

The Quotidian in Naguib Mahfouz's *The Cairo Trilogy*

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Introduction

Naguib Mahfouz's *The Cairo Trilogy*¹ is lauded for its poignant, realistic and paradoxical reflection of transition from old to new in the everyday depiction of life. As summarized by Matti Moosa, "Mahfouz depicts the family's unremarkable daily life in minute detail" (144); characters are depicted as partaking in their daily routines, as the opening scenes of nearly every chapter of the first book, "Palace Walk," exemplify. Still through these everyday delineations, critics cite the author's ability to depict, according to El-Enany, "the conflict between old and new, or past and present...the conflict between two value systems; one wallowing in the security of age-old tradition, and the other attracted to Western modernity with all its attendant perils" (47). Evidently, Mahfouz reproduces life and embodies the tensions therein with a quotidian² subject matter. Everyday life, with its constituent habits and rituals and transitions, comprises the core elements of *TCT* and Egypt's social milieu. Throughout *TCT*, the quotidian, everyday, rudimentary aspects of Egyptian life shift with the times, reordering power dynamics and delimiting characters' personal subjectivities³ and changing values.

As theorized by Kristen Ross, French Art Historian, the quotidian is that cyclical recurrence of everyday life in which habits and routines exist. It is the structure and scaffolding of life. Ross writes, "[The quotidian is] the sequence of regular, unvarying repetition" (20). Much like the French art of the 1950's and 1960's, Mahfouz's trilogy is "awash in a kind of sociological fascination ... with the transformed rhythms and accouterments of daily lived experience" (Ross 19). These accouterments include, but are not limited to, work, sexuality, cooking, hobbies and spatial demarcations in the home. As the story progresses, the

¹ Henceforth, *TCT*.

² See the next paragraph for a definition of the "quotidian," and to obviate redundancy, the word will be used synonymously with "routines," "habits," "accouterments," "everyday," and "rhythms."

³ See pages four and five for a definition of "subjectivity."

accouterments change. Careers that were popular become unpopular. Sexuality is redefined. That which is modest in *Palace Walk* may not be considered modest in *Sugar Street*. Characters enjoy different hobbies at different moments in the trilogy.

As the quotidian affairs of life shift, there comes a point when some characters find themselves stuck in-between the past and the present. They are located in what Homi Bhabha calls the Third Space⁴ in which characters navigate subjectivity. Bhabha's Third Space applies most aptly in the text to the liminal generation of Egypt, Kamal's generation. Kamal, who is an archetype for that generation, is represented differently to reflect transitions in his life. In *Palace Walk*, the first novel of the trilogy, his religious zeal is apparent. But by the end of *TCT* he has changed drastically into a liberally minded skeptic. The reader eventually finds that the text has been, for Kamal, a third space of sorts. With all the political volatility, the changing habits and routines, Kamal struggles to define himself and attach his identity to anything. Homi Bhabha explains this situation as

‘in-between’ spaces [that] provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. It is in the emergence of the interstices--the overlap and displacement of domains of difference--that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.

(2)

⁴ The “Third Space” theory within the field of postcolonialism derives from Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha coined the phrase to refer to space in between the poles of a binary. In this space, and only in this space, may subjects negotiate identity and meaning. As an example, he references the Algerian liberation from imperial powers and nationalist authorities, stating, “they are now free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference” (55).

This, in a nutshell, reflects shifts in discourse or formation of new discourse in Foucauldian sense of the word as habits and routines change, as particular characters enter a space in which they gain more autonomy in the defining act and break out from the old and transition to the new.

In his writing, Naguib Mahfouz subtly points out the ways in which Islam, Egypt's primary religion, circumscribes the quotidian and subsequently subjectivity. The orthopraxic religion, with its various sects, such as Shia, Ibaadi, Sufi, and Sunni, the dominant sect within Egypt, prescribes particular routines and habits as well as prohibiting other routines and habits. And though the different sects have different pillars, all sects follow some variation of the "Five Pillars." The pillars are rules prescribing particular behavioral patterns for adherents. There can be little to no admixture of the pillars with modern life. In addition to these religious tenets, there are other cultural practices that circumscribe the habits of individuals. For example, verbal greetings, which bestow peace upon people, and daily coffee hours are expected behaviors. Thus, in its "purist" form, Islam clamors for a "pure, unalloyed tradition from which to draw" (Rushdie, "'Commonwealth Literature' Does Not Exist" 67), and by forcing particular actions and prohibiting others, the faith partakes in the construction of the quotidian through power relations.

Shedding light on the power relations within early twentieth century Egypt, Mahfouz produces *TCT* in accord with Henry James's definition of realism⁵ and, more specifically, its later offshoot: social realism (Beard 64). As Henry James explains, "the novel is history" (2), and the novelist endeavors to "reproduce life" (4)--a practice that Mahfouz, at least for a period, adhered to, according to El-Enany (43). In fact, in an interview with Charlotte Shabrawy, he said, "When you spend time with your friends, what do you talk about? Those things which made an

⁵ For further examination of form in Post-Colonial Literature see *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies* (2001).

impression on you that day, that week . . . I write stories the same way. Events at home, in school, at work, in the street, these are the bases for a story” (n. pag.). Here he elucidates the fact that quotidian affairs purposefully comprise the content of his novels, which he represents as realistically as possible.

When renowned Mahfouzian scholar Rashid El-Enany wrote about the purpose of *TCT*, he noted that the work attempts to “trace the social tension between past and present back to a clear and definable point when it can be said to have started in earnest and which led to the situations in which we have seen [Mahfouz’s] heroes faced with the necessity of a stark choice between two irreconcilable value systems” (72). In other words, Mahfouz mirrors the events, power relations, educational paradigms, values, and changes leading to the Third Space. For example, Kamal, a son of the central family, chooses a liberal arts degree in spite of his father advising otherwise. Circumventing his father’s authority flies in the face of Egypt’s traditionally patriarchal society in which the head of the household, the father, generally hands down decisions. As well, the British military and time itself indirectly reorder the spatial hierarchy of the home, which is a representation of the power relations within the home.⁶ The encampment of British troops outside of the Abd al-Jawad home forces the family to abandon norms for the sake of precaution; and time flattens the hierarchy as it leads to the deterioration of the father’s authority, forcing him to lower floors.

Discerning the ways in which events in the novel transform the rhythms of Egyptian life requires an examination of the historical milieu. The three works of *TCT*, which was completed in early 1952, draw from the repository of historical events from 1917-1944. During the composition of *TCT*, two world wars had occurred; on a micro level, there was a national

⁶ Robert Tally Jr.’s *Spatiality* (2013) provides a thorough examination of the ways in which spatial demarcation bears witness to power dynamics.

revolution, and the British had granted the first stages of independence to Egypt. No stranger to grappling with the meaning of historical events,⁷ Mahfouz purposefully chose particular historical events that would shape his characters. In the introduction to Mahfouz's *Echoes of an Autobiography*, Nadine Gordimer asks him what events he loved to write about most. Mahfouz replied, "Freedom. Freedom from colonization, freedom from the absolute rule of a king, and basic human freedom in the context of society and the family" (XVII). Thus, it would be safe to assume that the public events chosen to shape the family of *TCT* can be interpreted through a Foucauldian lens. That is to say, the events deal with the dissolution or realignment of power relations, and they change the parameters of characters' subjectivities. For example, in Mahfouz's words, "after the revolution brought about political freedom, [Abd al-Jawad's] family demanded more freedom from *him*" (n. pag.). He clearly wanted to portray how power structures were shifting and altering Egyptian identity.

In the early to mid-twentieth century Egypt, the imposed will of colonizers made ripples throughout Egyptian society's power relations, which altered the everyday experience of the people. The two world wars exacerbated the impacts of British imperialism because the British were incessantly afraid of uprisings in their "territories" during the wars. The British still occupied the country, but on occasion, would cease occupation—nominally—only to return shortly after that. Though an Egyptian monarchy existed, it was controlled by the British (Daly 299). Often power vacuums arose as a result of British and Egyptian political clashes within the country. The destabilizing power vacuums resulted in an emergence of non-parliamentary organizations vying for control of power and the discourse in Egypt (Daly 300-304). The

⁷ Before beginning his career writing in the vein of social realism, Mahfouz had been, in a sense, a historical scribe. *Abath Al-Aqdar* (1939), *Rhadopis* (1943), and *Kifah Tibah* (1944) were the historical novels with which he began his writing career, having been fascinated with the depiction of pharaonic history, as it pertained to modern Egyptian identity.

jockeying of power structures (e.g. nationalism, fundamentalism, communism, etc.) can be seen throughout *TCT* as Egypt embraces modernization and change; and Mahfouz uses the texts to elucidate and critique the alterations to the quotidian that ensue. Different parties attempt to change habits and routines and control the flow of time.

Egypt, having been an occupied British territory, had, like so many other countries, undergone several changes at the hands of imperial influence. Many of the Egyptians' everyday traditions were subject to British authority. Throughout *TCT*, a recurring lament by several characters is the lack of access to the entertainment district, which the British cut off. Even in areas where British authority had no direct influence, they still left fingerprints. The political sphere was, as one would expect, no exception. Several political parties came in to restore power with the intention of restoring power to the hands of the people. Throughout the period of 1918-1952, Egypt's seats of power changed hands on multiple occasions:

A typical pattern emerged in Egyptian politics: whenever a free election was held, the Wafd [nationalist party] would be guaranteed a sweeping victory, but a conflict with the British or the palace led inevitably to the Wafd's resignation or dismissal, the dissolution of parliament, and the suspension or modification of the constitution. The Wafd would remain in opposition until a disagreement between the palace and a minority party, or a decision by the British, cause the Wafd's return to office. (Daly 290)

The Wafd party, which Mahfouz followed avidly until some undefined point in the middle of the completion of *TCT*, held the keys to power for a brief period. Their reign began a few years after the 1919 Revolution that saw the country demand the evacuation of all British forces. However,

during their brief rule, many dissident movements developed. The political situation was volatile to say the least.

The years during World War II proved especially unstable and led to more conflicts in power. The trouble began at the onset of the War when in 1939 “Egypt [became] subject to Marshall Law per the Anglo-Egyptian treaty, which included censorship” (Daly 298). The declaration of Marshall Law led to unrest. In an orthopraxic society that had mechanisms already built in to create boundaries for experience in the form of rules, boundaries were drawn in even more by the coercion of an outside force. Shortly after that, in 1940, the British forced the resignation of General Azia Ali al-Misri and Prime Minister Ali Mahir due to their fascist sympathies (Daly 299). Radical approaches to halt the cycle came from groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and Young Egypt and contrasted the secular efforts of the Wafd nationalist party (El-Enany 300). In an attempt to rid the country of foreign influence in 1945 and 1949, Egypt pled with the British to gain independence, but the British denied the proposal both times (Daly 304-305). Throughout *TCT*, the altering of characters’ habits bears witness to the attendant perils that go along with such political volatility.

In *TCT*, Mahfouz embeds a middle-class family within the historic district of Cairo to embody the struggle between social structures. Obviously, the term “conservative” manifests differently in different cultures. In this particular context, conservatism is closely linked to an orthopraxic religious worldview. The ideology latent in certain Islamic outposts, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Young Egypt, found a worthy enemy in several nationalists at the time, because the nationalists were attempting to combat the strictures of what they believed was damaging fundamentalism (Smith 1). The narrow thoroughfares and overall claustrophobic

atmosphere of the historic district offer a microcosm of the middle-class family's worldview—generally conservative and reticent to provide space for new ideas.

Like the initial worldview of the middle-class family, the discourse of the old area was primarily Islamic. Anyone with an understanding of Islam would have been able to see, according to C. Nijland, “daily speech of the inhabitants of this part of Cairo is coloured by Islam,” which is “well captured in the novels” (137). Within this milieu, a nationalist pride began to permeate throughout the middle and lower classes. With the emergence of the Wafd party in the early 1900's, there was an outlet for the patriotism. At the beginning of the movement, *The Cambridge History of Egypt* explains, “It was a nationalist movement that had strong anti-colonial leanings. It was said to represent all social classes with the impetus to empower the masses not any particular groups, whether religious or political” (286-288). Mahfouz briefly sides with this anti-colonial agenda. Many of the characters initially side with the nationalist because they want unencumbered opportunities to navigate their own future.

However, change soon swept through the middle-class with the advent of urban development during the early-mid twentieth century, forever changing not only the landscape of Cairo but also people's visions of the world. A new city, adjacent to the old medina, arose, resulting in ideological tension. Mahfouz and his initial nationalist leanings are a testament to the ways in which change affects the middle-class families that grew up in al-Jamaliyya. Though Mahfouz relocated to the newer, more suburban city in 1920, his filial relationship to the old city remained. Sabry Hafez, a renowned scholar within the discourse of Arabic literature, considers Mahfouz to have been influenced by his new locale in a manner similar to other Egyptian authors, stating, “Many of the pioneers of realist narrative fiction in Egypt ... were born and brought up in the old city, but developed their literary talent in the context of the second; they are

a product of the passage between the two worlds, with their contrasting rhythms and visions” (New Left Review). The faster pace of life, the prevalence of licentious behavior, the changing opportunities for women, and the new educational institutions alter the possibilities of subjectivity.

At such location of emerging new routines and behaviors, “Foucault cut with a fine scalpel, slicing into the everyday and revealing a metastasizing pathos gripping modern existence” (Tran 17). At this location, Foucault and Mahfouz meet.⁸ The Arab Nobel Laureate’s trilogy highlights the everyday activities of early twentieth century Egyptians, exposing the mechanisms of power that seek to order and reorder characters’ subjectivities.

Understanding power and knowledge, in Foucauldian terms, assists the reader in uncovering the implications of the shifts in everyday activities in Mahfouz’s novels. To understand Foucault’s theories about the relationship between power and knowledge, one needs, at least, a preliminary understanding of the term “Discourse.” In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault develops his concept of historically demarcated epistemological structures. He explains, “in any given culture and at any given moment, there is always only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice” (168). These are dominant discourses; they delimit people’s views of the world.

When Foucault first introduced what he termed “Discourses,” they demarcated three extremely broad categories: the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, and Modernity. Stephen Slemon takes Foucault’s concept of discourse further, which allows for more historical fluidity. He writes, “‘Discourse’...is the name for that language by which dominant groups within society

⁸ Michel Foucault’s theories about the interplay of language, knowledge, and power help to link Mahfouz to the canon of Post-colonial literature within which he belongs. Foucault’s theories also help to generalize and make more adaptable the tasks of the Rushdies of the world. It would be unfounded to assert that Rushdie, Mukherjee, and Roy have no interest in Foucault’s thoughts about the relationship between language, knowledge, and power. See Rushdie’s “Imaginary Homelands” for further discussion of the genre.

constitute the field of 'truth' through the imposition of specific knowledges, disciplines, and values" (6). According to Joseph Rouse, Foucault's seeks to identify how "concepts and statements were intelligible together, how those statements were organized thematically, which of those statements counted as 'serious,' who was authorized to speak seriously, and what questions and procedures were relevant to assess the credibility of those statements" (96). From witty banter about domestic activity to stimulating political debate, the narrative's discourse shifts to reflect the contemporary power discourse. In regards to the imposition of knowledges, different fields of knowledge—expressed through valuations of particular college degrees—are given primacy at various points in the novel. For example, scrupulous rules governing females can be better understood in the context of Foucault's concept of discourses. Joseph Rouse explains that practices like the surveillance of women are ritualized to delimit subjectivities (99). In the context of *TCT*, one should consider how the coffee hour, the prohibition of the wife leaving the home, and the use of a nanny to escort Kamal to and from school might function to circumscribe the possibilities of many of the marginalized characters.

Power relations set up, maintain, and ensure adherence to the prescribed flow of life. Foucault refers to this phenomenon as disciplinary space. He writes, "[disciplinary space's] aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communication, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits" (*Discipline and Punish* 130). Although many have regarded "power" as something that enables an entity to only limit its object's expression of free will, Foucault views power in a manner more fit for the field of post-colonial literature. Foucault's conception of power is, according to Jonathan Tran, "more about inculcating subjects into certain modalities of life" (23). In other words, circumscription

becomes a more appropriate way to view power. It confines subjectivity to interpreting the world according to a limited set of signifiers.

Mahfouz's penchant for poignant realistic depiction helps uncover Foucauldian power relations. And with his agenda of finding a space in which identity can be expressed freely, Mahfouz begins his most acclaimed work with an intersection of time and the quotidian. The time is midnight, the inception of a new day. The quotidian element is the awakening of Amina, wife, mother, and symbol of the past. Waking at midnight is "an old habit she had developed when young, and it had stayed with her as she matured" (5). Here, he presents a traditional character unable to gauge at which point in the arc of history she stands. With no mechanism for calculating time, the woman, mother, and wife unknowingly awakens in a moment that is the precipice of a new day—midnight. She did not wake with the aid of any modern technology set to sound an alarm. She wakes at that hour because she always wakes at that hour. She only exists and acts within the parameters of her habits.

Simultaneous to this moment in which Mahfouz begins to establish a rhythm, he establishes a discourse and undermines it in the first chapter. The narrative timeline begins with Amina's routine. He immediately undermines this temporal prioritization in the following chapter by narrating events that had happened before her routine. In the second chapter, he shows Amina's subservience to her husband. Though she appears initially as a servant in the chapter, Mahfouz seems to undercut her husband's authority. As Mahfouz uses terms to designate the identities of the characters, he uses general indicators such as "the man," "she," and "he" so as to obfuscate the relation between the characters. The first character, the husband, addresses the latter, "Good evening, Amina" (12). Amina replies with addressing the man as "sir" (12). The vocative she uses seems to ascribe superiority to her addressee. It is only a few

lines later that Mahfouz reveals the characters actual relations. They are husband and wife.

Though Mahfouz casts her inferiorly with the use of language, he centers her with a temporal reversal. He uses the banal act of waking with a transgression of time to foreshadow the creation a new space for the woman to navigate identity.

One of the mechanisms that moves the novel toward the aforementioned moment of tension is the physical presence of the foreign powers. As they close in on the private sphere, quotidian affairs associated with the home change. The coffee hour, which originally took place on a particular floor at a particular time with particular participants, changes. Taking children to school transforms. School becomes more than just reading, writing, and arithmetic; students incidentally end up in political demonstrations. Simply attending school no longer excludes the possibility of the children participating in demonstrations. Foreign influence starts to transgress physical boundaries and manifests in an alteration of everyday affairs. When the foreign soldiers encamp in the streets just beyond the house, Kamal, the modern symbol of intellectualism and science, begins his replacement of the father.

The form with which Mahfouz portrays the time span fortifies the notion of a shifting discourse. The first novel, also the longest, covers the shortest expanse of time, because Mahfouz directs the reader's attention to the habits and rituals of everyday for the typical Egyptian. By the end of the final novel, also the shortest and covering the most time, the reader encounters explicit political and sociological dialogue within the text. The flow of the narrative changes from a strict focus on the quotidian to a more inclusive narration that includes more discussion of social issues and how particular characters interpret and counter such issues.

As a result, in and across *TCT* hybridity⁹ recurs. Oppositional value systems and knowledges emerge, creating tensions between and within characters. The father, al-Sayyid Ahmad, is a traditional patriarchal figure trusting in cultural traditions. His youngest son, Kamal, who is a highly educated liberal character, trusts in logical positivism and exists as a peripheral figure in the margins. The former values and constitutes subjectivity according to tradition. He asserts that ritualistic behavior, gender ordering, and industrial knowledge are essential to identity. The latter questions those delimitations of subjectivity and seeks new modes of understanding and constructing reality.

Though most commentary agrees that *TCT* is primarily concerned with the effects of modernizing values and practices, some critics dispute Mahfouz's authorial intent in regards to the formation of subjectivity. As Fadwa Gad contends, some critics have falsely accused *TCT* of insurrectionist rhetoric (24).¹⁰ Regardless of how critics interpret the text's relative support of the revolution, most acknowledge that *TCT*'s date of completion, which is just before the revolution that would alter the course of modern Egyptian society, affords a unique perspective on the trajectory of Egyptian society as it was before the 1952 coup d'état. Critics also generally agree that the novel's characters embody the progression of the Egyptian society from traditional culture to a more modern one as it veers toward revolution. Many view the characters within the context of their use of Islamic language. The typically traditional characters' use of religious language is often contrasted with that of the modern characters.¹¹ As the narrative progresses, so

⁹ Homi Bhabha refers to this concept to denote a more fluid notion of nationality, identity, and subjectivity. For more see his "Commitment to Theory."

¹⁰ This stems, she says, from a misinterpretation of an analogous relationship between the patriarch of *TCT*, al-Sayyid Ahmad, and Gamel abd al-Nasser.

¹¹ This is an unfortunate limitation of my research. Not being able to read Arabic well enough for this work prohibits thorough examination of how Mahfouz uses common, universally accessible Arabic. But it is, nevertheless, in need of mentioning.

do the role of the characters. The characters filling the traditional role (e.g. the Patriarch) lose privilege in the dominant discourse, thus changing the linguistic flavor of the narrative.

Chapter One traces the establishment the quotidian in *Palace Walk*. It lays out the routines that the Abd al-Jawad family follows. The chapter primarily follows the established routines of al-Sayyid Ahmad, the father, and Kamal, the youngest son. Simultaneously, the Chapter bears witness to the encroachment of Western influences, especially the primary manifestations of foreign impositions and dissolution of the public and private binary. Throughout most of the first novel, the two spheres contain different habits for the patriarch. The chapter illuminates the collision of the two worlds. It also illuminates the collision of the past and present. Old ways of life meet new ways of life. Mahfouz starts to merge the public and private binary simultaneously with the past and the present binary.

Chapter Two takes stock of the situation as it exists post-fracture. The influence of Western practices and values is growing with each day. The formerly dominating character, the patriarch, is becoming less and less relevant. Chapter Two highlights Kamal's entrance into the center of the narrative from the margins. With Kamal at the center, the chapter discusses the clash of Kamal's formerly nationalistic tendencies and Western mores. The clash results in the removal of sanctity from many traditional elements of life. The way Kamal views cultural symbols like marriage, religion, and education changes because of the skepticism birthed at school.

Chapter Three seeks to establish how Kamal productively uses the Third Space. The chapter also analyzes several characters as they make use of new space and knowledge to define reality. The Chapter shows how many characters have access to a multiplicity of epistemologies resulting from al-Sayyid Ahmad's continued marginalization. Though the new space provides

copious opportunities for many of the characters, Kamal is the character most fit for analysis because he has his feet most firmly planted in both the past and the present more than any of the characters.

Mahfouz is unrivaled in his ability to realistically depict the social environment of Modern Cairo. His precision permits the reader ample opportunity to reflect on transitions. The early rhythms and behavioral patterns of *TCT* are nearly non-existent by the end of the novels. Through these delineations of Egyptian life, Mahfouz reveals the opportunities that many characters have to negotiate their own subjectivities. At first, al-Sayyid Ahmad's patriarchal presence obviates characters' autonomy in the pursuit of understanding. The father's patriarchal role even circumscribes his behavior. According to Foucault, this occurs because the power relations that exist at that point in the novel prescribe and prohibit actions for characters. As the power relations shift, different characters find space to explore alternative definitions of reality. According to Foucault, characters never truly negotiate life independent of the institutions of power. However, Mahfouz contradicts this in his evaluations of subjectivities. For Foucault, as Jonathan Tran remarks, "the self" was not a substance, but only a nominal way of speaking of persons in relation to others, then its destiny can only be achieved by increasingly dense demarcations" (18). Individual subjectivity does not matter because other subjectivities determine and delimit the possibilities of one's self. However, like Mahfouz, the Judeo-Christian tradition also rejects this premise by placing absolute value and substance in the self. It allows for free will. Though Foucault would likely argue that such valuation occurs only within the discursive field created by the *logos*, it seems that the self, having been stamped with the *imago dei*, needs no vindication of its essence and willing power. Each person's subjectivity possesses intrinsic value by virtue of its creation. Like the creator, part of the creation's subjective

expression is the capacity to act willingly. Even within the tradition of Islam, which was at its inception highly influenced by the Judeo-Christian ethic, the self possess intrinsic value and a capacity to act freely.

Chapter 1: The Quotidian in *Palace Walk*

With the rhythm of everyday life foregrounded against a backdrop of socio-political change, *Palace Walk*¹² follows the Abd al-Jawad family as it navigates the murky waters between two “palaces,” the dying Ottoman Empire and the British Empire (Irele 89). The Ottoman Empire continued to remain relevant in Egypt thanks to the Khedive to whom Mahfouz occasionally refers in the novel. The British are responsible for deposing the Khedive in early 1920’s (Daly 250). While the family wades through the liminal space of 1917-1919 Egypt, time alters the everyday lives of Egyptians. That liminal space, which is the transition between the old and new, enables the transformation. The country is in between sovereignties, as the Ottomans and British fight for control of the land. During the transition, Mahfouz locates the liminal space at the intersection of the public’s incursion into the private and the transgression of time boundaries with the quotidian. As the private and public merge, power relations shift, and previously privileged types of knowledge fade, beginning the partial erasure of antiquated subjectivities.

Mahfouz extensively details the everyday affairs of individuals, or the quotidian, within the family to “prepare the scene for the shattering impact of the revolution” (El-Enany 73). The impact manifests primarily in the dynamics of power among and between individuals. He chronicles these events with a vested interest in how the state apparatus, represented by al-Sayyid Ahmad, circumscribes subjectivity. For, he worked in the government, and many believe he was subject to its whims. According to Hosam Aboul-Ela, “the Egyptian state has been very effective in reducing Egyptian writers to Foucauldian author functions”¹³ (n. pag.). In the world of the Trilogy, the everyday entails rich traditions such as, but not limited to coffee hours, ritualistic

¹² Henceforth referred to as *PW*.

¹³ In the sense that the author is no more than a function of the state.

prayers, context-specific language use,¹⁴ regular visits to venerated sights—and sibling bickering. Mahfouz’s transformations of the elements of Egyptian life indicate shifts in power relations that dictate and constitute the possibilities of the characters’ definitions of society.

How characters define autonomy, what it means to be Egyptian, and what it means to be a citizen change along with these traditions. The characteristics mentioned in the introduction about the district in which the family lives hint at the potential impacts of a foreign imposition from a liberal and largely secular influence. Fahmy, the family’s staunch nationalist, reproves the impositions, saying, “a people ruled by foreigners has no life” (374). Amina, his mother and a character whose voice is marginalized, points to one of the most fundamental elements of the everyday, life, in an attempt to rescind the power from the imperialists’ hands, which Fahmy’s statement afforded them. She reminds Fahmy, “we’re still alive, even though they’ve been ruling for a long time. I bore all of you under their rule” (374). Abiola Irele refers to Amina’s statement as “the commonsensical chronotope of life in its most quotidian, anti-national sense” (91). Amina espouses a different rhetoric, which cares little for the nation and a lot for the individual. These two responses typify the war waging within the country. As a nationalist rhetoric is emerging to preserve the “nation,” another is coming from the margins of society, clamoring for the privileging of the unique individual subjectivity.

Mahfouz establishes a narrative precedent in the first pages of the novel, indicating the centrality of the quotidian in revealing power relations. A nameless woman arises from her sleep. She wakes at a liminal moment, midnight. Moreover, she wakes out of “habit” (5). Thus, the reader enters the narrative through an anonymous awakening, which is a finite, routine act.

¹⁴ By this I mean regularly repeated phrases such as *As-salamu alaykum*, *Insha’ Allah*, *Masha’ Allah*. These are common phrases that are repeated nearly moment-by-moment across the Muslim World regardless of one’s first language. I also refer to the agglutination of names whereby prefixes are added to the beginnings of names as terms of designation. I will discuss the implications of these later in the chapter.

Mahfouz proceeds to insert very ordinary, rudimentary images of everyday life: oven rooms, kneading dough, and other domestic affairs. The background to these images is the hour of al-Sayyid Ahmad's return from his nightly entertainment affairs. The situation is suffused with irony. This nightly ritual is an assertion of the father's control over his wife. The scene establishes a link to Foucault's belief that individuals do not necessarily possess power but relationships between people exert power (Gutting 109). The father is not later dispossessed of his power over Amina, but the ritual that enables the power changes. Hence instead of leading into the story with his domination, Mahfouz lets Amina control the narrative flow. His temporal reversal foretells changes that are certain to occur in power relations.

To fully understand how the alterations in the quotidian affect change in power relations, the first order of business is coming to terms with al-Sayyid Ahmad, the foil against which to compare the large-scale transformation in the country. The patriarch seems like a walking contradiction even though he is aware of his multiple subjectivities: "His life was composed of a diversity of mutually contradictory elements, wavering between piety and depravity. Contradictory though they were, they all met with his satisfaction, without needing to be propped up by any pillar" (47). He perpetually sways between the time for Allah and the time for the heart.

According to Mahfouz, the family patriarch is a typical Egyptian middle-class man. His habits are no different than most of the men of his stature and class at that point in history. As such, he is a symbol of all things national. He has a public persona and a private one: "His acquaintances did not know what he was like at home. The members of his family did not know him as others did" (41). That he is "dreaded and feared only in his own family ... [and with] everyone else ... he was a different person" (41) pleases him. Though each subjectivity

expresses itself differently according to the public and private binary, as the binary dissolves and traditions change, the delimiting power al-Sayyid Ahmad's presence changes.

Despite the latent contradictions, he is successful “in harmoniously joining these two sides of his personality in a compatible whole” (240). Though he is aware of his duality, most of the other characters are not—at least at the outset of the narrative.¹⁵ In public, or simply beyond the walls of his home, he is a gallant man, the life of the party, a raconteur, a proverbial playboy, and he seems to be devoid of *extraordinary* influence. Furthermore, his story-telling ability is reminiscent of traditional, Bedouin Egyptians. He has not aligned with a Western conception of beauty. His image beyond the walls of his home represents a progressive, secular man, imbibing in extra-marital affairs and alcohol—two forbidden vices within Islam. Unfortunately, for him, these liberties are only temporary because imperial surveillance methods inhibit these habits later on. At the penultimate moment of *PW*, Mahfouz reveals his nationalist consciousness. His excitement abounds concerning the nationalist petition being passed around Egypt. His effusive joy “was like this in all concerns of life, so long as they had no connection to his home” (354). His jovial, licentious nature and national consciousness among his friends and peers win him great acclaim throughout the district. However, in unmitigated contrast to his social image, at home, he inhabits another subjectivity governed by different rules. He is unequivocally pious, tyrannical, chauvinist, and incapable of displaying affections. He performs his ablutions¹⁶ daily, along with the attendant prayers. He demands adherence to conservative conventions on the part of his family; however, as Yasin observes, “[he] recklessly ignore[s] conventions” (319)—a fact that Yasin learns later in the story. He continually surveys his family. Any contravention of his

¹⁵ The entertainer, and one of his mistresses, Zubayda, perceives his duality quicker than any. Though he's ostensibly pious and full of dignity, inside, the true test of a man's character, she sees that he is “licentious and debauched” (102).

¹⁶ This is the mandatory cleansing ritual that a Muslim must perform before each of the five daily prayers.

familial code meets austere punitive measures. Simply being in the home enables his presence to pervade throughout the house, spreading a spirit of fear and consternation. He's been so dictatorial in the past that his first wife's defiance provokes him to violent abuse. He has a temper that "was not held in check at home by the brakes of civility that he employed to perfection outside his household" (140). Mahfouz hyperbolizes his anger by juxtaposing an act of discipline with a conversation in his store. After throwing a temper tantrum at home, he trivializes the matter at the store, laughing mockingly about it with his friends. Kamal reveres his father's ostensibly upstanding character in *PW* to that extent that Mahfouz writes, "He could not imagine that any other man in the world could equal al-Sayyid Ahmad's power, dignity, or wealth" (55). However, he will gain knowledge of his father's indiscriminate acts that affect his level of respect. As al-Sayyid moves through the events of *PW* his dual subjectivity abides, but the subsequent social transformation tempers his polarity.

Language use is central to the rhythms of life that Mahfouz establishes.¹⁷ In *PW*, characters make sense of tragedy with language in ways that correspond to the privileging of particular discourses. Before her departure to exile, Amina uses the phrase, "God willing," when she expresses her hope to reunite with the family (213). It occurs again when Amina's mother uses the *Bismillah*, "in the name of God," to console Amina despite the potential reality of indefinite separation from her children (218). When the children go to visit Amina while she resides at her mother's home, they attempt to console one another verbally. During the revolution, Kamal finds himself in his uncle's pastry shop. While bullets fly by, his uncle recites surahs from the Qur'an. Moments later he states, "perhaps this verse would drive away the English as effectively as it drove away the jinn" (394). Before a precarious endeavor, Khadija

¹⁷ Language is a central component to Foucault's understanding of power relations because he believes that language enables power relations to abide.

admonishes her mother to invoke the assistance of God, “reciting the opening prayer of the Qur’an” (177). The discourse of coping in the text consists of rote utterance. Mahfouz makes sure to indicate the lack of newness in this approach to coping, writing, “as usual in a situation like this, the conversation went full circle. Everything that had been said before was repeated in the same words or different ones ... The conversation went on, without bringing up anything new” (226). The characters possessing and wielding this particular language are only the mother and the young son, Kamal, both of whom are marginal characters in *PW*.

Education is another element of the quotidian that contributes to the circumscription of potential subjectivities. Women are uneducated in *PW*—at least in the modern sense, which is not unlike the situation in Egypt (Moosa 146). They are not permitted to attend school past a certain age unless their husband’s grant it to them. However, Amina claims to have “general knowledge” that has been given to her by the generations preceding her (70). Thus, she is limited in her perception of the world due to inability to access new forms of knowledge. Her knowledge is folklore brought into the present with neglect of modern advances in knowledge. For example, Kamal and Amina argue about “whether the earth rotates on its own axis in space or stands on the head of an ox” (70). She finds what the school is teaching Kamal to be contradictory to the knowledge passed down from her mother’s generation to hers and, therefore, illegitimate. Moreover, in her evaluation of valued knowledge, she asserts that God’s favor rests on religious scholars for their knowledge of the Quran because Quranic knowledge derives from divine revelation. As a result, religious clerics and scholars seem possess more valuable cultural capital because it can be exchanged with God as a banker. She deems eternal currency more valuable than material currency.

Aside from women's limited access to new types of knowledge, their routines are partially contained within the scope of the affections of men. To al-Sayyid Ahmad, women serve one purpose: to offer their bodies to men. His ex-wife, for example, was his possession under his absolute rule. Amina proves to be no exception to his rule even when she attempts to act on religious duty. Her relationship with al-Sayyid Ahmad delimits her experiences. For example, at the suggestion of her children, she goes to visit the shrine of a sacred saint while her husband is out of town for work. By not receiving his consent, she sets herself up for punitive recourse. Of course, the trip could not go smoothly, and upon her return from the place, a car sideswipes her, breaking her collarbone. Needless to say, when her husband returns home, he quickly learns of her actions. After letting Amina recover, Abd al-Jawad promptly evicts her from his home for the crime of disobedience. His surveillance techniques demand compliance. The way the father treats Amina—and the rest of the family for that matter—is “based on principles he would not abandon” (244). Amina's capacity to experience the world stops where her role as a wife in a traditional Egyptian home makes it stop.

The tradition of marriage offers another frame through which to view how the power afforded to al-Sayyid Ahmad's role in the family reorders and circumscribes others' subjectivities. He receives a request for the hand of his youngest daughter, Aisha. His malignant response indicates a threat to tradition. He considers the request a circumvention of tradition, causing dishonor. A few days before he receives the request three women come to visit his home, presumably to see the oldest daughter, Khadija.¹⁸ While there, the guests only see Khadija. However, a few days later they send a request for the younger daughter, Aisha. In doing so, they raise eyebrows. Al-Sayyid Ahmad wonders how they could ask for the hand of the daughter they

¹⁸ Because it was so uncommon for women to leave the home in early twentieth century Egypt, this fact is assumed in the narrative.

did not see. Moreover, as was customary in the Arab world at the time of the story, the older daughter would always marry before the younger one. Having his daughter observed by a man and reversing the order would bring shame to the older daughter and subsequently to the entire home, as indicated by the father's reluctance: "I would despise giving my daughter to someone if that meant stirring up doubts about my honor" (167). Al-Sayyid holds his family to a different standard than many of his peers hold their families to. Fulfilling his role as a traditional character, "he was extreme in his insistence on retaining traditional standards for his family. Reordering the marriage sequence within the family transforms the quotidian further than our patriarchal ruler is comfortable with because he wants to preserve the traditional marriage order, thus retaining his ability to control.

Amina's mother offers an interesting opinion about al-Sayyid Ahmad's reaction to Amina's transgression of the patriarchy that foreshadows the eventual decline of the *modus operandi* reflected in the father's actions. Responding to Amina's confession of guilt, the mother reminds her of her late father's acquiescence to the request to leave the home. Before she makes that statement, though, she poignantly characterizes Amina's father as "a religious scholar [who] knew the Book of God by heart" (217). Juxtaposing Amina's father's piety with his complicity makes al-Sayyid Ahmad a hypocrite. The man who symbolically upholds traditions appears to have transgressed those very traditions by disallowing his wife to leave the home for religious purposes. Towards the end of this episode, Mahfouz makes a stunning observation about the two women:

The juxtaposition of the two women appeared to illustrate the interplay of the amazing laws of heredity and the inflexible law of time.¹⁹ The two women might

¹⁹ Mahfouz's "law of time" derives from Henri Bergson's idea of evolutionary time, which insists that "life is the absolute temporal movement informed by duration and retained in memory ... life also consists in the practical

have been a single person with her image reflected forward to the future and back into the past. In either case, the difference between the original and its reflection revealed the terrible struggle raging between the laws of heredity, attempting to keep things the same, and the law of time, pushing for change and a final. The struggle usually results in a string of defeats for heredity, which plays at best a modest role within the framework of time. (218-219)

The patriarch's attempt to maintain a traditional atmosphere within his house is not only false but doomed to decay.

Though the female identity is marginalized, we see several occasions in which a social norm concerning women is evolving. The traditional Shaykh betrayed an honoring act toward women when he mentioned the names of al-Sayyid Ahmad's daughters in praying—out loud—for all of his children. This act of uttering a name of “any of his women” beyond the walls of the house unpleasantly surprises al-Sayyid Ahmad (44). The singer, Zubayda, surely a symbol of the west, walks around unveiled. That Umm Maryam, the Jawad family servant, would shake al-Sayyid's hand indicates that Umm Maryam is more progressive than most women. Fahmy does not care about marrying a woman at or above his age, which is a deplorable concept to his father, permitting the female more opportunity in regards to prospective suitors. Fahmy's heartthrob, who he knows only across rooftop terraces, allows Fahmy to see her (65), disregarding traditional modesty and adding to the idea that the feminine plight is not static. As habits and routines continue to change, these small foreshadows pave the way for further changes as women slowly emerge from the margins.

necessities imposed on our body and accounting for our habitual mode of knowing in spatial terms” (Lawlor and Leonard). The inevitability of change within Mahfouz's conception of time varies slightly from Foucault's ideas. Foucault asserts that some things exist outside of time for the purposes of preservation (e.g. Museums).

Though it takes the story several hundred pages to transition Kamal , another marginalized character, from a subjectivity in compliance to one discourse to another, the story contains traces—even at the beginning of the story—of the possibility. Mahfouz’s view of time demands that he foreshadow the changes he knows must come. Consider the case of the agglutination of names in which Al-Sayyid Ahmad’s father is referred to as al-Hajj Abd al-Abd al-Jawad. The affixation of *al-Hajj* to a name signifies that that individual has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca. We later realize that al-Sayyid Ahmad dies having never gone on the Hajj himself. Not only does al-Sayyid Ahmad fail at one of the five pillars of Islam.²⁰ He also departs from his late father’s tradition by wearing a *fez*²¹ as opposed to a turban. While al-Hamzawi, the worker from al-Hajj Abd al-Abd al-Jawad’s generation, participates in Quranic recitation, al-Sayyid Ahmad feigns interest but is actually preoccupied with the company ledger. This act reiterates the father’s duality and continues to bring the reality of Western capitalism and secularism closer to the home.

Mahfouz embedded other signs of the social shift within the everyday early on in the narrative, continuing to prepare the soil for the emergence of a Third Space. After Yasin makes the suggestion that his mother should visit a holy site, the rest of the family joins in the plea. As a result, “they all participated, unwittingly, in the revolution against their father’s absent will” (177). Kamal, the youngest son, is pitted against the brawn of older boys with his acute intellect. In the past, their brawn may have had more cultural capital, but now Kamal’s intellect is more valuable in the present age as Egyptian society begins to accept Western values of

²⁰ Islam, being an Orthopraxic religion, requires its adherents to comply with five pillars: *Shahada*—the verbal confession that God is one and that Muhammad is his prophet; *Salat*—mandates five daily prayer time based on a solar timetable; *Zakat*—almsgiving; *Sawm*—fasting during the month of *Ramadan*; *Hajj*—the pilgrimage to Mecca

²¹ The *Fez* replaced the turban as a style of hat during the late nineteenth century.

intellectualism. His infatuation with a woman on the cigarette advertisement indicates an acceptance of Western values. He's clearly liminal as his gaze suggests. Mahfouz writes, "He tore himself away from the picture of the smoking lady, and gazed this time at the mosque of al-Husayn" (53). He wants both the Western and the Egyptian. Kamal's kind finds no room in what was the contemporary discourse of 1920's Egypt. He is initially a marginalized character. As Kamal participates in the coffee hour with his family, his stories fall on deaf ears, and when they do listen, his stories are met with contention (58-59). If the family is a microcosm of Egypt, and if Kamal represents Mahfouz's liminal generation, then the reader can deduce that the discourse of the liminal generation found no place.

After spending the first several hundred pages delineating the quotidian of early twentieth century Cairo, Mahfouz starts to let time unravel. Throughout the first fifty or so chapters, nearly every single chapter begins within a frame of some banal activity—kneading dough, talking at the coffee hour, tucking in children, or walking to and from different rooms within the house. These activities provide a sense of time, attaching the narrative flow to the past. The private sphere represents the past. The public sphere represents the present. Rasheed El-Enany says as much:

The novel reveals to us gradually the build-up of public events, and as the pace of action is stepped up, the inevitable convergence of public and private reaches its tragic conclusion. The afternoon coffee gathering formerly reserved for innocent chat and the usual bickerings among brothers and sisters is now dominated by talk of politics and accounts of demonstrations and violent confrontations with soldiers. (72-73)

These references are the only indicators of time for most of *PW*, signifying a timelessness and general lack of large-scale spatial context as things progress. In a way, the reader finds commonality with Amina, who is unsure about the location of London. As Mahfouz changes the discourse in which the characters participate, —from the past to the present—he dissolves time boundaries in how he narrates events. When Yasin goes to visit the prostitute/entertainer, Zanuba, he finds his father in the room nearby. Utterly dismayed by the understandably jarring revelation, Yasin’s entire perception of his father flashes before his eyes, conflating the boundaries between past and present. Within “one or two minutes,” the boy sees a “long story” unfolding before him. It coalesces in one image, transgressing the boundaries of time by revising everything he has known about his father (267-268). The characters are starting to have access to assess the past in regards to the present moment for the first time. Now, the binary of past and present is starting to suffer under the weight as the public and private binary.

The turning point at which the greatest change sweeps through the lives of the Abd al-Jawad family is two-fold: Aisha’s engagement, which signals the incursion of the societal into the familial. The two actually go hand-in-hand. Aisha’s engagement is subtly that very type of incursion. With Aisha’s wedding comes an enormous change in the everyday routine under the Abd al-Jawad household. Aisha moves into to her in-law’s home, leaving an apparent void in her own family’s home. The coffee hour, breakfast, daily chores, nighttime stories, and tucking in the children will no longer be the same. Aisha’s absence precipitates bigger changes. The narrator asks, “[w]as Aisha’s wedding the harbinger of a new era of freedom?” (308). It seems that the temporary break in the domestic and societal divide effected a change. Though al-Sayyid Ahmad refused the initial request for his younger daughter’s hand, he changes his tune later. When Mrs. Shawkat, the Turkish upper-class woman, comes to the family’s home, she alters the

father's reserve and adherence to tradition. Before making any inquisition, she greets him, obviously. However, that Umm Maryam would shake al-Sayyid's hand indicates she is more progressive. She requests Aisha, the younger of the two daughters, as her son's wife. The request, coming from this particular woman, is irrefutable. When al-Sayyid proves reluctant to the request on the basis of his timeless principles, Mrs. Shawkat explains the situation beyond the walls of his house. She tells him about other families who have begun to allow the younger daughter to marry before the elder. The currency of tradition starts to lose its weight. Khadija and her piety have netted few returns while Aisha's lack thereof has proved inconsequential, leaving Khadija to believe that the lack of piety has been beneficial. A member of another family, possessing a dissimilar cultural heritage, enters into the Abd al-Jawad discourse and ignites transformation.

At this point, Mahfouz creates a veritable relationship between the quotidian, power, time, and subjectivity. The relationship is a significant connection because major Mahfouzian scholars have suggested that time is the most prominent theme in the trilogy.²² A clear distinction exists between Mahfouz's view of time and Foucault's. Mahfouz believes any change from the past into the current version of the present to have been an inevitable movement. Foucault's beliefs about the present moment are much different, however. According to Gary Gutting, "Intolerable practices and institutions present themselves as having no alternative ... Foucault's histories aim to remove this air of necessity by showing that the past ordered things quite differently and that the processes leading to our present practices and institutions were by no means inevitable" (10). Therefore, momentarily, and involuntarily, Amina loses any control over

²² Rasheed El-Enany, a renowned Mahfouzian scholar, writes exhaustively about the role of time in his seminal work *Naguib Mahfouz: The Pursuit of Meaning*. Another acclaimed scholar, Sasson Somekh, writes similarly in his book, *The Changing Rhythm: A Study of Naguib Mahfouz's Novels*.

her subjectivity because she has ceased to participate in the quotidian, resulting from her husband's actions but not because of her indifference.

Mahfouz establishes Amina as a timeless character who embodies the relationship between the quotidian and time, which undermines the authority structure within the home. While Amina remains in exile, she recedes from the flow of the quotidian, maximizing the extension of her husband's domination over her. His actions reorder her history. That is to say, whereas before she was entrenched in everyday affairs, tending to daily chores around the house incessantly, now she has "no occupation" (248). She is no longer in possession of the circumscribed subjectivity she had. By creating a link between the two themes, Mahfouz seems to suggest that Amina is at the intersection of time and the quotidian is liminality. Amina's longing for her children is like "an emigrant in a distant land parted by fate from her loved ones." Adding to the emigrant parallel herself, Amina remarks, "a mother away from her children is a stranger. She's a stranger even if she's staying in the house where she was born" (248). Upon returning to the home after her temporary banishment, Amina returns to the head of the everyday affairs. The void left by her absence allows the reader to observe the impact of her presence. During her first night back home, she resumes her daily routines. One of them sheds light on the actual power dynamics of the household. As usual, al-Sayyid Ahmad returns around midnight after his licentious escapades. As usual, Amina must provide a light to lead him up the stairway (252). Her benevolent action signifies his need for her and illustrates her role as the head of everyday affairs within the home. Upon her return, she reenters the home with no knowledge of what has occurred in her absence—Aisha's engagement.

Ironically, Aisha's wedding is going to play a pivotal role in the emergence of a liminal space, which will provide Amina subjective freedom. The public and private divide suffers the

first truly penetrating blow when Mrs. Shawkat says in jest, “Watch out, Madam Amina. It seems Jalila’s eye has strayed to al-Sayyid Ahmad” (292). Finally, one of the father’s many affairs has become public and private knowledge. This declaration hits the family viscerally because they are bearing witness to a side of their father to which they have not had access. The entire family reacts by attempting to preserve its way of life despite the evolution that occurs with marriage. Kamal not only refuses to accept the Aisha’s move to another house, but he detests the idea that people could call her new location, “home” (275). To Kamal, home is where the family resides, an ostensible fact that cannot change though it already has.

Mahfouz attributes the transformation that will ensue to a slowly eroding and modifying of the stock of daily routines and habits. It begins with spatial designation within the home. The lowest floor of the home is reserved for some domestic activities. Others, including cooking, occur outside of the primary structure in a quarantined location. The spatial hierarchy is, in a Foucauldian sense, a source of power relation. Not long after the designation of spatial priority, we witness something else in the stock of the quotidian. The venerated, Shaykh Mutawalli Abd al-Samad, a relatively germane figure in *Palace Walk*, visits the family. In the conversation with the family, Amina praises him for his healing powers, which are still important at this point in the narrative (43). He has a priestly role in his power, infallibility, and authority. In other words, his status signifies what is valuable according to the community. However, his role will subside as the novel goes on; his visits will become more intermittent; he will lose touch with the world around him, eventually deteriorating into a character of madness.

The changes resulting from Aisha’s wedding trickle down through the quotidian from the coffee hour to the daily chores. For Kamal, these changes are reprehensible and a sign of familial treason. Kamal refuses to concede that his sister ought to live outside of the Abd al-Jawad home.

This thought dominates his mind at her wedding; and months later, when he goes to visit her, he remains reluctant to accept that she will not return with the rest of the family. Later, after Khadija is set to be married off, Kamal looks to the precedent set after Aisha's wedding as indicative of what will happen again. When his mother informs him later that Khadija will become engaged, he retorts, "are you going to give up Khadija the way you abandoned Aisha?" (326). Kamal is starting to exhibit some very pejorative nativistic strategies of selfhood in which all that is near must remain. Nothing from beyond may enter. The heart is only where the home is, and the home must remain steadfast in its contents. The traditions, the relationships, the hierarchy within—however anachronistic they may be—may not change.

After this point in the narrative, the transgression of time through anachronistic traditions dissipates. Yasin may provide the most poignant insight into the transformation. Though he physically mirrors his father, he has evolved into something else. And his relationship dynamics with his father are starting to change drastically, resulting in a radical change in his subjectivity. Friday morning, traditionally the holiest day for Muslims, takes on a different role for Yasin. As opposed to using the day for practicing his religion, he uses the day to seek out prey—women—he deems desirable (261). Al-Sayyid Ahmad does not see himself reflected in Yasin but refracted in him. What is recreational for the al-Sayyid Ahmad is a vice for Yasin. After catching Yasin attempting to seduce the housemaid, the father says, "the wine and women al-Sayyid Ahmad considered a harmless form of recreation for himself, fully compatible with manly virtue, became an unforgivable crime when they defiled one of his sons" (303). His friend and Yasin's future father-in-law, Muhammad Iffat, proposes that al-Sayyid Ahmad's austere measures of discipline ought to change. Al-Sayyid Ahmad, in turn, maligns his friend's comment about changing the way he treats Yasin and Fahmy. He ostensibly resists the change in father-son

dynamics that naturally evolve with time. Though he verbally condemns the idea, he acknowledges that things have already changed. Whereas he used to physically reprimand the boys, he now uses more diplomatic methods. When the patriarch alters the ways in which he disciplines others, they gain a sense of freedom that have not had—freedom from fear.

Patriarchal authority further wanes when the routines of the family receive an incursion from another culture. Zaynab, who is of Turkish descent, marries Yasin and moves into the family's house as is the custom. Both Amina and Khadija resist natural transformation of the quotidian that ensues after grafting the new bride into the family. Zaynab does not immediately enter into the flow of the routine upon entering her new family's home. Khadija finds fault in the new bride's reluctance. Then, when Zaynab assumes her place within the quotidian, Khadija finds fault again. Upon taking her place within the family, Zaynab introduces a new element into the quotidian. She desires to add a Turkish recipe to the family's repertoire. Amina takes Zaynab's pride in her Turkish origin as an affront to the Abd al-Jawad Egyptian identity. However, while Amina seeks to keep the peace, Khadija would rather kick her sister-in-law to the curb (324). Both the father and Khadija clearly feel protective of their roots, though they have no choice but to acquiesce to the reality.

After Yasin commits another error—this time as a husband—his father reveals his prerogative for maintaining such a tight grasp on the family. Al-Sayyid Ahmad intimates that Yasin's pursuit of the Western ideal, unbridled entertainment, will lead to destruction. Yasin *and* his wife go to Kishkish Bey, a progressive theater, which conjures up ominous thoughts in the minds of the family. That Yasin would take his wife is morally reprehensible (331). His father's verbal reprimand includes a caution that continuing in the direction he is headed, Yasin and his

wife will end up in the “abyss” (337).²³ While the father departed from the image of his late father, Yasin strays even further, diving headlong into modernization without bumpers. The father appears to fear the toll such a leap will take on his ability to delimit Yasin’s subjectivity.

Fahmy attempts to deal by firmly attaching to the nationalist ideology that Mahfouz eventually finds just as ineffective as the complacent approaches of Amina and the Shawkats. With his mind awash with nationalist idealism, while others neglect to consider how time transforms the past, Fahmy neglects to recognize the reality of the present moment. Instead of coming to terms with the present, he wishes to make it the past and press forward, focusing on a dream deferred. His failure is the inability to recognize the temporal division between the now and later. A classic idealist, Fahmy has impenetrable ideals about everything. His father, for example, has been a man whom Fahmy respects to the utmost degree. The young man is unable to merge the magnanimity he once ascribed to his father with the reality that Yasin reveals to him. Finding out about his father’s moral turpitude, Fahmy refuses to reform his perception of his father to accommodate the harsh reality. In a similar act of naïve loyalty, Fahmy’s respect for Yasin is unabating even in the face of gross allegations against his brother’s character. After Yasin marries and subsequently becomes disillusioned by what he believes is the banality of married life, he chooses to caution Fahmy against a similar fate. Though Yasin’s saturnine outlook is exaggerated, Fahmy nevertheless fails to believe anything other than ambrosial matrimony, holding “firm to this assumption because he refused to allow his fondest dreams to be destroyed” (361).

The discourse of the novel makes a dramatic shift from domestic to political affairs when Mahfouz divulges Fahmy’s true colors after talk of a nationalist uprising. Mahfouz writes,

²³ The ambiguity of the word “abyss” leaves one to wonder to what is al-Sayyid Ahmad referring, but it seems like the word could be synonymous with modernization stemming from Western values.

Talk of national liberation excited great dreams in him. In that magical universe, he could visualize a new world, a new nation, a new home, a new people.

Everyone would be astir with vitality and enthusiasm. The moment his mind returned to this stifling atmosphere of lassitude, ignorance, and indifference, he felt a blazing fire of distress and pain that desired release from its confinement in order to shoot up to the sky. At that moment he wished with all his heart that the night would pass in the twinkling of an eye so he could be surrounded once more by a group of his fellow students. (349)

His nationalist idealism reaches its penultimate height when he reveals his martyr's complex, regretting that he survives a demonstration. His national consciousness results in a state of subjectivity that is no different from the women of the story. It is subjugated to another. While the feminine subjectivity is largely relegated to definition only in its relation to man, Fahmy makes himself one with the nation, removing his autonomous subjectivity.

The revelation of Fahmy's nationalist fervor coincides with another incursion of the public into the private; this time it is the British forces encroaching on the home. The revolution infiltrates that space, violating it and making it unsafe. In that same space, the intersection of Palace Walk and al-Nahhsin, a spatially liminal plot on a map, Amina sees disembodied, ambiguous objects. These objects are Egyptians participating in the revolution. Alluding to traditionally Pharaonic Egyptian culture, they are reminiscent of "small pyramids" (396) as though these figures are but vestiges of the past, in the process of shedding that silhouette. She also mentions that they are indistinct from the soldiers. Presumably, Amina's description alludes to liminal figures, blurring the line between past and present.

Occupying the space just outside of the Abd al-Jawad home, the British indirectly alter the routines within the home, forcing changing in the spatial layout. The patriarch, who previously never “conducted a conversation at the breakfast table,” descends the spatial hierarchy to the lowest floor (399). The encroachment also offers the family their first real look at the British. They have yet to meet a British. Not longer after meeting a soldier, the family sees the British soldiers eating, smiling, and laughing. Witnessing this lightens the spirit within the home and alters their perception of the British, attributing to them humanity. Though this revelation quells fears of negative incursion, the impending revolution disavows them of long-term hope. Soon after the disarming image of the British, Mahfouz juxtaposes an alarming public characterization of Fahmy against a private characterization of him. When his father presses this question to his son: “Don’t you know the penalty for persons caught distributing handbills?” (422). We soon realize that his father posed the same question to Fahmy upon his induction into the student revolution committee. However, when his father asks the question, the setting is the home. When the president of the committee asks the question, the setting is in a undisclosed public space. In the former instance, which is the present tense of the narrative, he answers cowardly that his actions take no risk. Whereas in the latter case, the past tense of the narrative, Fahmy resoundingly declares that the sacrifice of his life shall not cause him to waver (451-452). Only a few days, his fantasy of martyrdom becomes a reality.

Upon Fahmy’s death, Mahfouz’s dissolution of the public and private and past and present binary is in full swing. The public is leaking into the private; the present is leaking into the past. Everything is changing as a result. The traditional family relinquishes its hold on the past, despite the repeated attempts at preserving traditions. The family constituents have scattered with outsiders (i.e. Aisha/Zanuba) replacing some of the family members. The leveling

of the spatial hierarchy dismantles the power hierarchy within the home. A zealous nationalist and son of the Abd al-Jawad family dies, taking with him the ideals of nationalism. Their everyday routines are starting to become faint glimmers of what they were. The family is left fragmented and primed for exploring new subjectivities.

Chapter 2: Incursion and Reordering in *Palace of Desire*

“[T]yphoid germs, like other ones, were incredibly tiny and invisible to the naked eye but capable of stopping the flow of life, deciding the destiny of men, and breaking up a family”

(979)

As *Palace of Desire*²⁴ opens in 1924, five years after the death of Fahmy, the family has taken on a different form. People, places, and routines have been displaced. *PW* set the stage with the incursion of the public into the private, newly emerging knowledges, along with the creation of new spaces for identity negotiation. As one set of power relations has begun to recede, another is starting to emerge. The narrative’s point of view changes with the alterations of the quotidian in *PW*. The father, like the state apparatus, subjected people to his system of values through austere discipline and surveillance. As one tyrant moves out, another moves in. Enter, the West. The transformed quotidian becomes a mechanism that triggers introspection when a foreign presence becomes more immanent. Rather than focusing on daily habits and routines, Mahfouz looks inward to the ways in which such changes start to pull at characters’ roots. Much of *POD* consists of actions that cause lengthy internal monologues.²⁵ With these monologues, Mahfouz highlights a change in discourse through a focus on individual subjectivities. Characters whose subjectivities were left previously unexplored because of the circumscription resulting from the Patriarch are finally included in the narrative perspective. As antiquated routines no longer fit within the dominant discourse, they become marginalized and decentralized from the narrative viewpoint. What was privileged is becoming less privileged—

²⁴ Henceforth, *POD*

²⁵ That this happens primarily for the men illustrates that certain subjectivities remain marginalized in spite of the modernization of Egypt.

not yet totally decentered. In contrast to *PW* which primarily focuses on the patriarch, the focus of *POD* is one particular character, namely Kamal (Peters 759). With Kamal as the central character and the soil tilled, Mahfouz unfolds Kamal's clash with Western values as he attempts to navigate a life where old routines are rapidly vanishing.

As the quote at the beginning of this chapter indicates, in *POD* Mahfouz thematizes the changes to the quotidian—the flow of everyday life. *POD* opens by setting the stage with a distorted picture of *PW*'s leading character that indicates a change that has swept through the household: the physical appearance of al-Sayyid Ahmad is deteriorated in comparison to what it previously was. Even the simplest changes indicate that a major shift has occurred in the relationships among family members. Though time has assailed the physical world, the characters attempt to march on with previous routines as if their habits are removed from time's malevolence. As a result, the changing family dynamics reveal that the once centered characters is receding into the margins.

War is unequivocally transforming the physical world of *The Cairo Trilogy*. Typhoid, tangibly, and many other less obvious “infections” have pressed up against the traditions and mores of Egyptian life. In *PW*, several different characters attempted a variety of measures to cope with these changes. One coping mechanism, nationalism, which appeared to be gaining steam, is shot down—literally—by the English in *PW*. In her poignant article, “Naguib Mahfouz: Life in the Alley of Arab History,” renowned Mahfouzian scholar, Matti Moosa notes that in *POD*, Mahfouz is concerned with illustrating the “deterioration of the national movement into petty squabbling between the politicians and the palace, and shows the clash of traditional values and concepts with those imported from the West” (227). An analysis of the ordinary—the quotidian—bears witness to the ways in which World War I is affecting power relations in

Egypt. As physical structures have been demolished, so have traditional epistemologies (e.g. the creation myth). Mahfouz demonstrates how just one Western incursion, typhoid, has dramatically changed spatial allocation, routine, traditional religious symbols, political sentiments, and religious myths.

Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* provides a matrix with which to analyze how Mahfouz locates subjectivities. Bhabha marks identity in the context of coloniality as: "to exist is to be called into being in relation to an otherness, its look or locus" (63). Much like the characters in *PW* were called into being through al-Sayyid Ahmad, in *POD* the imperial powers start to assume what was once the patriarch's role. Bhabha goes on to say that identification is the "distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness—the white man's artifice inscribed on the black man's body. It is in relation to this impossible object that the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes emerges" (64). Although, according to Bhabha, the true locus of identity is in the in-between space, we must first understand the two poles. *PW* examines one pole while *POD* examines another.

A cursory reading reveals a change in how *POD* reads compared to *PW*. Metonymy shifts because "[o]bjects, like words, take on new meanings as circumstances change" (861). The changing dynamics of symbolism signify a change in the discourse, as discourse determines relationships in representation. Realities, even specific language, that were left out of the narrative scope in the first novel enter into view with the second novel. Furthermore, events and themes emphasized in *PW* recede from the line of sight in *POD*. In the former, Aisha's wedding consumed the pages of the text. Yet at Yasin and Maryam's wedding in the latter, one brief paragraph is given to an account of the matrimony. Mahfouz focuses instead on the characters' subjectivities before and after the event.

POD contains many more explicit references to al-Sayyid Ahmad's vices than does *PW*, which is much more tacit in regards to such things as inebriation and cocaine use. For example, Chapters seventy-nine through eighty unfold around the patriarch's lust for Zanuba, the lute player. Mahfouz no longer excludes taboo words from the story. The use of the word "sex", for example, is apparently no longer taboo. Before, though all contextual clues would indicate sex and prostitution were central during al-Sayyid Ahmad's rendezvous, neither the characters nor the narrator would utter such words. Furthermore, in the past, when al-Sayyid Ahmad and his friends were inebriated, Mahfouz used flowery language to describe them. Wine flowed freely. Inhibitions disappeared. Never, though, were he and his friends "drunk." The propriety with which he presided over their previous encounters is now lacking.

The process of locating identity in opposition to the imperial powers begins when the public and private binary, on which the first book depends, is relatively absent in *POD*. The binary has nearly completely dissolved as a result of imperial measures taken during World War I. Chapter ninety-seven of the novel provides the most poignant insight into the magnitude of the breached barrier that was once the invisible divider between the two locales. Yasin brings Zanuba, a former one-night stand, into his present home. A merging of the past and present, the exterior with the interior, equaled an explosion. The English have been setting up camp more and more closely to residential areas. As an indirect result, the walls of the home no longer serve as a buffer between the private world and the public world; even when it comes to keeping scandals in one sphere or the other. While it took years for many inside the Abd al-Jawad home to learn of al-Sayyid Ahmad's illicit affairs, it took less than twenty-four hours for the scandal between Yasin and Zanuba to spread "everywhere."

Al-Sayyid Ahmad, the character who was most austere in his insistence that the two realms be kept separated, is troubled when he learns that the ministry will punish his son for what he considers to be an affair that should remain the business of the household. That Yasin is wedded to an entertainer reflects poorly on his place of employment, so his employers have chosen to move him somewhere else to rid themselves of the shame. However, by doling out punishment for such an act, they inadvertently participate in the merging of the two spheres. In stark contrast to the narrative's symbol of tradition, the newest generation considers the barrier between the locales trivial. Whereas as a child Kamal would only play in the home, the younger generation feels free to play in the streets.

Not only has the divide disappeared, but also the public and the private are different in essence than they previously were. The street the family is on "stay[s] awake all night" (539), which is in contrast to its lack of nightlife in *PW*. Moreover, Mahfouz has inserted a new prominent spatial feature into the narrative. Al-Abbasiya, the place of residence for Kamal's sweetheart, stands as a spatial symbol of European values. In contrast to Palace Walk—the area where the Abd al-Jawad family resides—al-Abbasiya has an ambrosial atmosphere with its clean, wide streets and lush gardens. The homes are extravagant, featuring aspects of European architecture. Furthermore, Yasin gives a caricaturist depiction of the street, saying, "a man sitting in a shop on the right could reach over and shake hands with his neighbor on the other side" (817). The road in front of al-Sayyid Ahmad's store has also changed with potholes everywhere, signifying decay. And another secular locale has entered the scene as evidenced when Kamal goes to Wajh al-Birka street. This street scandalous not only for its name, but also for its function: it is the "red-light district" and serves the purpose of assisting in forbidden indulgences.

Within the home, the change in spatial allocation is as dynamic as it is beyond the home. Spatial hierarchy all but vanishes with the patriarch's mandate to move the first floor to the top floor and vice-a-versa. By the end of *POD*, the man of extreme measures loses his battle with time. Having fallen ill in old age, al-Sayyid Ahmad must conflate the physical boundaries of habit. As social propriety dictated, sleeping, eating, and socializing happened in distinct locations. After he becomes sick all of those things, and more, take place in one location—the bed. The obvious dimensional flattening provides a backdrop against which the character development happens.

Within the context of spatial and representational reconfiguration, Mahfouz reorders many commonplace elements of Egyptian life. Al-Sayyid Ahmad's position as the arbiter of knowledge and power²⁶ wanes as his surveillance of his family members' actions and decisions fades. The weight of his opinion and the opportunities for him to express his power lessen. Expressing the present status of his stature, Kamal observes, “[m]other never resorted to violence because Papa was there. A mention of him was enough to ensure his commands were obeyed. But at my house—and yours is just the same—the father is present only in name” (580). Even when he is present, his efforts at behavioral circumscription fall short. Kamal, per the precedent set for him, defers his decision about university specialization. However, his father realizes such a matter lies beyond his purview (586). Kamal decides that the Teacher's Training College is what he wants. His father immediately rebuts the boy's statement. His reason for disagreement is that it is a free school. According to al-Sayyid Ahmad, a free education is not an education. Kamal, on the other hand, separates prestige, wealth, and learning, finding intrinsic value in learning. Al-Sayyid Ahmad responds, “[s]ome kinds of knowledge are appropriate for tramps and others belong to the pashas of the world” (588). After an extended repartee from the father,

²⁶ This was established in Chapter 1.

Kamal makes his final declaration, “[t]he fact is, Papa, that these disciplines have won the highest respect in advanced nations. The Europeans cherish them and erect statues in honor of people who excel in them” (591). Kamal is starting to uproot his fervor in traditional Egyptian norms in order to re-root himself elsewhere.

Aside from the chapter about Kamal’s education and intermittent appearances, the father’s presence in the family’s affairs has disappeared. As a result, when he does talk with his family, the conversation is small talk, not authoritative intervention. Kamal and his father actually partake in casual conversation on occasion—something that the father’s sacred persona prevented in *PW*. As for his relationship with Yasin, when Yasin seeks his father’s approval about the woman he hopes to marry, his pursuit is nominal at best. That is to say, Yasin is merely participating in empty social etiquette. He does not intend to listen to his father; he only wants to hear his father consent, reluctantly or not. What makes this particular act so poignant is the woman he hopes to marry. Maryam, the woman his father rejected for Fahmy, has caught Yasin’s eye. Yasin also directly addresses the man instead of speaking through his mother or Fahmy, signaling al-Sayyid Ahmad’s austerity has waned. Much later in the narrative, the magnitude of Abd al-Jawad’s fall is heightened, as he no longer censors the everyday affairs of the family at all. Now, a figure from outside the home must inform the father of news about his own son. Muhammad Iffat goes to Ahmad Abd al-Jawad to tell him that his son, Yasin, has been married for over one month. Western values of pragmatism and secularism are reordering the power relations of the Abd al-Jawad family, and consequently Egypt, thus changing the access characters have to knowledge that may change their subjectivity.

In the midst of Abd al-Jawad’s decline, a once marginalized subjectivity begins to gain legitimacy: the female subjectivity. However, this is a slow process of change. Indicating that

women continue to remain in the margins, Mahfouz illustrates the static nature of the al-Jawad female affairs. As the narrative begins, Amina still lights his way up the steps in the evening following his return from his nightly affairs; and upon reaching her, he still greets her with “Good evening” to which she reciprocates, “Good evening, sir” (537). In regards to Amina’s development, “she sat there as usual, but time had changed her” (538). In other words, she still upholds certain customs “as usual.” However, she is beginning to transform. New power relations are reordering her subjectivity. Her perspective continues to be one filtered by the “wooden grille” of the window from the balcony; it continued to be her and most women’s portal to the world. At this point, though the streets have changed, “what she could see of the street had not altered, but change had crept through her” (539). Amina is finally able to leave the home on her own accord, not being *absolutely* under the authority of her husband (540).

Regardless of the subtle changes, the male perspective still defines the reputation of the woman. Regardless of how the woman behaves, if her husband approves, then her behavior is considered virtuous. If he disapproves, she is regarded as a rebellious harlot: “Aisha’s a married woman, and her husband has the final word as to the propriety of her conduct. If he allows her to visit the neighbors and knows that she sings when she’s with her friends ... then what concern of ours is it?” (793). Females inability to define the limits of their own moral conduct indicates that the male consciousness still delimits the possibilities of the feminine subjectivity.

Further changes to the everyday routines of the family illustrate how the power relations are shifting, permitting certain characters freedom from the margin. The coffee hour was, and continues to be, an integral part of the daily life in the Abd al-Jawad home. However, its function has changed. In *PW*, coffee entailed more than the consumption of the beverage; it came with conversation. Now, it’s merely a habit of consumption. Gone are the days of “religious lessons

and stories about prophets and demons ... That era had come to an end” (707). At the same time, slowly but surely, Kamal is beginning to assume control of the discourse. Whereas in the past, Kamal revered Yasin’s handle on language arts, frequently asking for stories from his brother, Yasin now looks to Kamal as the raconteur (560). As he begins to come into focus, Kamal’s routines appear to be different than his fathers, revealing a much more secularized, Western, agnostic persona.

Kamal’s subjectivity is continually changing as new systems of knowledge come in vogue. Kamal and his friends differ considerably from his father and father’s friends. While his father’s social interactions were primarily limited to matter of the physical world, the dialogue of Kamal and his friends is primarily meta-physical. Always talking about sensual pleasures, al-Sayyid Ahmad and his band of fornicators skirt around issues of politics and religion. Kamal and his friends seem unable to avoid such discussions. Their interactions, along with those between other characters, provide a lens through which to observe the emergence of a new dominant discourse.

Kamal redefines traditions that have been staples of Egyptian culture. The real trigger for Kamal is the loss of Aida, a young woman he loves that eventually marries his friend and moves to Europe. Mahfouz reveals this to the reader when he allegorizes the national within the private, writing, “Like Kamal, Sa’d Zaghul was as good as imprisoned and the victim of outrageous attacks, unjust charges, and the treacherous betrayal of friends. They had suffered because of contacts with people distinguished both by the loftiness of their aristocratic backgrounds and by the baseness of their deeds” (777). By suffusing Kamal’s personal subjectivity with national affairs, Mahfouz reveals fractures in Kamal’s link to nationalism. Kamal is starting to see

nationalist idealism's inability to affect change in the real world. Nationalism, like Aida, is nothing more than a faint dream.

The link between Sa'd Zaghlul and Kamal not only provides commentary on Kamal's issues with nationalism, but also amplifies the break between the father and his youngest son. Though Sa'd Zaghlul loves the new singer, Umm Kalthoum, Abd al-Jawad does not experience the catharsis he felt listening to older music. No longer does the feeling of elation come naturally. The reason is two-fold: he has changed, and entertainment has changed. The change in discourse manifests in an affective detachment from the arts. These symbolic representations help to peel back yet another layer of Mahfouz's depiction of change in the quotidian.

Kamal's nationalistic fervor has fully transitioned to fervor in the pursuit of knowledge. As noted earlier, he has chosen to pursue a degree at Teacher's College, where he will learn extensively about the liberal arts. His father's reply grants the reader a poignant perspective: "What is this learning you desire? Ethics, history, and poetry? All those are beautiful pastimes, but worthless in the workaday world" (596). His father's industriousness finds such Western educational fields hallow. However, Kamal is not content with an understanding of cosmology and teleology that has been handed down on the coat tails of tradition. He believes a "cultured" mind will satisfy him regardless of what any external voice thinks. Although his father continues to admonish Kamal to make a pragmatic decision, Kamal maintains his loyalty to the Western ideal of the pursuit of knowledge.

The change in the educational prerogatives manifests in metonymic shifts. Words no longer have the same referents. "Merchant" was an endearing term to Kamal. People that were given that label garnered his respect. That changes when "compared unfavorably with the son of the superior court judge" (870). Kamal promises his mother that he will "consecrate his life to

spreading of God's light" (895). In his mind, light equates with truth, but that truth is not the same truth in which his mother believes. He concludes, "what [is] true religion except science" (895). Kamal's statement proclaims his decision to remove roots from the past and the values it held dear.

A Western form of science is replacing a traditional form of science. An example of this is that doctors have supplanted Shaykhs as the proprietors of health. Previously, Shaykhs would diagnose people and provide relief. Now physicians of modern medicine are assuming this role. As a result of this shift, people are becoming aware of medical conditions than ever before and the methods of treatment are shifting. Rather than the diagnoses of sinful lifestyles, Egyptians are told that their eating habits are poor. As opposed to prayers and talismans, Egyptians receive many of the new prescriptions and diagnoses derived from the West. Doctors repeatedly tell the elder generation to steer clear of red meat, eggs, and alcohol. Zubayda, the entertainer, provides a sound bite that embodies the past: "Eat and drink in good health. A man should be his own physician, letting the Lord have the last word" (955), illustrating the resistance to the progress of humanity and attempting to transgress time with antiquated mores. Moreover, the doctors' sacks and pumps replace quotidian objects in entertainment, such as the tambourine and the lute (955).

The metonymic shifts are not reserved for commonplace colloquialisms. Representational changes even occur in the understanding and application of the Islamic holy book. In *PW*, characters like Amina wielded passages from the Qur'an to ward off evil. The applicability of the Qur'an has shifted for other characters in *POD*. Al-Sayyid and his cronies reappropriate the holy book on multiple occasions. They use the Qur'an to justify their licentious activity. First, they recite the Qur'an to justify hiding from police patrol. Then, al-Sayyid Ahmad recites, "unless you are embarrassed, do whatever you want" (627). He uses this saying, which comes from the

Hadith, to admonish liberality in his friend's sexual endeavors. In other words, he exhorts him to do as he pleases. Kamal's friend, Isma'il, not only misappropriates a Surah, but fails to recognize its origin. He attributes the proverb to a poet rather than the venerated prophet Muhammad. Since discourse is directly tied to religious beliefs, and since religious beliefs are changing, discourse, as well as interpretations of the Qur'an, is clearly changing.

Kamal uses the knowledge that he learns in school to dismantle traditions. At one point, he surmises, "[i]t's only tradition that has linked the two words: 'love' and 'marriage'" (556), and he attempts to sever that relationship. Kamal's actions reflect a liminality that is readily emerging in his generation. His education was conflicting "violently with his soul, his beliefs, and his Lord" (891). He actually writes an article about Darwin's theory of evolution that is published in the paper.²⁷ When his father reads the article, he is appalled that his own "flesh and blood" could write such an affront to his religion and culture (889). He reflects on his family and surmises that his liminality is partly a product of his family in which there is neither atheist nor religious zealot.

The spill over from Quranic representational shifts manifests in Kamal's life. The young intellectual's descent—or ascent depending on one's perspective—begins when a symbol loses its material referent. Mahfouz later indicates, "revelation of [al-Husayn's] tomb's secret had been the first tragedy in his life and then how the succession of tragedies following it had carried off love, belief, and friendship" (974). His teacher tells the class that the al-Husayn shrine is a mere symbol possessing no material power. The law of physics, imported from the West is desanctifying traditions. Suddenly, everything begins to lose meaning and power. Kamal also dispossesses Islamic ablution of its traditional power, stating, "water can't wash away sin" (613). He also no longer views prayer traditionally. In Islam prayer usually occurs in the mosque,

²⁷ This obviously conflicts with the Islamic view of creation.

shoulder to shoulder with other Muslims. Kamal, however, prefers private supplication. Eventually, not even private intercession merits his attention. When the patriarch takes his two remaining sons, Kamal and Yasin, to the al-Husayn shrine, the formerly religious icon recedes into the repository of sacred iconography. In the past, it was a site of religious revival. Now, to Kamal, it is no more than “a vast collection of stone, steel, wood, and paint covering a great tract of land for no clear reason” (972). As they participate in prayer, Kamal goes through the motions, reciting absolutely nothing.

Kamal is not alone in his hallowing out of tradition; other characters participate, as well. Perhaps, most obvious is when song lyrics replace Islamic greetings. When al-Sayyid Ahmad returns to his entertainment escapades, his friends greet him with song instead of the conventional declaration of peace. Moreover, marriage, a sacred institution in Islam, sheds its sanctity to become a means of social ascension. A fruit seller, Bayumi, marries Bahija, Maryam’s mother, in an “unorthodox ploy” to ascend the class hierarchy. After Hasan’s engagement to Aida, Isma’il, likewise, accuses Aida of attempting to dispossess marriage of its traditional sanctity for the sake of social status. The Shaddad wedding hollows out the ceremonial aspects of matrimony. As much as Kamal longs to be the bridegroom of Aida, he is equally elated that the Shaddad Bey wedding is a symbol of bi-partisanship between oppositional political affiliations. Furthermore, before the Shaddad wedding of Aida and Hasan, the couple recites the Qur’an to commence the celebration. However, it is a nominal act done out of superstition rather than piety. These recitations, along with other ceremonial events, are termed “formalities.” Such a designation indicates that tradition is only good for ushering one into a new stage, moving one from one place to another. It has no intrinsic value. The wedding traditions continue despite the acts’ irrelevancy to the current situation. Enjoying the festivities themselves,

Kamal's friends admonish him to indulge in alcohol. Isma'il says, "even a pious man permits himself to get drunk at weddings" (869). The wedding has become an excuse to throw off the burden of tradition rather than a marker and preserver of tradition.

The post wedding traditions also succumb to redefinition. Yasin undermines the chastity required following marriage. He transforms an illusion to the Ka'aba²⁸ into sexual innuendo. Fantasizing about a woman, he says he will circle her seven times.²⁹ He even replaces her with a "shrine" to complete the metaphor. Yasin also uses a reinterpretation of the Quranic Surah: "Let those who have aspirations compete" (668) to justify pursuing his future mother-in-law. Islamic law is also belittled. It dictates custody battles be awarded in the favor of the father. Once a child turns seven, the father can ask for custody without resistance. Just like his son, al-Sayyid Ahmad re-symbolizes a religious image for carnal purposes. He reappropriates the religiously charged image of a camel with pilgrims embarking on a journey to Mecca to describe Jalila and Zubayda, who are modern and prostitutes. He could not imagine the life of his grandson progressing in the home of Yasin and Zanuba, the entertainer, lute player, and his soiree partner and exhorts his son not to exercise this right. To avoid public shame and the denigration of his family name, he even chooses to undermine tradition.

Vacuity also befalls traditional symbols of social status. While Kamal partakes in his inaugural consumption of alcohol at a bar, several men walk in wearing fezzes, hats, or turbans. Each hat symbolizes a man of a particular ilk. That men adhering to different traditions would convene together to consume a forbidden substance indicates all markers of the past are beginning to lose significance. The hats transform from indicators of adherence to tradition into arbitrary signs of preference. Subsequent to this transformation of hats is the transformation

²⁸ The Ka'aba is the spatial center of Islam. It is the direction towards which every Muslim must pray.

²⁹ When a Muslim travels to Mecca, their holiest site, they circle the Ka'aba, a large cube, seven times.

of another symbol of tradition, the azan—the Islamic call to prayer. Mahfouz writes, from Kamal’s perspective, “outside in the street laughter reverberated like the call to prayer, but this summons was to debauchery” (909).

Al-Sayyid Ahmad as a cultural symbol himself becomes a vestige of his former self because his “godlike qualities ... have faded away” (930). He transforms from a revered and esteemed father to a “tyrannical dictator, a petulant despot” (930). Kamal uses such malignant words because he believes that his father’s decision to only show the family his austere persona is unfair. Even God, according to Kamal, is subject to time.

With many traditions and religious symbols divested of their original meaning, the actions of the characters become manifestations of the altered structures around them. Several characters go with the new flow of life. When Kamal finds out that his father’s pious, austere persona is a farce, he feels that truth has fully unraveled, leaving him no choice but to get on board with the changes. He can no longer seem to find anything upon which to base reality. The episteme of the past has no merit. Truth and reality have become confusion and illusion.

As a result of the latent skepticism that emerges, the acquisition of knowledge becomes a central debate in many of the characters’ circles. How to educate and be educated are topics of debate. Kamal’s ideal life endeavors to uncover the essence of the classic Western triad of truth, goodness, and beauty. In opposition to the coping mechanisms his mother deployed in *PW*, many characters are leaning on Western paradigms to cope. Ibrahim Shawkat, Khadija’s husband, condemns his wife for putting the child in school at the age of five, citing tradition as a precedent. His attempt to transgress time by not altering his view of education supports Khadija’s statement that he is “impervious to change.” Not only has the attainment of knowledge changed, but also the cultural value of knowledge has changed. Scholasticism replaces class as

cultural capital. While Fuad and Kamal are in the coffeehouse, Mahfouz reveals that—though earlier it was said that Kamal was superior due to his class—Fuad is superior in games and school, thus reversing the class structure (609). In *PW*, Kamal wanted nothing but knowledge of the Qur'an, whereas now, his motivation is “truth,” by which he means, “What is God? What is man? What is the spirit? What is matter?” (709). Unfortunately, Kamal's native language, Arabic, does not permit Kamal the opportunity to learn a wide enough array of subjects. His decision to enter the Teacher's College seems primarily motivated by the desire to learn English in order to gain access to repositories of knowledge kept from Arabic speakers.

Kamal's skepticism leads him to look for an escape. He believes that he can transcend the quotidian, the finiteness of life. He reorders time by changing the historical demarcations of time, A.D. and B.C., to B.L., before love, and A.L., after love. When Kamal fantasizes about Aida, he does not imagine her political, religious, or social view; he wants to know about how she eats, what she eats, and other banal activities. That which has become a part of the flow of everyday life dissolves by love's snare: “What's happened to the political feud, the heated debate, the furious quarrel, and the class conflict? They've melted away and vanished at look from your eyes, O beloved” (704). Nothing is left but triviality, which must change.

Talking to his friend, Hasan Salim, Kamal refers to the subject of his discussion with Aida as “ordinary matters” (756). Their discussion is, in fact, entirely about beauty and love. Love starts the quarrel between the young Kamal and his friends while food starts the quarrel between the Matriarch and Khadija involving al-Sayyid Ahmad. Entering the flow of everyday life is the sound of whiskey swishing around in patrons' mouths as they indulge in illicit behavior. The surprising thing is that the man who confesses the acquisition of this habit claims to have inherited the behavior from his grandfather, indicating this has been happening for

decades. The quotidian now is not altogether different from the past. The difference is the ability to talk about it publicly and the general permissibility of the actions. After drinking at the bar, Kamal and Isma'il "fell in with the flow of men going their way (912)," which is towards the harem. The directional flow of life for his generation is away from the conservative ideals of the past.

Looking back over the narrative it is easy to see how new subjectivities gain more freedom for expression with continual outside influences. Aida, Kamal's fantasy, brings foreign influence into the most intimate and private of realms: the heart. The propriety that delimits most Egyptians' everyday affairs does not confine her to set patterns. Neither propriety nor Islamic conventions control her behavior. Fashion becomes less about functionality and more about social status and self-expression. Wearing a coat goes from a necessity to a fashion statement for Kamal, as he approaches Aida's home. It gets to the point where Kamal can change his attire based upon his sentiments toward Aida: "the more hurt and despondent he felt, the more dapper his attire became" (798). He changes on the whims of an(other).

Aida's presence carries the aroma of a Western cultural hotbed, Paris. She visited the region and brought back to Egypt many elements of Parisian culture. Her scent, her language, and her personality emit Parisian vibes. She wears Parisian perfume; she frequently uses foreign words; she is incredulously materialistic; she even attends Christian ecclesiastical services. Kamal muses to himself, "[she] inspired you to see everything in a new way, even the traditional style of life in the ancient quarters of the city" (725). The food Kamal takes with him on the trip to see the pyramids pales in comparison to the spread Aida and the others brought, not only in presentation but also in its contents. They take alcohol and ham, two forbidden foods in Islam. In

fact, “Aida knows more about Christianity and its rituals than she does about Islam” (741). The West is reordering Kamal’s personal life because he has permitted Aida access to his affections.

Aida, in a way, functions as a symbol of the discursive boundaries circumscribing what Kamal can know. The cultural shift first becomes obvious when ‘slenderness’ becomes fashionable, contrasting and replacing the traditional voluptuous woman. Kamal loves the thought of a slender figure. As a symbol of European extravagance, Aida replaces the role of Islam that traditionally delimits fields of knowledge for Muslims. Eventually, with time, Kamal can paint an accurate picture of his idol, Aida. The final product is quite different than his initial impression of her. The constituents of her inner beauty—intelligence, virtue, and piety—transform into ignorance, intolerance, and moral turpitude (753). Because these attributes are embodied in “the perfect beloved whose attributes and acts are beyond suspicion,” he must accept this beauty like it is a “divine decree” (754). Unfortunately, the decree she provides him—that is becoming a pillar of his faith in the world—will soon crumble once she moves away.

Once she is out of the picture, Kamal makes a statement about the vacuity of corporeal attractions that further illustrates the movement towards a liminal physical state. The world of ideals vanquished with the death of Fahmy, and now the corporeal world is receding with the imminent absence of Aida. In a way, the result is a spatially ambiguous state. He chalks it up to “fate, the law of heredity, the class system, Aida, Hasan Salim, and a mysterious force he was reluctant to name” (868). As a result, he laments, “I’m a foreigner and must live like an exile” (875).

While Kamal is getting lost in-between the binaries, his brother, Yasin, inhabits a subjectivity doomed to fade into irrelevance. Mahfouz uses Yasin as a picture of the previous

generation that has attempted transgressive acts of bringing the past to the present, hoping to maintain an uncompromised past. It is obvious throughout the story that Yasin longs to leave the past behind. However, he is unable to escape it. In fact, he embodies the past. His family frequently tells him that he carries the visage of his grandfather. Whether it is physical appearance, his mother's legacy, his illicit adventures, his ex-wife, or a colossal hangover, he always seems forced to confront the past. Often, he obliges and dives back into the past headlong. At the end of his reunion with Zanuba, he gestures toward her saying, "we need to act without any thought ... Let's go" (826). As Yasin and Zanuba wonder where to carry out their illicit endeavor, the setting belies their activity. While they rush headlong into their affair, the world around them hangs in a liminal state of stillness. Al-Sayyid Ahmad enters only to learn of his son taking his place. Zanuba has also caught the eye of Yasin's father, but it seems that Yasin has the upper hand in the matter. The past does enter the present moment for al-Sayyid Ahmad; however, his position in the power relations has changed.

Al-Sayyid Ahmad is also beginning to truly ponder the implications of the merging of the past and present. He worries about the consequences of his decisions. In *PW*, he never gave consideration to the possibility of the past actions reverberating into the present, let alone the future. As he contemplates marrying Zanuba, he wonders how such an action will alter the personas he has been projecting and maintaining distance between. He believes this indicates a development of caprice in his character. He fears this impetuosity will eventually destroy that distinction that has upheld his shallow magnanimity. The fear of a shrunken stature leads to a contemplation of suicide. Much like Yasin, he would prefer oblivion to the present moment.

POD ends with a foreign imposition delimiting subjectivities. Typhoid runs through part of the Shawkat family, destroying Aisha's perception of reality. She loses all hope. Sa'd Zaghlul,

the leader of the revolution dies, squelching the hopes of the nationalist. He dies as the individual sacrifice necessary in nationalism for the good of the collective, showing the need for individual subjective expression. When Kamal and Yasin are talking one of them describes their liminal state as “back and forth between Palace of Desire and Sugar Street” (979). The reader is left echoing the refrain of al-Sayyid Ahmad: “Where’s the Ahmad Abd al-Jawad who used to play the tambourine? he said to himself. “Oh...why has time changed us?” (952). Hence, “there’s not a single party calling for the return of the Khedive today” (701). Nobody wants a full return to their roots; however, they are uncertain of where to turn. The Third Space of *Sugar Street* will provide the opportunity for characters to explore different perceptions of the world and establish some sense of rootedness.

Chapter 3: *Sugar Street's* New Subjectivities and New Spaces

At the beginning of the third and final novel, the setting transitions from Palace Walk in al-Jamaliya, the ancient district of Cairo, to Sugar Street in al-Abbasiya, the modern district. It represents the shift that has taken place in the quotidian. The district's names and what they represent epitomize the changes that the reader witnesses throughout the third novel. As noted in the Introduction, the ancient district and the new district echo different ideologies. Mahfouz's deconstruction of the binary creates greater opportunity for many characters to absorb their surroundings and change as a result. Anecdotally, Shaykh Mutawalli, who seems to have followed the family to the new district and who epitomizes many traditional Islamic virtues (e.g. religious conservatism, highly valuing religious knowledge above other types of knowledge, and piety), does not seem to fit in the new space. He appears intermittently, looking lost and slightly deranged throughout *Sugar Street*³⁰, indicating his disorientation in the new era. The new location is not a place for old ideas. The transformation of the characters' daily routines, the dissolution of the public and private and past and present binaries has created a space in which some characters may thrive while others die. Though the changes affect every character, it seems that Mahfouz places Kamal, the main character of the third and final novel, at the end of the barrel, if you will.

In the previous book of *TCT*, the centering of marginalized characters, the hallowing out of traditions, and the incursion of Western knowledge reordered power relations allowing much more freedom for characters to explore alternative epistemologies. Kamal takes center stage, and his father fades from the rear view mirror as the young man struggles between reclaiming an untainted past and embracing European acculturation. Formerly referred to by the narrator as Al-Sayyid Ahmad, his father's regal prefix vanishes, revealing a shift in the make-up of family

³⁰ Henceforth, *SS*.

dynamics. He is now, even if only temporarily, to simply “Ahmad” (997) as opposed to Master Ahmad. His name change follows directly from his physical change. The once gallant man who commanded the attention of all of a room’s patrons is now thinning to the point of resembling his younger son, Kamal, whom he once maligned for carrying so little weight. Thus, while Kamal begins to claim a leadership role, his father is “having to relinquish the dominant position he had reserved for himself in the family” (1004). With the father’s delimiting presence sealed away in the past, Kamal presence gains new meaning.

Many of the structures that had been constraining Kamal’s vision are changing. The destabilized geo-political situation precipitates changes that will unequivocally affect Kamal’s understanding of the world. When the novel begins, the world is on the precipice of World War II. The trickle down effect is such that the colonial powers fear insurrection wherever their hegemony extends. According to the characters in 1935, “the English are everywhere, in the barracks, the police, the army, and various ministries” (1024). Yasin comments on the feeling of the occupied life, stating that there is no space without a miser watching one’s every move (1274). The presence of the English has affected several changes in Cairo up to this point. As a review, it has already begun to shape the traditional hierarchies within homes; it has started to shape education; and it has brought about political change. The extent to which the colonial powers attempt to control their colonies varies from country to country, and in Egypt the degree of foreign control appears much less aggrandized than in countries like India. Regardless, examining the colonial influence in Cairo provides another layer of meaning to Kamal’s existential quest.

Much like for his mother, for Kamal, the marginalization of al-Sayyid Ahmad means a relatively clean stage from which Kamal may assert his subjectivity. The reader finds Kamal’s

emergence as a young, intellectual, nationalist much different than his father. Kamal's early desire, expressed in *PW*, to become a "man of culture" foreshadows his nationalist consciousness, which seems to require an individual to be able to articulate one's national culture. However, embarking on his intellectual journey, Kamal surely could not have seen the result. Having feasted on many European philosophers and scientists—Bergson, Darwin, Spinoza, and Leibniz—Kamal's intellectual roots have given birth to a conflicted soul. The Anglicized public space, the leveled hierarchy within the private space, and the alterations to Kamal's routines, leave him isolated and alienated from the world around him, resulting in opportunity for introspection towards self-realization.

Understanding Kamal means understanding the nationalistic tendencies of consciousness. Attending a demonstration, the narrator observes, "[Kamal's] presence at a crowded gathering liberated a new person from deep inside his alienated and isolated soul, a new individual who was throbbing with life and enthusiasm" (1016). At times, Kamal finds individuality within the collective. Mahfouz goes on to describe Kamal's fascination with The House of the Nation—obviously a nationalistic symbol—in the same way, he described Kamal's adoration of the al-Husayn shrine in *PW* (1018). The shrine that once imbued the young boy's imagination with religious sentiments has taken a back seat to a symbol of English resentment, Egyptian autonomy, and Nativist ideology. He no longer wants to simply explain history through the divine decrees. The shrine and what it stands for is the historical hegemony of the past, which was constructed by privileged subjects. However, Kamal seems to be criticizing that mode of historiography "for having recourse to divine action as an explanation of historical causality, and for failing to adopt a critical stance toward the testimony of great ancestors" (Laroui 24).

The problem with divine recourse for Kamal is memory impairment. Part of the effort to disrupt the flow of memory emerges in the form the dissolution of the traditional Cairene spatial binary.³¹ The foreign powers contribute to the termination of traditional structures of knowledge production. It starts small when decisions made by a Patriarch in a home occur without the direct surveillance of a father figure. Ahmad Shawkat proposes to a young woman in the street of Cairo without first soliciting the consent of his father. The conflation of traditional knowledge structures heightens when political affairs enter the home as two warring ideological camps hold meetings in the same home—the home of Abd al-Muni'm and Ahmad. El-Enany characterizes the brothers as “equally pure, equally altruistic and equally desirous of being instrumental in the reform of their society: one a Muslim fundamentalist and the other a socialist” (52). The former brother hosts on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood while the latter hosts on behalf of the socialists. Separated by only a floor, the two disparate ideologies attempt to establish their discourse as the dominant discourse. Had the English not restricted so many public venues, the two would not have been forced to have the meeting in their homes.

The Egyptian political system proves to be no exception from foreign influence, and it is on the front lines of ideological warfare. As indicated in the introductory chapter, Egypt's seats of power maintained very little steadiness between 1919 and 1952. Moreover, the party who has been given the stage throughout the Trilogy, the party with the most vested interest in Egyptian identity, the Wafd party, Egypt's nationalist party—despite its best efforts—is fettered to the imperial powers. As a nationalist party, aligning itself according to staunch nationalistic ideals, the Wafd party unintentionally ties its fate to that of the English: “the length of [the Wafd Party's] rule depends entirely on the English” (1261). The British meddling in the country's

³¹ As has been established in the first two chapters, al-Sayyid Ahmad, the epitome of a traditional Cairene man, maintains a bifurcated persona. Each person inhabits a particular space, either the public or the private sphere.

political affairs combined with the Wafd party's desire to possess the throne of power creates a conflict between two oppositional ideologies. The former is circumscribing the Other's possibility for subjective experience. The latter is promoting national values in direct opposition to foreign impositions.

The conflation of religious and political war is also symptomatic of the effects of foreign incursions. Kamal, for example, is described as celebrating, "Jihad Day." In Islam, "Jihad" derives from the Quranic admonition to struggle against the powers that seek to slay Islam. The term is liberally applied to political intervention, making political matters of the religious realm. Again, at the gathering at which Mustafa al-Nahhas, the Wafd party leader, speaks, the Qur'an is wielded as a political weapon. A nondescript spokesman admonishes the public to fight on the authority of Surah 8:65 from the microphone. At one point, once a certain set of the worst raids ceased, the celebratory atmosphere rivaled that of the commencement of Ramadan (1201). As a result, the nationalism proffered by the Wafd party appears to be like the totalizing ideology of religion.

At a protest of foreign intervention, another colonial strategy becomes clear: disrupt the flow of memory, erasing the colonized memory so as to thwart a coup. As Kamal wanders around during the demonstration, the stimuli around him stir up his memory. In the moments of reflection, some self-discovery is possible. However, as if the English are aware of this, they begin to reign down bullets on what is a peaceful demonstration. As the English disrupt the flow of memory, they continually attempt to dispossess the Egyptian of his identity. As Kamal attempts to put the pieces of the event back together and recall a similar experience from the past so as to make sense of the present, "memory failed him" (1021). Kamal starts to find that both the West and the Wafd offer worldviews that do not permit him the freedom he desires.

Much like the first two chapters, the Egyptian home proves susceptible to the imposition of the British. When *SS* opens, the reader finds a continuation of themes from *POD*. Traditions are transformed into nothing more than museum exhibits. Mahfouz writes, “[t]he sitting room ... retained its time-honored appearance” (985). It *looks* like it is honoring Egyptian mores, but functionally, it has been dispossessed of cultural performativity. Furthermore, though we observe a traditional aesthetic, the adornments have changed. An electric light has replaced the oil lamp. In a bit of an ironic twist, the newly acquired radio emits a voice lamenting, “[c]ompanions from the good old days, how I wish you would return” (987). Using modern technology that has supplanted traditional means of communication, this voice yearns for the past. Though the song lyrics may be resounding the father’s lamentations, Mahfouz has revealed that the family, but more specifically al-Sayyid Ahmad, no longer turns up its nose to modern advancements. The paragon of traditional virtues,³² the family patriarch, is allowing innovation to replace tradition.

After the political turmoil, Mahfouz illustrates how the foreign influence alters the quotidian, the daily life, the habits of the Cairene citizens. He uses these changes as institutions to further dissolve the demarcation of the public and private. The coffee hour, which is a tradition that has persisted, has returned again to the first floor. Indicative of his waning status, al-Sayyid’s failing heart forces the traditional routine to change (985). The spatial layout of office spaces is changing: “Kamal’s desk in the center of the room under an electric light was flanked by bookcases” (1012). The familial relationships are changing: “In the street Kamal could view [Abd al-Muni’*m*, Ahmad, and Ridwan] as ‘men.’ At home, he always thought of them as young nephews” (1015). Eventually, the effects of the British become so austere in the private space that traditional means of establishing a sense of community (e.g. the coffee hour)

³² As was established in chapter 1, al-Sayyid Ahmad represents Mahfouz’s conception of the typical early twentieth-century Egyptian man.

give way to alternate forms: “The tomb brings us all together just as the coffee hour once did” (1212). The divide between the public and private has been so conflated that the routines that normally occur in public intrude on the home. Apparently Abd al-Muni’*m* and his new wife, along with Ahmad and Sawsan, live in the same house. One day Muni’*m* held a gathering for the Muslim Brotherhood while on a lower floor of the house the other two held a gathering of people from different groups, many of who were Marxist journalists (1278). Khadija astutely observes the encroachment of the public upon the private as she states, “they’ve converted their apartments into coffeehouses” (1280). Mahfouz concludes that changes in the dynamics of familial relationships combined with the effects mentioned above of spatial reallocation have the following result: “Over the course of time, the old house assumed a new look of decay and decline. Its routine disintegrated, and most of the coffee-hour crowd was dispersed. These two features had been the household’s soul and lifeblood” (1175). Disintegrating the routine disintegrates the people.

Amidst the vitriolic atmosphere created by the immanent feeling of war, the characters feel that the dissolution of their habits indicates their country will also dissolve. As Ahmad and his classmates enjoy fellowship at a going-away-party for their sociology professor, they sense the immediacy of change. While many of the students are conversing and debating, they are ushered into another room to partake in teatime because they “musn’t let the moment slip away” (1162). However, the irony is that they are set on preserving the opportunity for a British custom, which they observe with the utmost deference for British manners—all at the expense of conversation and entertainment, two Egyptian pastimes that have been repeated throughout the Trilogy.

Times have changed. Beauty has been redefined. Voluptuousness, which was once considered beautiful, is no longer in vogue. Being candid has supplanted the silence previously expected of women. That is to say, the ways in which subjects are talked about and the types of knowledge that are valued and privileged have undergone large shifts, leaving characters grasping for new ways to define themselves and those around them. As characters grasp at meaning, their efforts are in vain, as previously established epistemological mechanisms have dissolved. For example, many words that correspond to everyday experiences have undergone metonymic changes: “You’ll need a new dictionary for old terms like ‘love,’ ‘marriage,’ ‘jealousy,’ ‘faithfulness,’ and ‘the past’” (1247). Ahmad, for example, truly believes in a different brand of marriage. The precedent set by his older family members, even just the generation before him, is that marrying a woman equates to two families marrying each other. However, while his family berates him for being indifferent to this ostensible fact, he argues that no such amalgamation will occur (1249). In regards to childbearing, Ibrahim Shawkat, Khadija’s husband, suggests, “Abd al-Muni’m and Ahmad consider having children a fad as outmoded as obeying their parents” (1276). The incursion of foreign powers has disrupted the potential flow of meaning and the ways in which characters navigate meaning with common language.

As language shifts, one thing becomes clear: Ideological warfare is at hand. Different ideologies want to canonize their versions of the words. While two of the boys from the latest iteration of the Abd al-Jawad family discuss death, we witness how discourse is shifting. Ahmad wants Abd al-Muni’m to be able to separate his personal consciousness from his nationalist consciousness, but Ahmad himself seems unable to do so. His sentiments about the death of the recently deceased “tyrant,” King Fuad, reverberate with nationalistic ideology. Nationalistic fervor supersedes the gravity of death. As opposed to grieving for the death of another human

being, Ahmad dehumanizes the former leader, placing the label of “tyrant” upon King Fuad. In resisting the English, the nationalists have constructed an ideology that leads to individuals’ inability to find identity beyond the collective.

The emerging shifts in language signify shifts elsewhere in the Cairene ways of making sense of and engaging with reality. In line with Mahfouz’s self-proclaimed endeavor to paint a portrait of the pursuit of freedom (Shabrawy), the changes were “periodic revolutions [which] were necessary to serve as a vaccine against ... tyranny ... the nation’s most deeply entrenched malady” (1018). Abd al-Rahim Pasha Isa, a nationalistic icon, who has become like a god, offers himself as an ideological remedy for tyranny. He hopes to oppose al-Nahhas, who recently signed a treaty with the English. Fuad al-Hamzawi parallels the treaty to marriage, which he finds bonds one inferior unit to a superior unit. Pasha Isa appears throughout the novel, offering a nationalistic solution that would sever Egypt completely from the imperial powers. As a result, young men pledge to become his “disciples” (1048). He breaks from tradition in that he is far from a man of the cloth, and he does not want to marry. Moreover, he rejects the language of supplication that characters often use when addressing superiors (1051). His agenda runs contrary to the mantra of the most prominent emerging religious faction offering a social solution, the Muslim Brotherhood, which states, “a return to the Qur’an ... [which] consists of a creed, a code of law, and a political system” (1064). The prevailing sentiment of the educated class coincides with that of the editor of the magazine *The New Man*, a liberal political magazine, which proclaims, “[s]cience must take the place that prophecy and religion had in the ancient world ... The prophets of this era are the scientists” (1072-1073).³³

³³ These warring ideologies arise and combat one another at a historical moment during which freedom appears on the brink. Many believe they have finally been granted true independence with the recent treaty signed in London. In contrast to the nominal independence obtained in the past, the new treaty “abolishes the ‘reserved points’ limiting

The prophetic words of the editor ring true throughout *SS* as the scepter of power transfers from one group to another. As the institutions with power change, the possibilities of subjective expression change. As al-Sayyid Ahmad and his friends struggle with illness, they ruminate about great grandchildren and reveal a split in their allegiance to the dominant discourse. When the patriarch's granddaughter, Na'ima, was born, the doctors informed the family that her heart would be incredibly weak. As he reveals his angst about this very grandchild giving birth, a friend retorts, "Since when do you put your faith in the prophecies of physicians?" (1125). The physicians take on the role that was once inhabited by the canonized prophets of the Qur'an. Those prophets placed before the people the object of the people's faith. That is to say, was it not for the prophets the people would not have something at which to direct their faith. With the new medical knowledge readily accessible in Egypt, the physicians begin to assume that role as scientific knowledge replaces religious knowledge. Once the actual day of birth comes, Abd al-Muni'm, Na'ima's husband and Yasin's son, trusts in the trained hands of a professional, not in the sovereign hands of God. Yasin, though, calcified in the mold of his generation, says, "[God] controls [childbirth]" (1134). In the workplace, whereas in the past, family lineage and "advocates"³⁴ were requisite for promotion, education, has entered the discourse as a means of leverage.

Characters must now navigate the world for themselves without the assistance of the past. Among those left in al-Sayyid Ahmad's generation, a name, a family, or a friend possesses power to liberate; but in politics, such hallow ideals give the possessor no leverage. Reason

Egyptian independence" (1077). The main factors that have constricted the country's freedom up to this point revolve around foreign affairs and privileges granted to foreigners in Egypt.

³⁴ A term used by Yasin, which basically means people who leverage their influence for people regardless of merit.

supplants family hierarchy and “wasta”³⁵ as a matrix for decision-making. When the two Shawkat brothers are arrested, their mother attempts to free them from custody by name-dropping. One of the officers was a friend with Fahmy, the long lost family nationalist, who won the favor of many in the community. However, her efforts are to no avail. The police officer responds to the plea, saying, “we’re just following orders, lady” (1296). Not only does he refuse, but also the officer refuses to acknowledge the relational bond to the distraught mother, addressing her with the vague, general, and disaffected term “lady.” Though it is not pervasive, change is undeniable.

The discursive alterations do not cease at titular levels, carrying over into the class system as well. Class struggle is a reality experienced by many. Riyad claims that the Wafd party sees no ethnic lines, placing people of all origins in equal places. He surely would not have joined the party otherwise, coming from a Coptic background. The barriers between societal groups spare no expense in the domain of love, either. The woman Ahmad is pursuing says that the one thing separating them from each is not love, or the lack of it, not opportunity, not any pragmatic reason, but “the bourgeois mentality” that she accuses Ahmad of possessing due to his background (1246). As the nationalist party seeks to propagate a trans-class message, the class system, which was pervasive in Cairo throughout *PW* and parts of *POD*, begins to dissolve. The bourgeois class is predicated upon preserving traditions, and Abd al-Muni’*m* is finding it difficult to push against those traditions. Wanting to marry into a dancer’s family, another class of society, he is left defenseless against the propriety of the class system (1216-1217). Husayn Shaddad, whose fortunes and bourgeois status disappeared after his family had been destroyed, has become part of the proletariat (1289). Acknowledging the class system and seeking to grant

³⁵ “Wasta” is an Arabic term that essentially refers to one’s ability to make things happen and get things done based on whom one knows.

subjectivity to the Subaltern, Kamal's friend, Riyad Qaldas, portrays the proletariat in his novels. By putting the "proletariat in the spotlight" (1191), Kamal believes his friend is indeed actively working toward social justice.

Within this ideological war zone wherein traditions have receded into the margins, one should examine al-Sayyid Ahmad and Kamal as they negotiate identity. For Kamal to emerge, al-Sayyid Ahmad's presence, the dominating and delimiting force that it is, must wane. The process started in *POD* and continues at the beginning of *SS*. The narrator remarks, the father's "past life had disappeared forever" (990). Mahfouz has sealed the patriarch in time. His magnanimous visage of the past has deflated and become a mere reminder of how life no longer resembles what it once was. The marriage between Aisha's daughter, Na'ima, and Khadija's son, Abd al-Muni'm, takes place in a time sealed vacuum at Palace Walk, home of al-Sayyid Ahmad. The wedding occurs at Palace Walk, where "no changes worth mentioning had taken place" (1101). The Patriarch's home is in the same condition, maintaining the same traditions that it did at the beginning of *PW*: "The day passed like any other one" (1101).

The present moment is Sugar Street. The title of the third part of the Trilogy, the present tense of the narrative is absent the presence of the patriarch. He is, by virtue of his health, unable to be present in the present moment. He has been left behind—by virtue of time. He laments the street because it reminds him of his past, which is no longer accessible to him: "This household, which had always yielded to his absolute authority, now looked askance at him, granting him pitying looks when he asked for something or scolding remarks fit for a child" (1179). Confined to his bed and with no more living friend, physical ailments have delimited his access to freedom, making him like his wife.

The only changes in the Patriarch's home portend a shift in the power dynamics. The top floor of the house has a study (1078), which shows how the spatial hierarchy has changed. The father's domain had previously taken up most of the entirety of the top floor in *PW*. Now knowledge has unseated tradition as the rudder of Egypt. Al-Sayyid Ahmad, who truly stands on pretense, expects his persona to carry weight in his relationships. His magnanimous stature and commanding presence piggybacking on his role of father controlled his entire family through most of *PW* and some of *POD*. Dictating what family members would do and how they would do things became his *modus operandi*, irrespective of his knowledge, or lack thereof, in regards to their affairs. However, as symbolized by this change in the floor layout, Egypt is moving towards a new dialectic. Kamal, who represents a new type of knowledge, is now situated in a place of power.

As he has aged, al-Sayyid Ahmad has found himself walking through everyday affairs according to different mores. Western knowledge starts to dictate the everyday affairs of people. Doctors have exhorted Ahmad and his friends to abstain from alcohol, which has been a staple of their daily affairs. Al-Sayyid Ahmad's routine no longer resembles what it once did. Since he stopped working at his store, his public appearances have become few and far between as a result of his decaying heart. Time has thrust upon him a change in health. With Age comes wisdom—and sickness. Routine change is symptomatic of the inevitable change: a decaying body. This change transforms his once “symbol of virility and of elegance” (1123) into a means of survival. To further his emasculation, the “patriarch” has switched places with his wife and they have assumed each other's routines. The visitations to the mosque, the stops by the al-Husayn shrine, and the trips to the market have become too strenuous for his decaying body, so his wife has taken on his duties. The father's routine has become entirely passive; he is even unable to

perform his daily prayers. Samson Somekh makes an astute observation about the result of the father's meeting with a new discourse, writing, "the new political and social processes are too dynamic for him to understand fully. The pace of life in general is already too quick for al-Sayyid to cope with" (117). He is no longer a relevant character in a saga that he helped set into motion.

Stripped of virility and piety, al-Sayyid Ahmad enters his final days as a marginalized figure, leaving a power vacancy and disorienting those around him. His wife, Amina, whose subjectivity has been fettered to his since the beginning of *PW*, laments the loss of her husband as well as her home. That is to say, the death of al-Sayyid Ahmad affects the essence of the house in which the family lives. His presence is what makes it home, according to Amina. Her routines of subservience to him, which had defined her, no longer exist, providing an opportunity for her to assume a new subjectivity. And the chapter proceeding the death of her husband is a monologue infusing her voice into the narrative. Finally, the reader encounters the indelible voice of the wife.

Given his chance to make decisions and interpret, Kamal wants to uproot the binaries constructed by spatiality. Inhabiting particular spaces means something different for Kamal than it did for his father. Whereas al-Sayyid Ahmad used different spatial locations for inhabiting different personas, Kamal resists this aspect of the traditional Cairene man, attempting to merge the dual subjectivities. Unlike his father, Kamal is the same in public and private. Whereas his father's lovers describe his father as "passionate" and "impetuous," yet sterile and pious at home, Kamal is the same in both spaces. Unfortunately, Kamal still sees the binaries that have emerged: "I still see life as a set of mismatched parts" (1093). And of course, he attributes that to the impact of the English. Because the English have begun to dominate the public sphere, a character

like al-Sayyid Ahmad, who upholds traditional Egyptian virtues, must be austere in the home, the only place where such an endeavor is possible. However, his feeling about marriage reveals that he wants to end the dual subjectivities Egyptians have been forced to inhabit: "I'm searching for a marriage that will affect both the private and public aspects of my life" (1093).

As he reacts to the English influence, attempting to merge the spatial binary throughout *SS*, Kamal also seeks to define the quotidian, to establish a routine, and to make sense of it. How one defines the quotidian is indicative of one's place in the world. For example, Kamal, standing in between two worlds, places marriage in a transcendent, metaphysical realm. The majority around him, however, considers it "a normal part of everyday life like saying 'Hello'?" (1252). Apparently, his view of normality stands in opposition to most, further alienating him.

Ironically, though isolated, Kamal frequently needs to inhabit the nationalistic space to maintain his link to the collective routine, even though these routines have transformed. Political reformation interrupts the quotidian affairs of *PW* and *POD*. No longer do families quarrel simply about betrothing daughters, dowries, or household chores. Instead, the people seem consumed with revolution. When the patriarch and his friends gather, they quickly shift the focus of their conversation from health to revolution. In a way, the collective routine is starting to resemble what Kamal's has been since *POD*.

Beyond Kamal's physical milieu of space and daily activities, his introspective tendencies most poignantly reveal his hybridity. Kamal, like his young nephew, Abd al-Muni'm Shawkat, is an opponent of the class system, illustrating some affinity with the younger generation. He also has chosen to put marriage on hold. However, the generation before him and the generation after him agree that he should marry. Kamal elects to stand in the middle, holding at bay what those around attempt to thrust upon him. The result of Kamal's interaction with the

colonialism that fragmented his nation is an alienation that leaves him straddling not only generations but also cultures.

In his current state, Kamal hardly resembles the boy of his youth. It is most notable in his ostensibly unwavering allegiance to the Wafd party. Constantly questioning the metaphysical realm and truth itself, Kamal has shed the zealous, confident boy of his youth. He had even opposed nationalism and befriended the English before the death of his brother. The only thing left unquestioned in his mind is nationalism: “Convinced that he believed in nothing, he still celebrated these holidays like the most ardent nationalist” (1014).

Though he differs in almost every way possible from his past iteration, Kamal continues to wonder if he belongs “to the past or to the present” (1240). Though he reads contemporary European philosophy, Kamal still wears a fez, contrary to the populist. Every moment provides an opportunity for reflection in regards to how the present situation comes to bear on the past. He often laments what he feels is the permanent departure from the past that time forces him to accept. In a moment of meta-awareness he wonders, “[p]erhaps the past is the opiate of the Romantic” (1032). When he learns that the Shaddad family, which he used to hold up as the ideal in *PW*, dissolves due to bankruptcy and suicide, he has but one option. Kamal immediately finds himself clamoring to stave off the throngs of time as they continually try to detach him from his past. Having just learned that the Ahmad Abduh coffeehouse will be repurposed, he attempts to cling to the last vestige of the past, Budur. The younger sister of his childhood crush seems to be the only lasting vestibule to the past.

The further into Western knowledge he ventures the more he unravels. He continues to stray from his roots because he is not sure they are valid. As he muses about the truth and politics, the narrator observes, “[n]ot even politics is exempt from [Kamal’s] insatiable doubt”

(1077). Kamal is “alienated and frozen into degrees of inactivity that rob [him] of any deep fulfillment and happiness” (Gover 106). As Kamal studies, researches, and writes, he remarks, “I’m a tourist in a museum where nothing belongs to me. I’m merely a historian. I don’t know where I stand” (1085). Kamal is self-aware of his liminality. He even goes so far as to delineate his descent into liminality: religious belief, belief in truth, materialist philosophy, rationalism, and skepticism. He is not the only one aware of his situation. Of Kamal’s identity, his friend remarks, “You seem to be an Easterner teetering uncertainly between East and West. He goes round and round until he’s dizzy” (1170). To some, his thoughts are mere rambling in a bygone world with no relevance to today’s affairs. Sawsan believes his writing about “the spirit, the absolute, and the theory of knowledge” is “ancient” (1190).

Kamal’s Nativist strategies flailed in their attempts to reclaim an untainted, pre-Islamic past. Love is the mechanism that shatters the underpinnings of his ideology. At least, that is according to Riyad Qaldas, who avows, “[l]ove is like an earthquake, rocking mosque, church, and brothel equally” (1087). Kamal ends up stuck between “adherence to foolish traditions” and his personal “principles of equality and human dignity” that are leaving him paralyzed as he attempts to give his nephew advice about marriage (1251). As Kamal discusses the issue of choosing a bride, his bewilderment leads him “in circles while the whole world advanced” (1263). Upon learning of the death of Aida, Kamal’s ideal from the past that he has hung on to for years, “words no longer seemed to mean anything” (1292). His love for Aida, and therefore of his idyllic past, had been misdirected and unfounded since her death. At her funeral—the funeral he thought he was attending for his boss’s wife, who he thought he had never met—Kamal was “bidding farewell to his past” (1293). She died; his past changed; he did not know.

In contrast to Kamal's restorative attempts, several characters from the new generation provide foils against which Kamal's endeavors may be better understood. Kamal fears what he sees emerging in the new generation. Kamal's longtime friend, Isma'il Latif, in complete opposition to any Nativist strategies of selfhood, is ready to destroy "all historic relics ... for the sake of today and tomorrow" (1033). Isma'il Latif views the past through the transgressive lens of *POD* in which the past is forced upon the present moment, disregarding the need to adapt it. The past, to him, has carried this negative transgressive label as it has so frequently been used to oppress emerging subjectivities. He sees betrothal in the like many in the new generation. Observing a situation that occurred in *PW*, one witnesses a significant difference in marriage proposal's between Fahmy, the son of al-Sayyid Ahmad, and Abd al-Muni'm, the son of Khadija's husband. The fathers in the respective families handled the situations much differently, reflecting a change in the times. Whereas Al-Sayyid rejected Fahmy's marriage proposal, Ibrahim allowed his son to "impose his will" on him (1102). Much like, Isma'il Latif, the young Ahmad, Kamal's nephew, has relinquished most of the habits deeply rooted in the past. He has shirked his religious duties for a two-year period. Further illustrating his departure from the past, he refuses to acknowledge the validity of the saying his brother leverages against him in an argument. His brother goes so far as to assert that he is an apostate, a grave sin in Islam. Ahmad is content in his liminality, stating, "[w]e marry and bury according to the precepts of our former religion, but we live according to the Marxist faith" (1252). In other words, the quotidian, which indicates one's place in the world, locates Ahmad's nominal Muslim identity in a new discourse.

If Kamal wanted to know whether or not Nativist strategies worked—without going through the pain of searing loss—all he would have had to do was look within his family, within his private sphere. His sister, Aisha, typifies the shortcoming of Nativist strategies. She laments

the loss of connection to her past, a loss of something by which to remember the past, saying, “If only I had the baby from her belly as a reminder of [Na’ima]” (1176). As a result of the disintegration of past and present, she sees the world as void of meaning. Not being able to hold on to the past robs her of subjectivity as she walks through life throughout *SS*. Moreover, Chapter One Hundred and Fifty-One unveils the imminent demolishing of the family home on Palace Walk—its ancient structure cannot withstand the modern science raiding them. By being fundamentally antiquated, the new world—particularly one which the imperial powers have dominated—leaves no place for the home.

The last chapter begins with the end of the beginning. The book as a whole ends with the beginning. The mother, who set the day, the plot, and the family saga in motion, appears paralyzed at the inception of the last chapter. As Aisha notes, “[i]f she lies in bed like this for a long time, life in our house will surely be unbearable” (1306). However, Amina still refuses to consult a doctor, a conviction that is the death of her. The daily routines, like the ticking of a clock hand, will cease if the mother does not remove herself at least partially from the past. The events and changes in the Trilogy will have interrupted life’s rhythm. A reversal of sorts will have taken place to the point of one character remarking, “[t]he cosmos had seemed to have turned upside down” (1102). Sure enough, an inability to enter the present moment belies life. Kamal ends up left with this thought, “the teachings of religion are based on a legendary metaphysics in which angels play an important part. We should not seek solutions to our present-day problems in the distant past” (1243). Though he provides the reader with a semblance of closure, one should not consider him the hero. He ends the book as nothing more than a “modern alienated figure” (Ghorab 76). The nostalgia that clamors for the good ole days falls on deaf ears by the end of *SS* as the characters are left with a need to assimilate their identities in a new age

within new realities in a way that does not transgress their fundamental beliefs, whether these realities—particularly those imposed on them from without—appease them or not.

Conclusion

Combining Naguib Mahfouz's extensive writing about characters navigating identity in twentieth-century Egypt (Hallengren 80) with Michel Foucault's interest in understanding the practices and rituals that delimit subjectivities reveals the underpinnings of identity in *TCT*. Mahfouz's seminal work, *TCT*, chronicles a family that typifies the middle-class Egyptian of the early twentieth-century. While Mahfouz is locating authority and power in individual loci, Foucault was not interested in identifying individuals in possession of power. For, he believed that power is not possessed by individuals but is manufactured through power relations—that is to say, relationships between people. Hence, the hierarchical layout of the house becomes a mechanism through which power is distributed. The prescribed practices of the orthopraxic religion of early twentieth century Egypt also dispense power. As several transgressive events converge, they reorder the institutions that delimit subjectivities.

By the end of *TCT*, the Abd al-Jawad family bears little resemblance to the version of the family Mahfouz introduced to the reader at the beginning of *PW*. As the narrative opens, the reader encounters a family embedded firmly within the rhythms of a conservative, traditional early twentieth-century Egyptian lifestyle. The lifestyle carries with it power relations that delimit the subjectivities of many characters. The father, al-Sayyid Ahmad, is initially at the reins of the power relations. He maintains his role through practices and rituals that circumscribed other characters. According to Rouse, "often these practices of subjection worked indirectly, by restructuring the spaces and reorganizing the timing within which people functioned" (98). Amina, his wife, is unable to see more of the world than what she is afforded through the filtered gaze of her window grates. Her identity and existence are entirely dependent on her husband's lifestyle. However, his reign of supremacy suffers blow after blow. As imperial

powers infringe on much of the Egyptian society, everything changes. Samson Somekh describes the situation as a “rapid rejection of time-honoured social norms, the slow emancipation of woman from medieval shackles, the spread of education and scientific thinking, the increasing influence of western culture, the decline of religious adherence among the urban middle-class” (106). Simultaneously, the patriarch recedes into the margins. In spite of the patriarch’s early efforts to maintain complete surveillance over his entire family and circumscribe the family members’ subjectivities, the dissolution of the public and private binary undermines his sovereignty.

By *POD*, the zealous young Kamal starts to inch towards the center of the narrative. Though women previously only viewed the world through windows, which may be considered as “‘walls’ that simultaneously pierce and reinforce the barriers between us and the outside world” (Gumpert 34), the father’s waning surveillance starts to open up the world to them. Kamal’s view of the world also begins to widen. From religiously conservative to completely skeptical, he loses hold of all that he held to in the past. Though the Western impositions have started to center Kamal, they also send him into a sort of existential abyss. Kamal’s encounter with and muddling in Western knowledges send him into the Third Space of liminality. The power relations from the dominant discourse in *PW* ordered Kamal in a particular way. Then, the new power relations come into the picture and reorder his subjectivity again. Thus, the process of translation that happens as individuals navigate identity within different power relations disorients characters.

As Kamal began the process of translation, he needs to come to terms with his past. Mahfouz’s proleptic writing in *PW* insinuates Kamal’s rapid divergence from his early self. El-Enany considers Kamal’s fascination with the English soldiers at a young age as a precursor to

his infatuation with Aida—both instances being evidence of his imminent liminality (86-90). His religious fervor does not last long, and nationalism eventually replaces it. He becomes an ardent follower of the Wafd party. When the Wafd party originated in 1918, it was a nationalist movement that had strong anti-colonial leanings. It was said to represent all social classes with the goal of empowering the masses, not any particular groups, whether religious or political (Daly 286-288). Its cause foretold of Kamal's impending departure from it. According to Daly, "the nationalist movement was an effect of urban middle strata educated in modern, western-style school . . . and circles of large landholders simultaneously articulating and responding to collective anti-colonialist sentiment and action" (309). Clearly, Kamal starts out holding Western values and knowledge at arm's length.

As he moves through the events of the novels, exploring science and philosophy, his faith in everything that has been passed down subsides. In her article, "Naguib Mahfouz: Life in the Alley of Arab History," Moosa places Kamal in-between, in the alley of history. She writes, "[he] becomes a skeptic and turns to science for the salvation of both himself and mankind, espousing Darwinism. As a result he is totally estranged from his own culture and society, which is still controlled by the British" (227). Though he never leaves the country, he still struggles with rootlessness. He stops participating in the prayer rituals. He questions the efficacy of religious reform. The conflict arises in Kamal as a result of the confluence of the Western intellectualism with "the petit bourgeoisie, which politically dominates the national State . . . delimits the intellectuals' horizon and defines cultural policy" (Laroui 160-161). The social class within which Kamal lives has "no means of familiarizing themselves with the rationality of science and industry" (162). The power relations that existed in the life of Kamal's past did not afford individuals access to the knowledges Kamal's would soon encounter.

However, when the British contribute to the disbanding of those power relations and the establishment of the new ones, the young man finds himself trying to navigate new power structures.

Foucault's conception of the self, which he believes is located within power relations and ultimately defined by them, fails to grasp the multivalency of Kamal. In her book, Moosa argues that Mahfouz believes in the harmony of faith and science (276). It seems that Kamal will eventually come to terms with these ostensible contradictions. Mahfouz's obvious endearment of Ancient Egypt throughout his literary career has roots, not only in his three historical novels detailing the pharaonic era and translation work, but also in "the context of a main intellectual current at the time which found in the face of foreign rule a sense of national and cultural pride in Ancient Egyptian History" (El-Enany 15). However, though Kamal latched on to nationalist sentiments in the face of foreign intervention, he eventually even lost faith in the ideals that were supposed to lead to salvation. The story ends with Kamal having no real recourse to identify himself. While his subjectivity was circumscribed by his father in *PW* and by the imperial powers in *POD*, at the end of *SS*, he is in a position to navigate his identity semi-autonomously. Instead of acquiescing to the pull of the roots in family, culture, and religion or the road of rootlessness, he lands somewhere in the middle. He wants to retain his culture, but he is not content with the current interpretation of those roots. Much like many characters in the novels of Rushdie, Roy, and Mukherjee, Kamal becomes the quintessential Post-Colonial character that wrestles with identity in the midst of warring ideologies.

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