad's store in *The Trilogy*, I noticed that his look lingered on certain places and that he slackened his pace in front of others, usually raising his head to contemplate and see.[6]

Mahfouz writes about his love of Old Cairo:

> My love and attachment to Old Cairo are unequaled. There are many times when I feel desiccated – experiencing one of those occasional blocks to which writers are prone. Then I take a stroll through Old Cairo, and almost immediately I am besieged by a host of images. It is in Old Cairo that I have imagined most of my novels. It is there that they have taken place, in my mind before I commit them to paper. And whenever I have felt that an event or an episode in my writing needs to be anchored in a specific place, al-Gamaliya has been that place.[7]

In Chapter One, I introduced the question of altruism among siblings and the role of culture in shaping this type of bond. It is assumed that siblings should act altruistically and support each other, and it is difficult to question such a notion. For instance, to ask an Egyptian about the reasons behind the obligation to act altruistically towards his or her siblings seems illogical. Egyptians are raised to be altruistic towards their siblings and they feel it is unintentional, however, both culture and religion play a crucial role in forming the sibling bond. In the novels *The Beginning and the End*, *Khan El Khalili* and *The Harafish*, Mahfouz presents many

[6] Ibid. p. 8.
[7] Naguib Mahfouz, 'Foreword', in *The Cairo of Naguib Mahfouz*, ed. by Britta Le Vie (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012) p. 1.

manifestations of altruism. We find that Nefissa, the sad and weak character, sacrifices herself by working as a seamstress. However, her weakness of character means that she also works as a prostitute to satisfy her own needs. The second example of altruism put forward concerns the character of Ahmad in *Khan El Khalili*. Where I show how there is a struggle between his egoism and altruism. Ahmed prefers to be altruistic, particularly with his brother, who he sees as a son. At the same time, his failure to achieve his dreams makes him isolated and shy. The type of altruism that Mahfouz arguably prefers is demonstrated in Khidr in *The Harafish*. Khidr decides to leave his love interest for his brother's sake and he manages to appear at the right time to save his family from bankruptcy. For Mahfouz, the relationship between siblings is symbolic. He suggests that interaction among citizens of the same society should be based on giving. In other words, the foundation of a healthy society lies in community work. In times of crisis, such as colonialism and oppression, the only solution is cooperation among people. It is clear in Mahfouz's works that his reference point is the 1919 revolution, when all men and women gathered together for one cause.

In Chapter Two, rivalry is the dark side of the sibling bond where evil is manifested in the one who competes and favors himself or herself. In *The Children of the Alley* and *ālāḫtyār* (The Choice), the rivalry comes from the outlawed, the outsiders and the schizophrenic. The emotionally or psychologically unstable characters think that rivalry will enhance their well-being. *The Children of the Alley* is Mahfouz's most controversial work where he discusses the history of humanity through the metaphor of one of Cairo's alleys. The controversy lies in the presentation of the novel. Mahfouz uses the prophets' allegories to picture the politics and the hidden desires of the Arab leaders, particularly Abdel Nasser. The sibling rivalry in this novel is the story of Abel and Cain, the extreme type of rivalry that ends in murder. *ālāḫtyār* (The

Choice) has the same type of rivalry. The feature film based on that novel was released in 1971, four years after the 1967 defeat. Again, Mahfouz addresses a political issue, which is the effects of the defeat on Egypt and the Arab world. This time, he wrote the script after sketching out the main ideas with Youssef Chahine, the director of the film. Mahfouz and Chahine collaborated in writing the story but Mahfouz wrote the script alone.

In Chapter Three, I focused on discussing the representation of only children in Egyptian families in Mahfouz's five novels. Mahfouz refers to the only child in many works, but these five novels were selected for analysis because they emphasize the role of culture in Mahfouz's understanding of the only child. Mahfouz adopts a cultural perspective on the only child, a perspective that rejects solitude and prefers collaboration. He relates the solitude of the only child to the solitude of the Sufi. Although isolation for the Sufi is obligatory, Mahfouz does not accept it. He introduces a new definition of Sufism, which encourages interaction between the Sufi and society.

Many Sufi scholars encourage isolation and applaud it as giving an opportunity to worship God to the fullest. Mahfouz, however, suggests that worshipping and feeling a strong attachment to God do not require separation from society. On the contrary, a Sufi is like a messenger who needs to interact with people. In this chapter, the Mahfouzian definition of the Oedipus complex was presented. Mahfouz's account of the complex differs from the Freudian version in two aspects: the absence of the father figure and the lack of sexual desire towards the parent, particularly the mother. That said, Mahfouz's novels explore how strong maternal attachments may serve to complicate the development of maturity on the part of the child.

In Mahfouz's novel *The Mirage*, Kamel struggles to be independent. His life revolves around his mother's attention. He meets his father for the first time at the age of 17. His father is absent

in his early life and Kamel finds himself in a matriarchal world. According to Freud, the Oedipus complex entails a strong emotion towards the mother, usually a sexual one, and a high sense of rivalry towards the father. For Mahfouz, the absence of the father is the main reason for the maternal orientation in the Oedipus complex. In Egyptian society, when one parent disappears, the other takes on two roles. This replacement and complete devotion to the child leads to the complex. The sexual aspect of the Oedipus complex does not exist in *The Mirage.* Significantly, Kamel sees his wife as another version of his mother, which causes his impotency.

In *The Search*, Saber, the protagonist searches for his father thinking he will have a better life when he finds him. The reasons behind his search for his father are not clearly stated. Mahfouz emphasizes the dullness and failure of Saber's life and his dependency on others, particularly his mother. The reasons for the search are open to the readers to interpret. Perhaps he needs a father to support him financially or emotionally. Interpretations of these reasons may vary, nevertheless, Saber, an only child, is always doomed to fail. He is lost, living the life of a hippy aristocrat. His mother is a belly dancer, who spends her money on him, to help him live the life of a wealthy person. She never involves him in her degraded life. He was raised to be a loner who relies on his mother and her money.

The other three novels considered: *In the Heart of the Night, Travels of Ibn Fattouma* and *The Morning and Evening Talk* suggest a similar analysis of the only child, but they discuss spiritualism and Sufism in more detailed contexts. Mahfouz thinks the only child is a syndrome to prevent, whereas many psychologists have a different view. Mahfouz's view on the only child is perceived as disadvantaged, selfish and lost.

Culture plays a vital role in defining altruistic sibling relationships since, in Egypt, culture is mingled with religion. Holy books lay emphasis on good relations among siblings. For example,

in the Quran, Moses relies on his brother Harun to accompany him in visiting Firaun (the Pharaoh King). Egyptian culture is diverse yet all three divine religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, reward the sibling bond.

The description of rivalry in holy books such as the Quran is very discouraging. For instance, in Surat Yusuf, Joseph, the prophet, talks to his father about his dream. His father, fearing the jealousy of his other sons, warns Joseph not to tell his dream to his siblings. The verse states: 'He said, "O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan. Indeed Satan, to man, is a manifest enemy"'.[8] It is clear from the verse that the rivalry is linked to enmity. Additionally, the history of this bond commenced in the time of the ancient Egyptians, when the teachings for a good life began with the sibling relationship.[9]

The question of when a sibling is obliged to play the role of a parent has been raised in this research. It is a duty that some siblings experience as pleasurable, for instance, the character Ahmed Akef in *Khan Khalili*. At a young age, Akef found himself acting as a parent to his younger brother Roushdi, a job he never hated. Egyptian society assumes that the elder sibling will play such a role. Mahfouz describes the relationship between Akef and Roushdi as complete. Akef never sees himself as a victim and Roushdi admires his brother.

It is impossible to link the psychoanalytic and sociological discussions of this dissertation to postcolonialism without applying Cesaire and Fanon's theories of colonization, which encourage the colonized to stand together to fight the aftermath of colonization. Building community in society begins with strengthening the sibling bonds in the family. It is an African notion to put a

[8] *The Translation of the Glorious Quran*. Trans. Ahmad Zidan, and Dina Zidan. (Kuala Lumpr: A.S. Noordeen, 1995) (12: 5).
[9] Asa G. Hilliard et al. *Teachings of Ptahhotep: The Oldest Book in the World*, (Blackwood Press, 1987).

strong emphasis on this type of bond.[10] According to both Cesaire and Fanon, alienation increases the risk of mental and psychological illness. The idea of living in a community of brothers enhances the state of well-being.

Before beginning this research, it was not expected that discussing sibling relationships would lead to discussing politics, Sufism and the life of ancient Egyptians. On Sufism, Mahfouz links the misery of the only child character to the isolation of a Sufi, which he totally rejects. This point is significant because while discussing Sufism in Egypt is quite common, relating Sufism to the case of the only child and introducing the Mahfouzian definition of Sufism are new areas for discussion. Sufism is a significant practice in Egyptian society. As stated previously, Solitude, which Mahfouz rejects, is one of the main factors of Sufism. It is iconoclastic to critique such an important factor, and to link it to the case of the only child syndrome. While researching the origin of the sibling bond, I realized that this bond has been sacred since the period of ancient Egypt, and some modern Egyptian traditions are still affected by this history. The thesis has revealed new insights on the impact of the ancient Egyptians on traditions and beliefs in modern Egypt.

I have referred to Nasser's regime, when the concept of brotherhood was highlighted. Nasser encouraged people to stand together with him to build the nation. In other oppressive eras such as the Tripartite Aggression on Egypt, people acted as brothers to fight three Western powers. It is possible to ask the people to act as siblings and unite to confront the enemy, since the altruistic loving kind of sibling relationship is the most common in this society.

[10] Walter Rodney. *The Groundings with My Brothers.* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1969).

Ancient Egypt has had an influence on modern Egyptian society that many may find unexpected. The usual presentations of the history and mysteries of the ancient Egyptians make them appear different and exotic. However, some traditions and beliefs that go back to that period, including the sacredness of the family in our lives, persist in contemporary Egypt. To raise siblings to be companions is essentially an ancient Egyptian tradition and family convention. It is significant that Mahfouz's first three novels are about ancient Egyptians: *Khufu's Wisdom*, *Rhadopis of Nubia* and *Thebes at War*. The final novel is the one most related to the present time. Some critics have analyzed *Thebes at War* as a political novel, suggesting that Mahfouz presents the tyranny and oppression of British colonization.

A major part of this dissertation has discussed Mahfouz's novel *The Children of the Alley*, a controversial text, often mistaken as a religious novel. While researching the novel in relation to a discussion of sibling rivalry, political sources by previous researchers were identified and referenced. One of these sources was Ayman El Desouky's paper 'Heterologies of revolutionary action: On historical consciousness and the sacred in Mahfouz's *Children of the Alley*'. The novel has many political messages and can be classified in more than one genre. El Dessouky has argued that

> The novel itself is equally controversial aesthetically and defies ready literary classification: a novel, an allegory, a philosophical narrative, a mythological account, but of what? Of monotheistic sacred and prophetic narratives? Of the 1952 revolution? Of the possibility of collective agency of the masses?[11]

[11] Ayman El Desouky, 'Heterologies of revolutionary action: On Historical Consciousness and the Sacred in Mahfouz's *Children of the Alley*', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Vol. 47, Issue 4 p. 428-439.

Mahfouz has stated that he uses religious symbols to highlight the political crises that took place in the Middle East during the time when the novel is set. Furthermore, referring to certain leaders such as Abdel Nasser, and translating his speeches to emphasize the origin of the importance of sibling relationships in Egypt. Seeing the emphasis of this novel as political and social rather than religious is controversial. Mahfouz tackles the sibling bond as a symbol of the history of humankind in terms of political authority. This research has highlighted how the sibling bond is one of the major aspects that form society. Despite common assumptions regarding the significance of the sibling bond, sociological studies and literary critical research on this bond in Egypt or the Middle East are very limited.

As previously stated in chapters One and Three, Mahfouz prefers to discuss sibling relationships in his works by drawing on his own relationship with his older siblings. He was deprived of their company because he was the youngest in the family. Like many writers and scholars, Mahfouz prefers to write about his own subjective experiences in many of his works. He analyzes the importance of the bond in relation to the political and socio-economic circumstances in Egypt. He expresses how this bond structures all the layers of Egyptian society.

Freud's psychoanalytic theories were intended to apply to Western societies and are unsuitable to apply to Egyptian society. Although Freud is the father of psychoanalysis, his theories were not universally accepted, as demonstrated in analyses of the sibling bond in the work of Klein, Anna Freud, Coles and Mitchell. I have been able to utilize their child analysis theories, because they focused on siblings, which Freud ignored. He focused on the Oedipus complex for subjective reasons. He was fond of his mother and his relationships with his siblings were not strong.

This dissertation has answered a number of questions, however, there are many questions that can open doors to new ones. For instance, why is this bond still important and are technology and Western intervention (liberation) having negative effects on this bond? Do Egyptian youth value sibling relationships in the same way as older generations? If so, how and why? Is this topic still relevant and why? If sibling relationships are still having impacts on Egyptian society, what are the reasons? Are the reasons for these impacts political or social or both? What has changed? Are Egyptians still relying on this bond for support? Has Egyptian society changed its perception of this bond?

Research on this bond is fruitful. People still cherish family bonds and consider them significant, however, they are taken for granted and are not critically considered or articulated. Many scholars have focused on discussing the international rules of an ideal family without shedding light on cultural considerations. The fact that even in sociology there is no recent research on siblings' relationships in the Arab region makes it a challenge to work in this area. It seems contradictory that the majority of people care about this bond and yet it is neglected in serious research.

Technology plays a vital role in reshaping the structure of the sibling bond. Young parents still raise their children to be altruistic and to sacrifice for their siblings, nevertheless, a current major complaint in Egypt is that family members do not spend time together. They rely mostly on technological devices. This may affect the sibling bond.

The reasons for divides in the Egyptian family have been presented and the effects on sibling bonds have been considered. It cannot be argued that the sibling bond is not significant for the

young generations. However, there are factors that might threaten the strength of the relationship. Parents play a crucial role in creating a healthy, strong bond among siblings. Therefore, failing, as a parent, to understand these technological devices affects the creation of such a bond and creates a rift between parents and children. Children prefer to use technology instead of spending quality time with their parents.

The sibling bond is still of value in the contemporary world. As previously stated in Chapter One, altruism in critical political situations and brotherly love is comprehensive. Sibling bonds are sacred and they are emphasized under critical circumstances. Political crises are spreading throughout the world because of terrorism and oppression. As it was stated previously in Chapter three, *Only Child Characters*, in Egypt, two revolutions recently took place, in 2011 and 2014, and Egyptians have experienced many critical moments and communal efforts to resist oppression during the last six years. In facing oppression of any sort, Egyptians use this bond as a shield and a weapon of resistance. They rely on one another. Sibling love aids Egyptians in winning many difficult battles.

Many critics have argued that Western influence is limited in Egyptian society, while others oppose this notion. It is difficult to ignore the effects of Western media on Egyptian youth. Recent statistics have demonstrated that in the Middle East, some young people are influenced by Western media and films, which may enhance a sense of individualism in society.

The available sociological studies about Modern Egypt have focused on the general rules of family structure and most of these previous studies are based on Western societies. There has been no detailed study of Egyptian perceptions of this bond, perhaps because the bond's

significance is considered to be unquestionable. Psychoanalytical research carried out in Egypt and about Egypt has been relatively limited. Two significant books are *The Problems of Psychoanalysis in Egypt* (1946) written by Muhammad Fathi, and *The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt* (2017) written by Omnia El Shakry. Fathi's book focuses on educational and intellectual purposes including raising awareness of psychological illnesses and their treatments, the relationship between psychiatry and psychology, and providing scientific and legal views on psychology with reference to Egypt; however, there is no reference to the significance of siblings in the previous sources. El Shakry's *The Arabic Freud* presents the significant role of the Egyptian psychologist, Yusuf Murad, in the field of psychology and psychoanalysis. El Shakry remarks that 'presenting Freud's discovery of the unconscious as a "Copernican revolution" to his audience, Murad identified psychoanalysis as the dialectal synthesis of philosophical introspection, positivism, and phenomenology'.[12]

Murad (1902–1966) founded a school of thought within the psychological and human sciences in Egypt and the Arab world. Murad was born in Cairo, where he received his bachelor's degree in philosophy at Fu'ad University (later Cairo University). He travelled to France, where he received his doctorate in psychology in 1940 from the Sorbonne. He was the first to teach psychology and philosophy in Arabic at Cairo University. Working with his colleague Mustafa Ziywar, Murad founded the *Journal of the Society of Integrative Psychology* and the *Journal of Psychology*. The *Journal of Psychology* was the first psychological journal in Egypt and the Arab world. El Shakry writes about Freud's effect on Murad's work as follows:

[12] Omnia El Sharky, *The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017), p. 95.

> It concerns itself with how Freud traveled in postwar Egypt, invoking Freud as a touchstone or metonym for broader Arabic debates surrounding the status of the unconscious in psychic life. The writer presents 'a history of ideas and debates spawned by Freudianism as a multivalent tradition'.[13]

One of the articles that refers to the history of the family structure in Egypt is the 'Overview of the family structure in Egypt and its relation to psychiatry' by Tarek Okasha, Hussein El Kholy and Reem El Ghamry (2012). It has considered the history of family structure in Egypt for the last 5,000 years and its link to psychiatry. The authors have stated that

> The people of ancient Egypt valued family life highly, and this is the case even now. They treasured children and regarded them as great blessing. The importance of family has not changed dramatically even though the structures are beginning to.[14]

Their study has focused on the significance of the role of the family in Egypt. It considers the relationship between husbands and wives, and the support of a family member in times of psychological illness. At the outset of the research, Okasha, El Kholy and El Ghamry addressed all family relationships as the same. They have described how 'the quality of family relationships shapes and influences the social, psychological development and functioning of its members'.[15]

[13] El Sharky, p. 96.
[14] Tarek Okasha, Hussein El Kholy and Reem El Ghamry, 'Overview of the family structure in Egypt and its relation to psychiatry', *International Review of Psychiatry*, Vol. 24, Issue 2, (2012), pp.162-165.
[15] Okasha, p. 163.

It is difficult to locate sociological and psychological studies on siblings, but studies on family structure are more easily accessed. However, the significance of the sibling bond has been neglected even in these studies. Fayza Haikal's paper, 'Family Life in Modern Egypt', has focused on the economic and social changes and circumstances that Egyptians experience in different social classes. Haikal has observed that 'differences between social classes in Egypt can be much greater than elsewhere'.[16] Most of the existing research has been carried out on the ancient Egyptian family structure, while recent studies focus on family structure in relation to gender studies, economic circumstances, political crises and divorce rates.

As Bank and Kahn summarize the significance of this bond as 'a relationship which defines one's life journey. Siblings are, for better and for worse each other's ultimate fellow travelers. Whether their bonds are comfortable or uncomfortable, or a little of both, they are co-voyagers in a world without many enduring reference points'.[17] In Egypt, it is considered to be the foundation of the society and it is a dimension of psychosocial existence that deployed in Egyptians' perceptions of each other and themselves.

[16] Ibid, p. 163.
[17] Stephen P. Bank, and Michael D. Kahn. *The Sibling Bond*. (New York: Basic Books, 1982).

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