

The Cairo Trilogy: An Existential Reading in Three Generations of this Novel

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Abstract

The researcher in this paper elaborates the writings of Naguib Mahfouz from an existential perspective in Cairo Trilogy. Mahfouz concludes that western scholars and politicians conceal the realities of daily life in Egypt, which Mahfouz reveals. In Mahfouz's Cairo Trilogy, one can find an openness and acceptance in Egyptian society for other faiths and cultures. The researcher will illustrate how there is an important acceptance of internal existential and religious struggles amongst individuals in the society during this novel. The researcher focuses on the character and the inner psychological conflicts in these characters. It seems that this is an important aspect of Egyptian identity. The idea that Egyptians or Muslims are struggling mainly with the West is contradictory to Mahfouz's characterizations. He asserts that Egyptians have their own internal struggles because of the diversity of their ideologies.

Keywords

existential; Egyptian society, identity



I. Introduction

Mahfouz portrays variety combinations of fictional contemporary Egyptian characters who express their inner struggles in response to the impact of colonization, war, and economic indigence in a developing Egypt. So, Mahfouz depicts characters and situations that reflect both the external forces and internal conflicts experienced in contemporary life. His images of situations mirror how Egyptians have discussed religious and political ideological questions in terms of a struggle against alien powers and how they look for meaning behind the dominance of colonialism in all the facets of their lives. In other words, Mahfouz's portrayal of Egyptians and Islam exemplifies the multi-dimensional construction of Muslim identity today. For Mahfouz, these dimensions consist of social justice, human nature, Western influences, political upheaval, and religious extremism.

This diversity facilitates acceptance and openness to others as suggested by Mahfouz in his writings:

Perhaps it is this atmosphere, which my generation imbibed, that makes it particularly painful for us to witness the growth of religious fanaticism. For us it is an alien phenomenon, and any harm inflicted on our Coptic brothers is inflicted on us all. (Mahfouz, 2001: p.108)

The masterpiece in a realistic level has brought the novelist universal recognition and the Nobel Prize; the Trilogy is published between 1956 and 1957, in separate books getting their titles from the name of a street in Old Cairo a birthplace of some of the characters: Bain al-Qasrain, Qasr al-Shawq, and al-Sukkariyya. With the rise of the Existentialism during the first half of the twentieth century the trilogy has traced the fortunes of a middle-class Egyptian family for three different generations firstly during the revolution in 1919 and

extending to 1944 the era of the second World War. The family of a merchant, Ahmad Abed al-Jawad, lives an atmosphere soaked in tradition and decorum. The father Abed al-Jawad is a stern authoritarian who permits no nonsense in the house. However, beyond his house, and he is a libertine who sings and drinks with his merchant friends each night and visits women like the singing girl. There is a total binary of Ahmad and his wife the women of the house that knows very less of the world her house and hardly ever go out. Palace Walk begins with the family following the father sightlessly and concludes with an open rebellion of Fahmi his second son, who becomes a revolutionary against his father's grip. All the family members revolt against the dominance of Abed al-Jawad in different ways. From the point of view of existentialist writer Mahfouz portrayed each one as a seeker of the meaning of his existence, for instance Ayesha, Abed-al-Jawad's second daughter, crosses her limits and exchanges looks with a police officer, yet she feels guilty. Yasin, has similar habits of his father's, he only seeks his own pleasures trespassing the boundaries laid down for him and during his adventures; he comes across his father's stealthy activities. When the initial shock is over, Yasin is overjoyed and said:

Congratulations Father: Today I have discovered you." To me, today is your birthday. What a day and what a father, who before tonight was lost to me. Drink and play the tambourine as you wish, not like Ayshah the tambourine player. I am proud of you. Do you also sing, father? (The Cairo Trilogy: p.240)

Ironically, the father is also happy in due to the fact that Yasin is his own version. Abd al-Jawad cannot remain unaffected by an emotional attachment to the revolution, yet he does nothing practical and dismays it when it impacts his home life. The book concludes with the death of Fahmi as he participated in peaceful demonstration. However, the death of Fahmi as compared with the death of other characters in Mahfouz's works, their deaths are ambivalent of despair and defeat, while Fahmi's death is quite a glorified in defeat. In addition, the overall portrayal of life in Palace Walk, with its changes of tone, its extravagancies and its rich composition, that familiar during the medieval era of literature however, it yields in the later to a modern, with the existential approach of modern ways of thinking that is concentrated and yet reductive and fragmented approach.

The second book Palace of Desire, refers to the period from 1924 to the death of the Wafid party leader Sa'd Zaghlul's in 1927. There is a sphere of politics that Mahfouz has employed here in the shape of deteriorated national movement into trivial squabbling between the politicians and the palace, and states the clash of traditional values and imported trends from the west, especially as it has impact on Kamal. The story opens on a quiet and sad tone of Fahmi's death that has been a hard blow to the father and mother. Abed al-Jawad restrains his pleasures activities and allows his wife to go outside. The focus of the attention is removed from the father to his youngest son, Kamal, who represents the intellectual teens of the generations. He is torn between conforming and not conforming between bachelorhood and marriage, ideals and realities and is forever perplexed al-heir. (Shukri,1995: p.63).

The last part of The Trilogy, Sugar Street, encompasses the period from 1935 to 1944. Mahfouz closely looks at the political and the social upheavals, the collide between traditional Muslim beliefs and western ideologies, and the cultural and social changes without by modern civilization and world war-II. The book took its title from the street in which the eldest daughter of Abed al-Jawad resides with her family; the existential perspective is widely applicable in this part of the trilogy in a form of a continuing examination of Kamal's split personality. His nephew, Ahmad Shaukat, likes the intellectual solution for the political glitches that confuse the old generation through joining the communist party. Meanwhile the

other nephew joined the group of Muslim brotherhood. The story concludes with the both brothers are being detained simultaneously and sent off to concentration camps. The three books of the trilogy are built on the existential grounds that offer a better understanding of the predicament of most of the characters. They face multiple problems like oppression, injustice and familial conflicts.

II. Review of Literature

The Existentialism as Medium of Expression

The existentialism in literature has been flourished during the earlier decades of the twentieth century as many writers like T. S. Eliot, James Joyce and William Faulkner wrote about the fragmented and desperate mentality of the modern age. Existentialism as a philosophical movement has been a medium to express the fear, despair, frustration, disintegration and decadence of the age. The twentieth century at early stages has witnessed the departure from the rigorous Victorian values to arrive at the loose morality, age of jazz and reaching at the era of the great depression. Hence, due to the fact that if a nation is diseased with societal evils, there will always be certain people who rise to condemn and attack that evil phenomenon.

For instance, the literary strategies that are used to reflect on the chaotic existence of the modern man. In the Arab world, it is Mahfouz, prolific social critic, who made himself as a socio-political climate laden with various forms of deviation and perverseness. Mahfouz precisely observes that many individuals in his nation running depraved life, particularly Muslims whose traditions are in contrary to the newly imported trends of the West. The impression that Mahfouz has located in one in individual, family as well as the entire nation as a whole is a fact about their predicament. His trilogy recounts the patriarchy, hypocrisy, oppression, corruption, sex, class - consciousness etc. In fact, The Cairo Trilogy is a version of the Egyptian life in general with an existential context. Mahfouz is traumatized by this kind of social decadence, and the national frustration and despair. In this context he fairly holds the view believing that "literature should be more revolutionary than revolution themselves" and that writers must find the means to continue to be critical of the negative elements in the sociopolitical reality." (Beard & Haydar, 1993: p.35)

The Trilogy is a masterpiece of Arabic fiction. The novel can be seen as an evocative, provocative sensual and overwhelming account of a country moving towards independence. Many of the interesting features of the Trilogy are domestic and national transitions and how al-Sayyid Ahmad's second and third generations adapt and refuse the alterations that are going on. The events of the novel are set in Cairo and it depicts the time in which it is set. It is normally accepted fact that no writer is able to escape the influences of his political, cultural, social, and intellectual environment, hence, every writer is a representation of the age in which lives, works and creates. (Tilak, 1995: p.6). Mahfouz is no exception. In prior time to independence lot of social changes occurred in Egypt and it had staggering effect on Mahfouz. After all, in Egypt at the beginning of the century traditions were unmanageable social reforms are unheard of and male dominance undisputed. These are all the aspects of the predicament of modern man that are delineated in an existential perspective. The Cairo Trilogy is survey of all the changes in a magnificent approach. It also recounts all the changes for instance in the status of women, as well as the changing relationships between fathers and sons, the changes in styles and tastes and so on.

III. Discussion

3.1 The Hypocrite Behavior

As part of the existential theme “Hypocrisy” is evident all over the novel. As with the at the outset of the volume *Palace Walk*, the first part of The Trilogy, Ahmad Abed al- Jawad the merchant and shop owner behaves in his house like a devoted Muslim. He is quite sincere and serious in his prayer, and does his religious affairs to God like fasting, prayer, or alms giving, besides the frequent visits to the shrine of al- Husayn on Friday with his sons as they believe that to visit the shrine itself is like a blessing and protection to the home from evil. He also recites the short verses of the Holy Qur'an. such features make him so dear to his friends and in the meantime persuade his sons to see him as "a graceful but an upstanding and exemplary man whose moral conduct is impeccable". (Sakkut,1971: p.28).

However, in his disposition, Ahmad delights in the pleasures of life— choice of wine delicious and food, pretty faces. He follows every bit of these pleasures with joy, gaiety, and passion. Women and Wine in his extracurricular life are necessity and complementary thing. He is a man who would never lose a chance to enjoy as long as there is life, without suffering any conflict between his sensuality and piety. He never in his conscious feels guilty or has some doubts; rather he congratulates himself for his ability to balance his two faces. No one has an idea about his secret matters except his few friends. Among his friends, Shaykh Mutawalli Abed al- Samad condemns his behavior and questions his obedience to God is "by word or deed"? (Mahfouz,1990. *Palace Walk*: p. 43).

He answers in a tone that does show his distress –

By word and deed both, by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, by remembering God whether I am standing or sitting. Why is it wrong for me, after that to refresh myself with a little fun, harming no one, or for me to overlook one rule? Is nothing forbidden save these things? (Mahfouz,1990. *Palace Walk*: p. 43)

The Shaykh disapprove his answer and whispers, "what a perverse defense!" Again, Ahmad Abed al- Jawad re-joins that God is clement and merciful, and that even his vengeance is mercy in disguise” (I bid). It is worth mentioning that Al-Sayyid Ahmad, in his claim, committed to prayer, fasting and almsgiving as the purgation for his licentious and dissolute behavior while he continues to glory in it. Yet the Holy Qur'an is very obvious about the essence of prayer (Mahfouz, 1990. *Palace Walk*: p.44)

Recite that which has
Been revealed to thee of the Book,
And observe Prayer.
Surely, Prayer
Restrains one from indecency and
Manifest evil; and remembrance of
Allah, indeed, is the greatest virtue.
And Allah knows what you do.
(Quran, Al-Ankabut: p.864).

So the scoundrel Al-Sayyid Ahmad reorders the verse to suit his dissoluteness. Al-Sayyid Ahmad is a double personality type of man that functions in two different bodies. One is dedicated for friends and women, and another is utilized for his family and the world. Mahfouz has focused his attention to the second visage that maintains his respectability and distinction, securing his status beyond the regular aspirations. However, his caprice conspires against the respectable phase of his character, threatening to destroy it forever. In house he

becomes angry for the slightest reasons. He is influenced by his short temper, which is not matching the brakes of civility that he has outside his house. His infuriation at home, is perceived, grants him a bit of relief from the endeavor he exerts to others as he tries to shows self-control, graciousness, tolerance, and worries for other people's feelings and affections. Sometimes he understands the irrationality of his domestic temper, yet he never regrets it. He's got the feeling that by getting angry over slight issues will enable the family to avoid serious ones. For instance, when his son Fahmi loves Maryam and wishes to marry her, he first asked his mother Amina to discuss the matter with his father, after he knew the matter al-Jawad as always, blurts out:

What are you saying, woman? Repeat what you have just said." "What are you saying, woman? Repeat what you have just said. "It is just a question, sir, with the decision left entirely to you..." Amina mumbles. "He replies in an explosion of anger; 'What is this spineless pampering? But a mother like you could well ruin her children. If you were the kind of mother you ought to be, he would never have dared discuss such insolent nonsense with you' (Mahfouz, 1990.Palace Walk: p.128)

Rasheed El-Enany criticizes the character of Al-Sayyid Ahmad, as he describes him in his book Naguib Mahfouz: The Pursuit of Meaning, "that he is a bundle of contradictions: a stern, authoritarian, much feared patriarch at home, but a cheerful witty, much-loved friend and businessman outside; a true believer and pious worshipper in daytime, but at night a devoted libertine given to drink, women and merrymaking. Yet, all these contradictions live inside him in a harmony worthy of a god. (El-Enany ,1993: p.81)

In fact, nothing remains hidden forever; this fact is well demonstrated in this case. Ahmad Abed al- Jawad's secrete life does not remain undiscovered for long. Someday it is disavowed as Yasin, the first son of Abed al- Jawad, who is apparently one of the customers of Zanuba, is told that his father usually makes passes to a woman who takes to drinking and dancing music. After knowing these facts Fahmi turned out to be curious and at last with the help of Zanuba he saw his father enjoying with Zubayda. After discovering his father Yasin is immediately pounded with amazement and tells himself, -"What an amazing situation! It would never have occurred to me. Here I am with Zanuba and my father is in a nearby room with Zubayda. Both of us in the same house!"(Mahfouz, 1990.Palace Walk: p.239) When discovered his father's secrete activities Yasin wasn't able to keep his emotions calm and immediately tells his younger brother, Fahmi uncovers all the secret stories with elaboration. He blabs-

My father goes to Zubayda's house to drink, sing and play tambourine...My father allows Jalila to tease him and be affectionate with him...My father gets drunk and commits adultery." Completely stupefied the listener wonders, "Is my father depraved or is licentiousness a virtue? (p.271)

As a result of this mess, the news Abd al- Jawad's hypocrite personality spread through women's quarter, moreover, it moved from mouth to mouth till it reached Amina, Khadeejah and Ayshah.

One more example of the household's hypocrisy has been stated in Palace Walk is that in the day of Ayshah's wedding, Ahmad Abed al-Jawad conducted a huge celebrations and he invites the eminent dancers and singers from his dark world except Jalila, the leader of the folk ensemble that has long sexual affairs. But Abed al- Jawad deserts her for new affairs with Zubayda. However, she does not mind that yet condemns the way he attempts to look like a respected man in public. Hence, she desires to take revenge against him and comes to the party without being noticed when singing is going. Her surprising attendance brings the

attention of nearby eyes, as all the people know about her eruptions. She starts to scold Ahmad Abed al- Jawad for terminating their long and intimate affair. He becomes surprised to see her and tries to keep her calm and away from the crowd. He asks her- "didn't you think about the suspicions your visit might arise in the minds of those who saw you?"(Mahfouz, 1990.Palace Walk: p.271) Later Jalila addresses his invitees and friends disclosing the hypocrisy of Abed al- Jawad, for instance —"Is this the best welcome you have for me?" (p.271). She also says- "Gentlemen, you're my witnesses. Observe how this man, who used to be unhappy if he could not stick the tip of his moustache in my belly button, can't bear the sight of me. "(p.265).

The attendants are surprised to hear an immoral woman like Jalila accuses Sayyid Ahmad's of adultery. However, Yasin is overjoyed, thinking of this situation as one of his father's many conquests. He is proud of his father's relationship with Jalila, in the same way he did as he saw him with Zubayda. Moreover, her accusation horrified Fahmi, who is not prepared to believe adulterous account of his father as told by Yasin. His mother and sister, at any rate, accept it resignedly, apprehending their insecure situation in a society dominated by rules. As the story progresses, Al-Sayyid Ahmad is in a rough situation to secure discipline. As he is the man of the family, he has simply deprived himself of the right of role modeling. It is not enough that he has an intimidating impact or a dreadful attribute. Rather, he is in a situation likely to be challenged by any revolting member(s) of the family as he attempts to enforce discipline. Yasin and Fahmi, who by chance had a clue about their father's other side, happen to be licentious themselves.

For instance, Fahmi knows two prostitutes he visits regularly at their different whorehouses. As part of the existential perspective sex is a constituent of the broader theme of "Existentialism" in the behavior Yasin's passion for the women he encounters is becoming an untreatable disease. He is known "not discriminating between fine ladies and women who sell palm fruit and oranges on the street."(Mahfouz, 1990.Palace Walk: p.70-71) As it happens that after he has got married and divorced two wives, the third one Zanuba was his father's mistress. Sexuality runs in his blood in a way that affects his domestic life second marriage was collapsed when his wife knew that he had sexually taking advantage of their maid. This was shortly after he had sexually harassed the family's servant— Umm Hanafi. It is amazing to watch a man who is faulty not only to others, but also to himself. It is the maximum degree of hypocrisy and falsehood. He directs his duplicity, damming scruples. Al-Sayyid Ahmad reveals knowledge of his immoral personality and by the end he expects to harvest corn where he planted thorn. Thus without shame he preaches:

I do what I want and still I'm al-Sayyid Ahmad. That's all there is to it. What a fine idea it [is] for me to try to rear my sons to be outstanding examples of rectitude and purity, since it [will] be difficult for them to balance my lifestyle with my honor and rectitude. But, alas, my effort [is] in vain with this son by Haniya." (Mahfouz,1990. Palace Walk: p. 409)

However, it is just a wishful thinking, an attempt in futility, as to give a right advice, yet showing a bad example is worse than pointless. No wonder Yasin provokes the conscienceless father, telling him to control himself in the first place, and to advise him later. Moreover, he questioned him if he has forgotten Jalila, Zubayda, wine, and music. Zubayda and Jalila have been Al-Sayyid Ahmad's mistresses. Yasin reminds his father how he is,

Al-Sayyid Ahmad, had been appearing before them (his family members), wearing the turban of the most authoritative Muslim legal scholar—the Shaykh al-Islam—and carrying the sword of the Caliph, the Commander of all Muslims. Yasin reminds

him that he should leave him alone, for he is not a child anymore. Yasin advises his father to rather look after himself. (Mahfouz, 1990. *Palace Walk*: p.410)

Thus, the characters are stroke by the sense of their real existence that they try to hide or even balance between the reality and illusion, as the novelist presents this eruption and allegation process to disclose and castigate the disguise of dishonesty, behind which certain individuals hid their social life. He aims that this peace will call them to good conscience; make them able to embrace the values of moral code for more purposeful and respected life. However, a hypocrite is not sure where the game of two-faces will arrive at, since one phase of the journey is mainly conducted in the darkness.

Unfortunately, darkness is precarious. Al- Sayyid Ahmad went through a harsh and rough experience in one of his amorous and nocturnal adventures. Someday, after midnight he moves out of the house of Umm Maryam (Maryam's mother)—Maryam who in later time happens to be Yasin's wife— hiding himself in the darkness. It has been like that every night since the British Troops set up a military base there. This very night is hard and rough on him as the guard's halt and detained him, by force turning him around, and pushing him in the back. A policeman secured him to a trench and he spends the night, digging out ditches besides with others night adventurers like himself. Before dawn, he has been totally tired, having worked all night without rest, with the feeling of humiliation, he is in a deep remorse about his dishonesty that has subsumed his faculties.

3.2 Attitude towards Sex

As a part of the broader theme and theory of “Existentialism” sexuality had its own influence on 20th century moral attitudes, especially in matter of prostitutions, brothels and sex perversion. In the second half of 20th century sex themes are prevalent mainly throughout the Middle East, particularly in Egypt. Mahfouz concentrates properly on the attitudes of the individuals towards sexual behavior by a double standard, giving the belief that man is freely able to do what a woman is not allowed. In *Palace Walk* it is Sayyid Ahmad Abed al- Jawad who is a rigid and formidable master in the house, while beyond the house he is a friendly and amicable person that is appreciated and loved by his friends.

The members of his family do not actually know what type of person he is away from home and so are his friends don't know what he is like in his house. In a way, that he merely dedicated his private life to himself without the interference of any member of his family. When he comes back to his house in the middle of the night from night club, he acts to grave and compose himself to persuade his wife and children. It is a fact that beyond the house he is a hedonist who cherishes women, wine, dance and music, besides seeking sexual pleasure with Jalila and Zubayda, leaders of folk band, and Zannuba, the ud (lute) player, and goes to great length to preserve his manhood. But the main target of his desire is his neighbor Umm Maryam, Bhaija. After her husband has died she has initiated affairs with Sayyid Ahmad. He (Sayyid Ahmad) exercises a good attempt to keeping his sexual abilities.

For this, he wants to have grand food, including different pastes of almonds, walnuts, and hazelnuts, and his wife Amina is attentive to prepare him the types of food he likes the most. For instance, Amina gives him a cup that contains three raw eggs blended with milk in the morning after breakfast. It was one of several of tonics he regularly takes after meals or between them like sugared walnuts, cod-liver oil, and almonds, and hazelnuts- to sustain the health of his huge body. Some friends assume that he takes a little hashish as a stimulant, but he refused that as it may damage his virility. For that he takes some expensive narcotic called

manzul, specially prepared by Muhammad al-Azami; not desiring to be an addicted. However, he takes it only in occasions to enhance his sexual pleasure.

Mahfouz gives the reader vivid details of Al- Sayyid's evening sport in Zubayda's bedroom with a group of close friends. As the quiet, respectable merchant goes wild merry-maker. He dances, drinks and plays the tambourine, while Zannuba plays the Ud (lute) and sings. Later the playful group suggests that Abdul Jawad and Zannuba go through a mock wedding, they basically were joking at first however, things developed to reality scene. Abdul-Jawad without hesitation, he holds her arm and goes with her to bedroom amid cheers and congratulations from all. Naguib Mahfouz describes the other side of character of Al-Sayyid Ahmad. He describes him as a devotee Muslim who does his religious tasks. He diligently does the ablution and prays, begging the God to bless him, his business, and his family and to make them successful and prosperous. He looks so sincere and serious in his prayer, which he implements with a profound sense of humility. He every Friday he takes his son to Friday prayer, with a feeling and believing that by visiting the Shrine of Al-Husayn itself is a blessing and will safeguard him and his family from evil. He used to read the Qur'an and also he has been able to memorize the short suras (verses). His religious attitude apparently persuades his children that despite of his tyrannical practice and the patriarchal authority, he is not only mildly and delicate but an upright and exemplary man whose moral conduct is exquisite.

Critics argue as to whether he had manifold personality. Jomier mentioned that, "Sayyid Ahmad has dual personalities, one that of a tyrannical father and the other that of an amiable, gentle man. Unlike Molier's Jartuffe, however, he is extreme in his pursuit of pleasure, in his use of patriarchal authority and in his loyalty to his friends. Jomier concludes that he more nearly fits the image of a man from the distant past than a man from the twentieth century. He is a character straight from the Thousand and One Nights, where virility was considered a superlative trait. (Jomier,1959: p.26)

Yusuf al-Sharuni sees Sayyid Ahmad's personality has two phases. One is a conservative in the house, he symbolizes middle class father of the Egyptian family of his generation, despite the fact that Mahfouz emphasis his patriarchal power, yet, he is a womanizer, as is shown by seeking pleasure with his business acquaintances. In this respect, his actions do not suit the traditional moral values and principles of the merchant society of his time, characterized by temperance and sobriety. Thus, while Al Sayyid is the head in the family of the patriarchal society, he sounds like the ritualistic father examined in Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, in that he bans freedom on his wife and children, and permits himself only. Hence, one can say that Al-Sayyid Ahmad has a fragmented rather than split personality. He does not even attempt to correlate his domestic life to his activities in the market, at the night whereas he attends parties in Zubayda's place, or the mosque where he performs.

In fact, the life is full of people like him. The assumed fear of God does not prevent Al-Sayyid's from having illicit affairs with his neighbor Umm Maryam. When the elderly Shaykh Mutawalli Abd alSamad scolds his hypocritical behavior, Al- Sayyid replies that God is most forgiving, and affirm his love, piety, and obedience, thinking that his good deeds will wash away his sins.

Clearly Al-Sayyid Ahmad realizes his moral weakness attempts to cloak it in self-righteousness; despite the fact that the Qur'an condemns adultery, Al- Sayyid gives justification to his illicit relationships with immoral women by associating them to the slave women of old times, even citing Qur'an (4:3) to sustain his situation. Jalila and Zubayda, are

two of his sexual partners, tell him he is on the external level is religious but on the internal level he is dissolute. Fancying his pleasure so much to give it up, in the Islamic he has to be considered a fasiq. (Mahfouz, 1990. *Palace Walk*: p.50-52) Besides Sayyid Ahmad it is Yasin, the elder son of Al-Sayyid Ahmad who is to some extent different from Al-Sayyid. He also believes that he can repent at the right time, and that affirming faith is enough to prevent God from punishing him. He usually mentions that God is most merciful to castigate a Muslim like him who has made mere and simple mistakes without harming others. Unlike his father, Yasin has inherited his father's love for sexuality, runs after his own pleasures crosses the boundaries laid down for him. He is entirely touched by the private life of his often married mother.

Due to his impression of her he distrusts every woman; even he hopes in that his loving step mother burn in hell. He relieves his conscience himself that there is nothing pure in this life, everything is shabby and man has been born to see the moral filth. Hence sexual decadence is relevant to the theme of futility of existence that Mahfouz is trying to transfer to his readers.

However, Yasin chastises the conduct of his mother, apparently he would accept the old house on Qasr al-Shawq (Sugar Street) and some shops he is to inherit from her. Mahfouz describes him as having an unadulterated sexual desire, as if he was possessed by a demon. Besides, the novelist wants to illustrate through his character the devastating effects of divorce on children, the primary victims.

IV. Conclusion

This paper displays the existentialism as theme and framework of the study. The Cairo Trilogy has images of frustration, repression and the conflicting desires of father son relationships that all contribute to the existentialism. Moreover, it includes many aspects of existentialism through the motive of betrayal and frustration of the protagonist who lives double life. The researcher has directly mentioned the word "Existential" in the main title of the paper and used the existentialism as a philosophical movement to draw his analysis of the way the behavior of the majority of characters. The motive of change, the search for the reality, despair, generational conflict, frustration, and betrayal are all subthemes that contribute to the main concept of existentialism and the researcher has pointed them out in each occasion in this paper to reflect the existential predicament and the existentialism is the medium to prove it.

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