GENDER RELATIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD
A RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF NAGUIB MAHROUZ’S *AWLAD HARATINA*

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This study examined the novel by Nahjib Mahfouz, Awlad Haratina, or Children of the Alley. The goal of this examination was to reveal how gender relations are rhetorically created within the Arab cultural context. This study found that two rhetorical strategies mediated gender relations and provided a path for improving gender relations. The strategies were Lamentation and Muruwa.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER ONE: GENDER AND ARABIC RHETORIC</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Gender Issues</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Awlad Haratina</em></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamentation</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Questions</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Identity</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arab Female</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situating Myself in the Study of Arab Rhetoric</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Childhood in Bahrain</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Novel and the Author</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Overview of the Novel and its Implications Regarding Gender Relations</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Awlad Haratina</em> as a Key to Understanding Arab Identity</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolization through Storytelling</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Defeated Arab Self</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Muruwa</em> as a Critical Perspective</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of Chapters</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Rhetoric</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary Critical Perspective of Rhetoric</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Rhetoric</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Colonial Criticism</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Rhetoric</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Islamic Rhetoric</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Rhetoric</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Holy Quran</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Rhetorical Forms</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rhetoric of Abbasee’s Modernism</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Arabic Rhetoric</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Rhetorical Theory From an Arabic Perspective</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Discourse about Gender Relations</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth of Gender: What is Gender?</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arab Self versus the Jewish Other</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power, Personality and Sexuality</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity, Masculinity and the Concept of the Father</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahfouz’s Rhetoric in <em>Alwad Haratina</em></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Review of Mahfouz</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: THE POWER OF THE METAPHOR</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arrangement of the Word</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-making the Religious Myth</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Metaphors</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hara as the World</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR: NAMING AND GENDERED TIME AND PLACE

Space, Movement and Relation to Time .............................................................150
The Objectifying of Women ................................................................................154
The Space Between the Husband and the Wife .............................................156
Men are Ignorant about Womanhood ......................................................158
Women Express No Voice, Only Emotions .............................................159

Time .....................................................................................................................160
The Significance of Place in Alwad Haratina ................................................163
Naming in Alwad Haratina.............................................................................165
The Problem of Translating Arabic Names .............................................166

CHAPTER FIVE: THE MYTH OF GENDER AND MODERNITY IN AWLAD
HARATINA ..............................................................................................................175
The Roots of Our Mythical Thinking ..............................................................179
What is Myth? ......................................................................................................179
Mythical Discourse of Gender .........................................................................190
Myth, Religion and the Discourse of Gender .............................................193

CHAPTER SIX: GENDER RELATIONS AND SEXUALITY ....................................202
Economic Aspect of Sexuality ........................................................................206
The Metaphor of the Virgin versus the Prostitute ..........................................214
Gender Relations and Power .........................................................................220
Muruwa and Possibilities for New Understandings in Gender Relations.........225
CONCLUSION

REFERENCES
CHAPTER ONE: GENDER AND ARABIC RHETORIC

Introduction

Gender relations in the Arab World are not only misunderstood, they are relatively unknown by Western communication scholars. However, research (Tannen, 1990, 1994) shows that men and women have different communicative styles that can often result in fundamental misunderstandings between them. Tannen argues that the language codes used by men and women are based on their differentiated gender roles. “At the core of her argument is the notion that women focus on inclusion and support from others (solidarity), whereas men focus on levels of dominance and control (power) in social interaction” (Edwards, 2004, p. 1). Because of the strength of male/female gendered stereotypes, the same message delivered by a male may be interpreted differently than if the message was delivered by a female. (Edwards, 2004, p. 2). Men and women’s gender identity, shaped by culture, affects not only communication style, then, it also affects the way that men and women are understood by others. Even while in the process of seeking greater understanding, gender communication often exacerbates gender relations rather than enhancing them. The way people communicate is part of the socialization process, and most people are unaware of the subtle nuances that shape their use of language. Tannen states that, “Simply by understanding and using the words of our language, we all absorb and pass on different, asymmetrical assumptions about men and women” (Tannen, 1990, p. 243). Our ability to communicate, therefore, affects our relationships with others, especially the relationships between men and women. Consequently, the issue of gender and its effects on communication has become a central issue in the field of Communication Studies. The research done on gender communication topics implies an understanding of the cultural context and its effect on gender.
For example, when Tannen describes that women’s communication contains inclusion and is supportive to gain solidarity, and men’s communication emphasizes levels of dominance and control, this is not particularly surprising because we understand the gender roles in American society that caused these language differences to develop. Culture affects the gender roles and behaviors assigned to men and women. To better understand gender issues in communication, therefore, an understanding of a particular culture and the nature of its gender relations is required. For this dissertation, then, my objective is to identify and evaluate the gender relations within an Arab cultural context because so little attention has been paid to this significant and critical issue.

Arab Gender Issues

Male and female gender roles were prescribed by Arab males within the Arab society long before the introduction of Islam. Norms regarding gender relations were passed down from generation to generation by oral traditions. Usually the classical Arab mother taught her daughter the traditional role of the woman was such as housekeeping, mothering skills, or serving and pleasing her husband. Correspondingly, the father taught his son how to be the provider and the protector of his children and wife, including all other females in his household. The male, as the protector of the family, was the dominant figure in the male-female relationship, and subjugated the status of women to the control and desires of men. Even today in Arab societies, female students are given a prototype of what a good wife is. For example, there is an instructional piece called "Waseyyat Urabia Le Ibnatiha", which is a recommendation from a Bedouin mother to her daughter as to how to be a good wife. The text instructs women regarding personal hygiene and appropriate demeanor. A traditional message presented by an Arab mother to her daughter is that if you serve your husband as a maid, then he will become you servant. Although young
women are instructed on how to become good wives for their husbands, instructions about how to be a good man do not necessarily teach a man how to be a good husband. For example, the Qur'an has a verse called Luqman, which talks about a wise man named Luqman; he passes a recommendation to his son about how to be a good man, (Qur'an, Chapter 31). Therefore, gender relations in the Arab World are perceived by Westerners as biased against women. In this dissertation, I selected Naguib Mahfouz's novel, Awlad Haratina, to examine the rhetorical reality of gender relations in the Arab World.

Awlad Haratina

The feminist critique of the Nobel Prize Winner Naguib Mahfouz's novel, Awlad Haratina, is relatively overlooked. Awlad Haratina, which means "children of the neighborhood," was published in the Egyptian daily newspaper, Al-Ahram in 1959. This novel was banned by the Azhar, the highest religious authority in Egypt, and has never been allowed to be published in a book form. Therefore Mahfouz rarely discussed it. He thought of this novel as his "illegitimate child," (New York Times (Producer), 1999). From the general text of the newspaper writing, this novel was illicitly published in Beirut in 1967. Awlad Haratina was translated into English as Children of the Alley by Peter Theroux (1959), and also as Children of Gebelaawi, by Philip Stewart (1981). This novel is not usually included in Arabic rhetoric. Particularly in U.S. communication research, Arab rhetoric is not fully explored for its possibilities to render an understanding on gender relations in the Arab world.

Mahfouz's novel, Awlad Haratina, is heavily influenced by Retha, which is an Arab rhetorical style that was common in the Pre-Islamic era (Jaheleyya). The English translation for Retha is "lamentation." Mahfouz (1959) uses Retha or Lamentation (I capitalize this term throughout to give it a formal identity) to communicate an Arab-Islamic feminist perspective of
gender relations to reveal the tragedy of confining people to their gender role and social status within an oppressive social system. Through the character’s voices in Awlad Haratina and the inherent social criticism found through weaving together stories of the victimization of both men and women, Mahfouz creates a humanistic framework that I refer to in this dissertation as the "Muruwa".Mahfouz (1959) adaptation of Lamentation becomes an effective rhetorical style to intensify the characters’ stories within this powerful humanistic framework, despite the fact that Lamentation normally communicates helplessness and defeat, and it also sheds some light on the depth and the complexity of Mahfouz's agenda to bring universal enlightenment.

Mahfouz (1959) integrates the Lamentation into his literature, communicating the feelings of defeat within the fast rhythm of modern life, where there is no place for those who look to the past. I have chosen Mahfouz's employment of this perceived negative Arabic communication style within Awlad Haratina to demonstrate the rhetorical power of Mahfouz in this novel. I also argue that Mahfouz was influenced by three sources of Arabic rhetoric: classical Arabic poetry, the Qur'an, and the narrative tradition exemplified by One Thousand and One Nights. This literature helped Mahfouz turn a negative rhetorical style into a rhetorical weapon whose purpose was to shake the Arabic collective psyche in order to heal its soul. Mahfouz’s (1959) rhetorical choice, therefore, has the potential to turn the negative aspects of Lamentation into a positive remedy.

Literature has the power to transform and even liberate. As stated by Elizabeth Lane Lawley, “Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression and so of possibility...The boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion” (Lawley, 1993, p. 1). Mahfouz’s work in Awlad Haratina takes the reader on a journey across different eras to examine the effects of social oppression on
a culture of people haunted by the past. This dissertation attempts to explain the details of the rhetorical procedure that Mahfouz (1959) used to heal the defeated Arab self through the application of its powerful, rhetorical approaches. In the novel *Awlad Haratina*, Mahfouz transformed Lamentation from a crippling response of mourning that avoids the present or future to a medication that can be used to cut through the injured national psyche, awaken the hidden pain, and face life with a fresh look under a new retrieved positive framework, *Muruwa*.

My criticism of Mahfouz's rhetoric, therefore, has several possibilities. One is to examine the rhetorical depiction of gender relations in the Arab/Islamic culture and consider methods for resolving conflicts found there. The dissertation also has the possibility to provide the field of communication studies with two new rhetorical concepts as keys to understanding the Arab culture: Lamentation and *Muruwa*.

*Muruwa* is an Arabic concept that communicates the highest decency of humanity, and is derived from the word "*Mara*" which refers to humans being both male and female. However, the common term for woman is *Mar'ah*, or *Emra'ah*, which is derived from the root *Emra'* or *Mar’* which means “a person.” The common term for man is *Rajul*. The terms *Mara'* or *Emra’ah* are used interchangeably with men only in literature or prose.

*Awdl Haratina* interprets the Arab history of gender relations and it explores how those relations are linked to the details of today's economic and sociopolitical problems. Mahfouz has collected the history that Arabs continue to mourn, and has presented it within a realistic framework that is borrowed from the minute details of the Egyptian daily life. This clever gesture of connecting the *holy* past with the profane, contemporary era through the application of Lamentation functions on three levels, the narrator, the bard, and the individual voices of the people of Gebelaawi's neighborhood to achieve the culmination point that the novel seeks to
reveal to its reader. Mahfouz (1959) uses Lamentation as his rhetorical criticism regarding gender relations in the Arab world.

Gender relations in the Arab World are problematic. While gender relations could be seen from an Arabic perspective as a division of labor, it is seen from a Western perspective as domination and hegemony within the patriarchal framework. Until recently, the Western perspective about gender relations in the Arab World was primarily influenced by the images of Hollywood films such as Arabian Nights. The fantasy of the oppressive, controlling, and disturbed patriarch and the exotic female, who dedicates her life to satisfy the vanity of her male/husband, is the most common image that the Western movie industry still reproduces. The movie Arabian Nights (2001), for example was produced by Hallmark Entertainment and directed by Steve Barron (2001), based on the classic Arabic story One Thousand and One Nights.

Although the preferred image of the Arabian woman is that of the submissive, exotic, passive female (Naber, 2003), Steve Barron (2001), Arabian Nights gave women some credit by portraying Scheherazade, the female heroine (played by Mili Avital), as an exotic; but also, an overly wise and intelligent woman who managed to cure the Sultan from his rage against women. In the movie, when Sultan Said discovers his wife locked in a passionate embrace with his only brother, he flings his sword at the prince and accidentally murders his adulterous queen. Tortured by his wife's ghost, the maniacal and cowardly sultan must marry another to save his kingdom, but to avoid future matrimonial disgrace he plans to have her executed the morning after the wedding. Fortunately for him, Scheherazade, the grand vizier's daughter jumps at the challenge and the chance to marry her childhood love. A master storyteller, the newly crowned sultana escapes death night after night

Scheherazade designed a plan to cure the hatred and the pain of the Sultan through storytelling. Scheherazade made the Sultan promise to listen to her story until the end every night and execute her only when he did not like the story. The Sultan became addicted to Scheherazade's mysterious and enchanted stories, which she had woven in a cyclical and complex way. After completing the stories, the Sultan was cured. Arabian Nights or One Thousand and One Nights, is an important Arabic narrative that has survived for several hundreds of years, and has successfully presented the woman as a wise, knowledgeable teacher; through her powerful, magical and complex imagination and her skillful entertaining narrative style, she manages to teach patience, love, wisdom, and trust through entertainment, which elevates the position of the woman as an active participant in her culture rather than a submissive, silent objectified individual.

Mahfouz's novel, Awlad Haratina, resembles One Thousand and One Nights in its narrative style through several dimensions: The first dimension is the original narrative, which tells about the problematic story of Gebelaawi's neighborhood through a primary narrator. This intersects with the story of the Sultan and Scheherazade, and the primary narrator of that story. The second dimension is the meta-reality that is portrayed by the intersection between the bards of the coffee shops who tell stories of Gebelaawi and his children while creating a new text and a new reality for the reader. This multi-dimensional text plays against the Scheherazade text, which weaves the stories of each character, linking them back to a main story in a cyclical way, returning to the primary narrator, who is re-telling the narrative about Scheherazade and the Sultan.
The stories of *Awlad Haratina* are designed to engage the readers who are battling against each other, to stop them from committing the crime of metaphorically killing their national identity. By paying attention to characters and events in the novel, then again reflecting on the meta-narrative that is recited by the bards, the readers are cautioned to save themselves from repeatedly committing the same mistakes, and would, hopefully, learn the lesson, as the Sultan learned from Scheherazade.

Each chapter of Mahfouz's *Awlad Haratina* is chained to the next in a circular way that linked it to the original male hero, Gebelaawi. Mahfouz's adaptation to the Arabic rhetorical and narrative style enabled his text to flow from dimension to dimension in a circular way that involves his Arabic reader and connects that reader to the beginning of the text, as well as to Mahfouz’s own biographical beginning as an Arabic individual. Mahfouz adapted the role of Scheherazade by appointing himself as a creditable story teller/narrator, who possesses the teaching authority to educate his Arab audience about themselves. While the female is the primary teacher/narrator in the *Arabian Nights*, the primary narrator of Mahfouz and the bards are all males. Consequently, Mahfouz's *Awlad Haratina* is a portrayal of gender relations in the Arab World from a male point of view. Steve Barron (2001) *Arabian Nights* also imposes on the original text of *One Thousand Night and One Night* a male superiority. Scheherazade's father (the vizier or the prime-minister) in the *Arabian Nights* film, is the original teacher and generator of Scheherazade's intelligence. The image of the male as the ultimate authority could find its origin in the Christian concept of the Father as the master of this world. Mahfouz (1959) could be influenced by the colonial patriarchal discourse of validating the narrative of the male, and neglecting the female perspective. However, Mahfouz's rhetoric could also be informed through the examination of the gender discourse which is communicated through the structure of power.
Since the last half of the twentieth century, Western movie audiences have been introduced to the Arab culture through one dimension that heavily focused on Arab gender relations and Arab sexuality. This reduction of the Arab culture to the violent male and the submissive female has flattened the richly diverse aspects of Arab culture, which has complicated the relationship between the Middle East or the Islamic East and the West, and built further resentment and misunderstanding between the two within the framework of colonization. Any rhetorical discourse is produced within a cultural and historical context as a way to communicate an understanding about certain culture. Mahfouz's text in *Awlad Haratina* is an interplay between three discourses: the colonial discourse of the Arabs; the discourse of the historical conflict between Arab and Jews, and the current discourse of gender relations in the modern Arab World.

The Western discourse about gender relations in the Arab World is simplified by Western feminist scholars who perceive Arab women as "victims of genital mutilation and forced marriage, and that all Arab men are oil sheiks, terrorists, or religious fanatics" (Shakir, 1997, p. 104). This gender stereotype has become more noticeable in Western media as well as in the Hollywood, U.S.A. movies since the beginning of the Arabic-Israeli conflict. Israel as a new independent Western state, surrounded by several conservative Arab Islamic states, and particularly in the land of Palestine, which possesses several important religious shrines that have significant spiritual and religious value for three Middle Eastern Religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, has become a site for negotiating both Arab and Jewish identity. *Awlad Haratian* has the ability to reveal the rhetorical conflict between the two peoples, telling the audience that those two peoples are basically one, and this reality could easily render itself to the reader through the examination of the *Old Testament* and the *Qur'an*. Mahfouz (1959) borrows his story
from both to give his readers a chance to reflect on their mythic and theological texts instead of using those mythical and theological texts to mourn or to Lament the loss of the holy history.

The truth of gender relations in the Arab World could not possibly be fully captured either by Awlad Haratina, or by Hollywood movies. However, a rhetorical criticism and a cultural analysis of Mahfouz’s Awlad Haratina could communicate a new truth about Arab identity and about gender relations in the Arab World. Mahfouz demonstrates in Awlad Haratina that the histories of Arabs, Christians and Jews are historical and symbolic and, therefore, they could be explained rhetorically. For example, Mahfouz recreates the story of Adam and Eve, and Abraham and his maid Hajar from both the Qur’an and the Old Testament to encourage people to develop new ways of reading to reveal rich experiences that might answer our questions about today's problems. Muslims recite the Qur’an proudly like their Christian counterparts who read the Bible, reviving the religious stories about Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammad, but despite their intensive preoccupation with the religious stories and religious leaders, very few realize the connection between the historical circumstances and today's circumstances. Mahfouz reinvented the old mythical history to create a bridge between the past and the present. He uses exaggerated Lamentation to demonstrate that Muslims, Christians and Jews are using their religious history as a commodity to commercialize the religion without activating the true meaning of the ancient symbols to see their influence on our thinking until today. If only one removed the mythical aura from those sacred symbols, maybe people will be able to envision a better and more realistic future. For example, when one visits a mosque, one will observe Muslims admiring the values of Prophet Mohammad. When visiting a church, one would perceive the passion of Christians in accepting Jesus as the savior, and would witness the importance that Christians place on accepting Jesus as a savior and as God, without investing in
any work beyond that to change the misery of human beings. Jewish youth are encouraged to
visit Israel and revive the story of the chosen people. However, the messages behind those three
faiths are not fully comprehended by most of the believers in those three religions because the
sacred rituals have lost much of their historical meaning.

Mahfouz’s reading of the Middle Eastern religious text is a post-modern interpretation
that has the possibility of rendering revolutionist thinking. The Lamentation technique could help
us to perceive ourselves within a new light. Mahfouz tells us: Let us Lament all the stories that
divided us in the past. Let us give ourselves time to reflect on our grief as a collective
community, as people that belong to one species, and only then can we emerge renewed. Only
after reflecting on the pain that divided us and giving ourselves time to heal, only then we will
have the needed energy to envision a better future. bell hooks (1994) reached the same
conclusion that Mahfouz reached when she expresses the need to go beyond our pain, and
beyond our desire to dominate to establish a world of love and compassion that transcends our
divisions and separations.

Mahfouz’s careful treatment, therefore, of the characters of his novel, *Awlad Haratia*,
the application of the original history of those people, along with his own shared history, has the
possibility of creating a new way to use to use rhetorical criticism as a method to communicate
an understanding about certain cultures.

The conflict between Arab and Jews is traced by Mahfouz (1959) in *Awlad Haratina*
symbolically through the story of Gebel and Qaasem, in which Gebeliate or Gebel people are a
metaphor for the Jews, and the desert rats are a metaphor for Arabs. Mahfouz’s choice of a
derogatory term for the Arab is part of his ironic or Lamenting style to depict his disappointment,
the bitterness and the helplessness that he has experienced in his battle against the poverty and
the misfortune of his own people.

The application of Lamentation by Mahfouz (1959) was produced in a critical period of the Egyptian history. Mahfouz witnessed major political and social changes in the history of modern Egypt. He witnessed the transition of the political system from the British colonization to the independence. However, he became disappointed by the outcome of this transition and focuses on studying the history of Egypt to understand the problematic political, social and cultural situation of his time. His studies of the pharaohs were documented in his first novels such as Rhadopis of Nubia (1943, 2003), Wisper of Madness (1938), Mockery of the Fates (1939) and The Searcher of the Truth (1964). His views about modern Egypt are also documented in his novel, The New Cairo, Cairo Trilogy (1957), Beginning and End (1950), and others. In Awlad Haratina, Mahfouz employs Lamentation to reflect the helplessness that his people felt when faced by the corruption that persisted after independence. Lamentation became the tone that many Egyptian intellectuals and many other Arab intellectuals have expressed when they witnessed the malfunctioning of the new Arab governments post-independence, especially after the sacrifices that people paid in order to achieve that independence from foreign forces.

Mahfouz notes that the ancient Egyptian history contains rich political lessons that have the ability to teach people about their current problems. Mahfouz found that without understanding the past or the beginning, one could not possibly comprehend the present or perceive a future. His study of the Qur'an as a child, and later his higher education in philosophy, provided him with a chance to see Egypt within a universal context (Al-Annany, 1994).

Mahfoz's choice of a derogatory term for his own people (the Arabs) in Awlad Haratina was an application of three forms of rhetorical choices: metaphor, irony, and Lamentation. However, this choice was considered an insult and created indignation, and, therefore, his message was
misunderstood and never realized by his Arab readers.

Mahfouz repeatedly stresses the failure of his characters to benefit from their mistakes and develop a deeper reading of their history. The Lamentation style that Mahfouz adopted to communicate his message and his understanding about his culture is ironic in that Mahfouz himself predicted the fate of his novel in that his readers would probably not derive the conclusion that he wanted to pass on to them. Mahfouz obviously understood the risk he was taking, and the probable rejection by his Arab audience, but his vision and need to express his version of truth compelled him to write a powerful multilayered narrative. Mahfouz behaved like the mythical characters of *Awlad Haratina*. Mahfouz's persona could be that of Hanash, Arafa's brother. Hanash means serpent in Arabic, and serpent is a metaphor for wisdom in many cultures. This choice demonstrates that wisdom is the solution that Mahfouz himself represents, because Mahfouz's lesson is that knowledge without wisdom is not enough. Hanash teaches people magic. Magic then could be the knowledge that Mahfouz is trying to bring to our consciousness through his novel. Magic also is the art of story-telling that Scheherazade uses to cure the angry Sultan. Mahfouz's life was threatened as the rest of his heroes, but his rhetorical wisdom of using story-telling to educate people is the magic that people need to change their fate. The art of story-telling has the possibility to transform people as in the case of Scheherazade. The Sultan was transformed from an angry, violent male into a loving caring husband because of the patience, the wisdom and the knowledge of his wife Scheherazade.

*Awald Haratina* is not only a chance to explore different methods of writing as Fadel (2002) finds, but it is also an opportunity to review the theological and the cultural discourse that produced it, which mainly belongs to the masculine, patriarchal male. While my selection of *Awlad Haratina* is to study gender relations, and the position of the Arab woman in comparison
with the Arab man, this novel presents new concepts that could shed a light on the fact that gender relations in the Arab World is rhetorical.

Lamentation

Lamentation was used by Pre-Islamic individuals to express their pain, disappointment or loss of something valuable or someone dear to them through natural catastrophes, death, or through the necessity of traveling in space, sometimes to escape the harshness of the desert, and some times to escape political and social conflict. This departure from a place comes with painful nostalgia that Retha, or Lamentation incorporates as a way to memorialize the loved ones or the loved places that were left behind for good. Sometimes the harshness of growing up in the desert and the extended, stagnant time that marked the movement of people within open horizons, made the Arab Bedouin vulnerable in the face of the unknown. New people come and go, and nothing is predictable. The past becomes the only sure thing, and reflecting on the past brings with it the feeling of loss, especially the losing of childhood innocence, where young people have no worries about the future, and where life is still sweet and less harsh. The relationship with the past, especially with the memories of the childhood, the birth place, the young peers, is a strong relationship. Children were allowed to play freely with the other gender in a loving and caring atmosphere that provided security. Then people grew up to face the cruelty of life. Lamentation within the Arabic classical poetry, then, was a way to comfort the lonely soul by holding on to good memories about the past because the future could not be trusted, as it is exists only in the unknown. Consequently, the Arab individual of the desert sees his past as being at least as important, if not more so, than the present and/or future. When one lives longer, one witnesses the loss of older, loving and caring people who are irreplaceable, and whose love and kindness remain in their memories forever. This vulnerability, expressed by Arab poets
express through Lamentation, was the only way permitted, especially for Arab males, to reveal their vulnerability in a period that requires males to be daring, adventurous, and ready to face death to defend their communities.

The Arab classical poet would start his/her poetry by Lamenting the places of the childhood and the absence of loved ones, then move to describe the natural environment, with its landscape and its animals before focusing on one topic. Lamenting serves to set the mood of the poet to be sensitive to feelings, and it adds emotions to his/her words. Therefore, it was not considered a negative element of classical Arabic poetry, as compared to the practicality of our time, where Lamenting could be considered as a waste of time and energy.

The Lamenting style was very popular in ancient Arabic poetry and prose and was adopted by many Arab famous classic poets such as: Al-Khansa’s poetry, who Lamented the death of her brother, Amr in many of her poems, (See Al-Udhari, 1999). Emru El Qais, Zuhair Bin Abi Salma, Al-Mutanabi (1925), and Abu Firas Al-Hamadani (IbnKhalawayh, H., 1966, AbuFiras, 1994, Connelly, B,1986) are among the best Arab poets also influenced by this style, which is also called by the modern critics: Al-Beka Ala- Al Atlal (Crying over dooms). However, not many Arabs are aware of the deep impact that this ancient narrative style has on their thinking and their lifestyle. Most of the mentioned Arab poets of Jaheleyyya adopted this style as a form of introduction to each poem (See the above mentioned sources). This tendency toward Lamentation is due possibly to the harsh life of the desert where the existence of the individual is not predictable, and one's life depends on movement from place to place to escape the danger of drought. In this kind of nomadic movement, the Arab individual is forced to leave loved ones behind to seek a new refuge in the unknown. Dangerous and life-threatening adventures are inherent in the desert wilderness, with wind storms, wild beasts, and rouge thieves
presenting constant deadly threats. With this kind of life, the Arab individual of the past era found in Lamenting a way to express his loss and to relieve himself of feeling helpless in front of a mysterious and unpredictable fate.

Lamenting is an expression of nostalgia and a way to express the loss of precious things or precious relationships when there is no hope of recovering those things lost. It is the feeling that one experiences when losing a close friend, relative, or a loved one. Lamentation is the complete identification with the past to a level that completely blocks the possibilities of the future. This feeling of Lamentation leads the person to live in the past and its memories as a way of coping with living with loss. This theme of expression can be found in modern poetry, (See Al-Rahbi, 1988-2004). The writing of the Omani Poetry Saif Al-Rahbi (1956 – 200-) is a good example for the Lamenting spirit. Al-Rahbi is considered a leader of the modern Arabic poetry in Oman. Several other Omani writers have been influenced by this Lamenting style and can be found in Al-Rahbi's books (1980-2004). (See the issues of Nezwa magazines 1995 – 2005).

Mahfouz has perceived this Lamenting aspect in the behaviors of the contemporary Arab individual as well as in the tone of modern Arab literature. He adopted this critical style as a metaphor to criticize the unproductive aspect of Lamenting. Lamenting could also communicate irony in the way that it is applied in Awlad Haratina. However, adapting Lamentation in Awlad Haratina affected Mahfouz's message negatively making the stories less comprehensive to his Arabic audience. The sad tune and the nostalgia that accompanies Lamentation could be deduced in several of his novels: Cairo Trilogy, Madaq Alley, Respectful Sir and most of his historical novels about ancient Egypt. However, it was not recognized as a theme of Lamentation by critics. Rather, it was analyzed as a struggle that Mahfouz has to overcome within the interplay between time and place in facing death (See Al-Annany (1993),
Fadl (2003) and others. Some Western and Arab critics have noticed the dark irony in Mahfouz’s rhetoric (Abdulla, 1993, Al-Muhanna, 1999), but no one has pointed out the relationship between the dark irony style and the Lamenting behavior of modern Arabs. I claim myself the first to connect Mahfouz’s unique style to the Lamenting or *Retha* which was widely popular in the Jaheleyya poetry of ancient Arabs.

The rhetorical criticism of *Awlad Haratina*, then, could provide the reader a unique chance to reflect on this Lamenting theme of Mahfouz’s work, and of course of Arabic rhetoric. The reader would be able to perceive that from the first page of the novel, Mahfouz has adopted the Lamenting style as a way to give his reader a chance to reflect on the past to reveal the helplessness of the Arab individual in front of poverty and ignorance. Several centuries have passed since the defeat of the Arabs and Muslims in Spain in the fiftieth century after eight centuries of transforming Spain into an affluent capital for their civilization.

The Arabic psyche has never recovered from that defeat, and Arabs were never able to restore their dignity and pride after that big loss, especially after Europe's victory secured all the resources of knowledge that were collected under Arab sovereignty and then used and directed those resources toward a new theme of imperialism and colonization that does not acknowledge the Other as being eligible to participate anymore in the production of knowledge (See Amin Maalouf’s novel, *Leo, the African*, 1994, and Horani's 1986 *View of the History of the Arab World*).

Mahfouz witnessed the shadow of that defeat on the Egyptians who fought the British occupier aggressively, but then only to face the corrupt governments in modern Egypt. He witnessed that Egyptians and the rest of Arabs were failing in changing their destiny after the independence from their colonizers. The absence of social and intellectual freedom led
intellectuals to further frustration and that became obvious in their literature. Returning to history as a source to derive hope is not new to Mahfouz. His novels about ancient Egypt reflect his quest to search for answers to resolve today's issues. Other Egyptian writers did the same. Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqaad wrote a series of historical novels about Prophet Mohammad's close followers such as Khalid Bin Al-Waleed, and Omar Bin Al-khattab to explore their genius calling his books "Khalid's geniusness" and "Omar's Geniusness." Taha Hussein wrote about the innovation of classic Arab poetry. Qaasem Amin (1966) wrote about the necessity of liberating women. While this referral to the past by Arab and Egyptian intellectuals was a determined step to steer the intellectual current, it does reflect the barren present of Arabs, which intellectuals perceived as failure, having no possibility for inspiration.

Mahfouz experiences this sad theme in the writing and in the behavior of Arabs, both intellectuals and common individuals, and reproduced it in his novels. It seems that Mahfouz has created a comprehensive project for enlightenment, and chose to create a common ground with his audience to be able to communicate his messages and create hope through historic novels as well as romantic and realistic novels. In *Awlad Haratina*, he bridges the romantic mythical approach with the realistic approach by relying on the religious history of the Middle Eastern people. He discovered the vicious cycle that his people live in hopelessly, with no reflection from them on the possibility of changing that hopeless way of thinking and behaving. This absence of positive analytical and critical reflection on past experiences prevent the children of the neighborhood in *Awlad Haratina*, and the people of the Arab World in reality, from achieving a better life. In his analytical and critical approach on the history of his people, Mahfouz (1959) was able to perceive the possibility of applying both the negative and the positive aspect of the history in opening new doors that are full of realistic hope, and depart from
the Lamenting type of thinking, which affects the mind negatively and prevent people from using their intellectuality to liberate themselves from oppression.

Mahfouz tells us in the preface of the novel that someone he loves had chosen him for his ability to communicate the truth through writing in a time when writing was not perceived as a decent craft. The person asked Mahfouz to tell the story of his people from his perspective so people could see themselves and their history in a different light (*Children of the Ally*, 1959, p.5). The novel *Awlad Haratina* tells the Arab audience about the vicious circle of Lamenting the past which makes people prisoners, tied to a stationary past, with no energy to perceive the future. Through selecting five successful personas from the history of the Middle East, Mahfouz successfully wove each story of the five heroes to the next in a perfect cycle to show their failure to step out of their grievances and oppression to search for a fresh start. He collapses hundreds of years of time between one hero and his successor to demonstrate his point. For example, there is no definite information about the time of Adham or the time of Abraham who are represented by Gebelaawi, the great ancestor of the neighborhood and his protector. Mahfouz collapsed the two personas into one, as he perceived the similarities between the two. This very intelligent choice of Mahfouz demonstrates how Mahfouz's focus is centered on the point that he wants to illustrate, rather than reproducing the exact historical characters or the exact historical events. More evidence to explain that Mahfouz has a message to say, rather than repeating biographical stories, is the absence of an important biblical character, the character of Noah and the flood. Mahfouz completely removed this character for he was able to make his point without it. The five main characters of Mahfouz have existed in a mythical time as the *Children of Gebelaawi*. The choice that Mahfouz made is to demonstrate the fate or the manner of his people who return to the same helpless situation every time they thought that they had achieved salvation. This
puzzle of the vicious cycle that was clear to Mahfouz, would also become clear to some of his readers, if they are liberated from their Lamenting thinking. However, Mahfouz invites his reader to see that the will of those who choose to maintain the vacuous cycle lose the battle and the children of the neighborhood remained unsaved from their helpless Lamenting approach to life.

While the Lamenting style became a flexible tool in Mahfouz's hand to tell the story of his people from a new point of view, this new adaptation to Lamenting style shows it also has negative consequences because its target is not possible to be recognized easily by the common readers, who are the majority of Mahfouz's audiences. This misunderstanding is vital for its possibility to push the reader to focus on the defeated self, without perceiving the hope that Mahfouz leads to gradually. Of course, intellectual beings could learn from their past mistakes and trials; however, Mahfouz created *Awlad Haratina* as a double-edged sword. While the readers of *Awald Haratina* were able to see their religious, social, economic and political history come alive through Mahfouz’s characters and symbols, they were also confronted with the ugliness of their images through the eyes of one of them who represents the intellectual elite. Mahouz was perceived as the enemy "Other," who dared to steal their fantasy about their past in which they flourish and exalt themselves in Lamenting its loss, even if this flourishing and exaltation are mainly a destructive fantasy.

The novel tells us that the conflict between right and wrong, evil and good, God and Satan has no end, and no matter how much one thrives and wins, there will always be a battle between the good and the bad, and people will always be forced to choose one or the other. This is certainly a wise view of life, but it is always painful to be confronted with the harsh reality. People pursue novels to entertain themselves and learn new views about the game of life; however, Mahfouz’s Arab audience, especially the theologians who are considered the highest
spiritual and social authority in the Arab Muslim's psyche (See Al-Muhanna, 1999), and those who are less intellectual or less sophisticated readers, who are mostly the majority of Mahfouz’s audience (See Al-Annany, 1994), felt insulted to a high degree from the images of themselves in Mahfouz’s novel. The intellectual critics kept silent, favoring their individual safety in this debate (See Salah Fadel, 2003).

One factor that could have affected the audience response to the novel could be the timing of the novel, in which Arabs in general, and Egyptians in particular, were living in a critical political and economic period of their lives as Naguib Mhafouz himself suggests in the introduction of his novel. Arabs emerged from the World Wars to face a new colonization period. They had fought with foreign powers to rid themselves of the Turkish Othman Empire and found themselves trapped in a new colonial stage. In the beginning of 1950, Egypt got rid of her monarch, but the new Egyptian national leaders could not fulfill the dream of the Egyptians, especially not the dream of Mahfouz. (See other novels of Mahfouz such as The Bullet Still in My Bucket, Miramar, Cairo Trilogy, and also Hitti, P. H. (1970), El-Saadawi (1994) and Sharawi, H. (1978, Golley, N. AH. U. (2003), Accad, E. (1993). By 1959, when Mahfouz wrote his novel, Arab readers, both intellectuals and common people, were in need of a fresh start or a beam of light that signified salvation. Mahfouz’s novel was misunderstood by the common reader and was taken as an insult on their national identity.

The intellectual critics kept silent because they did not want to start a serious political and religious dialogue that might entangle them further and push them into a civil war in a time when they hardly recovered from long decades of tyrannical regimes and foreign interference. The ideological battle had reached its highest level during Nasser's government (1953-1973). Awlad Haratina was a reflection of the push toward the political endurance of the Egyptians to a new
political agenda that seeks a cultural reform, (See Al-Anany, 1994). The Islamic current was very strong, but so was the Socialist Marxist current and the Modernization movement. In that liminal stage (Turner, 1982), intellectuals other than the Islamic Brotherhood found themselves facing the same destiny as Mahfouz if they spoke their minds. Islam is not only a religion, it is an identity, and it would be impossible for the intellectual critic to defend her/himself if they are projected as destroying the identity of the nation, which is also perceived as an attack on Islam: an identity that has survived for thousands of years. The interference from intellectual groups would reveal the bitterness of the crude reality that tells Arabs or Egyptians that they are not fully prepared for the next move after ridding themselves of the foreign forces and foreign authorities. The fact that their new ideologies are foreign and not tested in an Arabic Islamic context made critics very cautious about speaking up.

This quietness, of course, failed to provide support for Mahfouz who found himself alone in the face of the strong hand of the theologians who have the ultimate authority of determining what was legitimate from what was condemned. Salah Fadel (2003) has pointed to this silence from intellectual critics toward the action of the Azhar in banning *Awlad Haratina*. This silence might have complicated the issue further and pushed the terrorists to use common people to assassinate Mahfouz in 1994.

Mahfouz’s work is selected here because of its ability to represent Arab rhetoric (Mousa, 2002). *Awlad Haratina* is a comprehensive work that was not fully examined for its potential to provide an understanding of gender relations from an Arabic world view. The examination of such representations in Arab rhetoric should provide us with an answer to the following question: How does Arabic literature contribute to the understanding of gender relations in the Arab World? And how is it rhetorical?
In this introduction, I have elaborated the significance of my topic, namely, Arab gender relations and their expression in Arab discourse. The next sections contain the central critical questions for this study, the rational for examining these questions, my position relative to this study as a cultural being, a female and as a rhetorical critic. The final sections of this chapter summarize and describe *Awlad Haratina* and the relationship between the novel and Arab identity.

**Critical Questions**

To formulate an understanding of gender relations in the Arab world and its ascribed rhetorical meaning, the above question has been narrowed to: How are gender relations rhetorically constructed in Mahfouz’s novel, *Awlad Haratina*? This question could be answered through the following four sub-questions: What are the primary elements of Arabic rhetoric and how do these elements relate to *Awlad Haratina*? What is the rhetorical significance of myth to Gender relations in *Awlad Haratina*? What is the rhetorical significance of time and place to Gender relations in Awlad Haratina? In what ways does the construction of Gender relations in *Awlad Haratina* rhetorically mediate aspects of Arab culture and create possibilities for new understandings and relations?

**Rationale**

*Arab Identity*

Why is it important to understand the rhetorical power of the Arabic literature and its contribution to the understanding of gender relations in the Arab World?

There are several reasons behind my examination of the rhetorical power of the Arabic literature and its contribution to the understanding of gender relations in the Arab World. The first reason is to counter the distorted images that Hollywood and other mass media dispersed
about Arabs, Muslims and gender relations through more than a century of movie history (Shaheen, 1984, 2001). The second reason is to help to situate the Arab cultural and political rhetoric in its historical and geopolitical context. The Arab rhetoric on gender relations as it is represented in *Awlad Haratina* could contribute a new understanding of the intercultural communication between the Arab Islamic culture and the Western culture.

Although *Awlad Haratina* was published by Mahfouz as a series in *Alahram*, the Egyptian daily newspaper in 1959, it was never published in a book form in Egypt because the Azhar, the oldest Arab Islamic university, the oldest known university in the modern world and the highest religious authority in Egypt, had banned it for its critical discourse about Arabian theological history (Abdulla, 1999, Al-Annany, 1994). The banning of this novel prevented a valuable opportunity to understand an important reflection on the Arab self (or divided identity).

The Arab divided self was created in the Arabic mind when Abraham had to abandon his second wife, the maid Hagar in the desert with her son Ishmael. The division between the two mothers Hagar and Sara created a division between the two half brothers Ishmael and Isaac. The Arabic term that Mahfouz uses in his novel, *Garabee’* (desert rats) communicates this bitterness that Arabs probably felt for having to be separated from their ancestor Abraham and God’s promise to honor his children. Arabs were not recognized by their brothers, the Jews as heirs in God’s promise to Abraham Consequently, Arabs were excluded in the *Old Testament* from being acknowledged as the Chosen People. More modern history caused further divisions between a unified Arab region. The Arab lands which were considered one land under the Islamic State became divided by the colonizers into twenty three small countries: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Philistine, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, and Mauritania. Even the one land considered
the motherland of all Arabs, where the Arab race originated thousands of years ago, disappeared from the modern map. There is no Jazeerat El-Arab as a source of identification. The Arabic peninsula or Arabia also disappeared from the modern map. The new emergent small entities failed to bring the brotherhood that tied Arab individuals together to one history and one dream. Modernization created more divisions among Arabs because modernity came with its political packages, and tied each Arab country to different foreign power. Mahfouz's solution for Arabs is to find a new identity that connects them to a different beginning that transcends their blood lines. This new beginning is what I refer to as *Muruwa*, understood as the highest level of humanity that transcends the divisions designed for political dominations. When individuals lose their fixed identity, they will lose some of the richness of humanity. Mahfouz calls for a family of humanity that is not based on race, gender, ethnicity or nationhood. The neighborhood is the planet earth and is the only answer to heal the divided Arab self, starting by belonging to our nearest neighbor.

This novel was published in Arabic for the first time in 1970, without permission of the author. However, *Awlad Haratina* did not receive the attention that it deserved by the critics. Only a few critics such as Al-Anany (1993) and Fadel (2003) pointed to this shortcoming from the Arab critics toward such important literature. Raymond Stock (2003) mentions the attempt on Mahfouz's life on October 1994 "for having failed to repent for this novel, Mahfouz was stabbed twice in the neck by a religious fanatic. The assault nearly killed him, and for more than four years robbed him of the ability to write," (p. vii).

The rhetorical criticism of Mahfouz's *Awlad Haratina* could help us to understand the reaction of Arab Muslims to the Western media discourse and the media coverage of Arabs in the last sixty years regarding the Middle Eastern crisis (See Said, 1978). This dissertation hopes
to aid the reader in understanding the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which reached its climax in the incident of 9/11, 2001. Ironically, the consequences of this unresolved crisis have continued to complicate the relationships between the United States and the Arab countries. The suicide bombings have become a ghost for both Arab and Western people, for it signifies the failure of communication in a stage when the globe witnessed the flourishing of the most sophisticated communication devices ever to exist. Even with this new technology, the mass media did not do a good job in building compassion and understanding among people. Although the media may report suffering around the world, such as the starving children of Africa, it does not explain the underlying causes of the problem. The results are a presentation of victims without stories. The media does not encourage people to ask why and how events happened. The audience experiences the suffering of others as an “us versus them” experience. In September 2005, when the American television channels covered the news about Hurricane Katrina which killed thousands of Americans in New Orleans, I was sadly reminded of the thousands of African kids who consistently appear in American television crying for help. I could not see any difference between the pain of poor American people, who failed to evacuate their homes to save their lives, and the poor African kids who were dying every day because of the famine. The difference for Americans is that they can identify with the people, and many reporters humanized the situation by sharing the story of families, their crisis, their rescues, and the media examined at length, “what went wrong?” Human suffering, whether in our own country or in another place, needs to be told as part of our human story in a way we can all identify with. Then we may see more clearly that we are all responsible to find a solution to minimize suffering on a global basis.

Unfortunately, a solution often sought when anger, resentment and misunderstanding occurs between two cultures is war. The lack of effective intercultural communication was partly
responsible for advanced countries, such as the United States, investing its mighty resources to strengthen its war machine. The country, an example of social and political freedom, has been confronted with a complex challenge to maintain the basic constitutional rights of its own people because of this intercultural and international communication failure. People are suspicious of each other's intentions, and the life of the human being is at stake. Young Arabs and young Americans are dying in Iraq and in other Middle Eastern countries without having the chance to communicate with each other and understand each other's cultures. The invasion of Iraq, the Patriot Act and the racial portrayals of citizens were among a few factors that demonstrate how understanding the rhetoric of “the Other” is significant to our survival on this planet; and since any rhetoric is a product of a historical culture, it cannot be understood without understanding its historical context. The rhetorical criticism of Mahfouz's *Awlad Haratina* is an attempt to build a bridge between the Middle Eastern Arabic culture and the Western cultures: It is a step toward liberating ourselves from the trap of the words, which have the power to bring salvation or doom to our planet. This dissertation finally aims to explore the possibility of creating hope, change, and shared meanings through revealing the power of the rhetoric of *Awlad Haratina*.

**The Arab Female**

The contribution of Arab feminists to gender relations could be perceived through addressing the questions of poverty, class consciousness, and the connection between the classes that a female belongs to and the degree of abuse and violence she is subjected to, (Refer to Nawal Al-Saadawi (1999), Sahar Khalifa (1988), Hanan Al-Sheikh (1994). The disastrous consequences of virginity and the code of honor in relation to women’s roles in society which reveal the exclusive possession of women and its connection to violence and crime could also be perceived in most of Mahfouz's work (*Miramar, Cairo Trilogy, Beginning and End, and House*
with Bad repetition (Bait Sayea Assumah). The code of honor in term of gender relations in the Arab World links the family's honor to the sexuality of their females. Male children are separated from female children when they reach puberty. All members of a family are dishonored if one of their females establishes a relationship with a male other than her father, brothers or uncles. The sexual consequences of having a relationship with a male outside marriage can be fatal for the woman. While sexual activities outside marriage could cause the woman to be killed by her male relatives or to be an outcast for the rest of her life, sexuality outside marriage does not disgrace or endanger the life of the male. Women carry the entire responsibility for any sexual relationship outside marriage. Women are considered the cause male temptation in most rape cases; therefore, women who are raped by men through violence keep silent to avoid disgrace by the society. In the Qur'an, there is a chapter dedicated to women, which ordered the Prophet Mohammad's women to cover their cleavages; to avoid speaking with men without a barrier; and to avoid speaking with a soft feminine tone, "to not be a source of sexual temptation for ill hearted men," (Qur'an, Chapter Four). While those instructions were directed toward the Prophet Mohammad's wives, the instructions have become a model to follow by all Muslims. Most Muslims used the veil as a sign of women's purity. Hejab, or hair cover, have become a sign of respect for the majority of Muslims. Women are socialized with other women, and men socialize with other men to prevent sexual temptation. This, of course, is complicated further by extremist religious figures, especially in some Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan where women have been excluded in many public arenas. Preventing Afghani Women from going to school has caused political debate internationally. Human rights for women are also at issue, and the war in Afghanistan after 9/11 was partly justified by the U.S. government on this human rights grounds. This subjugation of Muslim women because of their gender and their sexuality
became a daily debate between the Eastern and the Western cultures.

In the Arab world, a woman's virginity is considered sacred, and the man demands that the woman he marries is a virgin. This sometime blocks the chance of divorced women to be re-married. During the current modernization period in the Arab countries during the second half of the twentieth century, sexual segregation is imposed only on women, but not men. Arab women's debate over sexuality is considered by Arab men as disloyalty to their culture. This is true in other Islamic cultures and not only the Arab culture. The confusion between men’s political liberation and gender politics is one of the most important issues that are addressed by Arab feminists. Accad (1990), for example, states that “women are dominated, raped, led to suicide, or killed by men, who are themselves manipulated by the political power they seek to wield. It is a vicious circle of power struggles in which women are the ultimate victims,” (Accad, 1990, p. 171).

The mentioned sexual and political struggle between males and females in the Arab World demonstrates the desperate need for a different framework for gender relations that could work both for men and women mutually. Al-Muruwa is a framework that I suggest to the discourse of gender for its ability to introduce a new form of relationship between people that encourages mutual understanding and respect for both “the self,” and “the other.” This work has the ability to be universalized and could resolve the discrimination among people according to their gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age and social or economic class.

Accad (1990) finds that some novels, written by both female and male writers, are concerned with multiculturalism and the question of roots, exile, and pluralism that is mixed with violence and war and discusses how these are reflected in interpersonal relationships. She finds that terms such as exile usually means freedom, and the search for roots can be an expression of
nostalgia for one’s childhood or a need for security and love. While multiplicity is seen as something positive by women, male authors depict multiplicity as confrontation. She also finds that males search for purity, and see multiplicity as dishonor. Accad (1990) finds that multiculturalism increases a male’s schizophrenia and makes them uneasy and depressed. “Roots are a search for identity, and exile is a terrible fate” (p. 169).

I believe that Arab rhetoric about gender relations is highly connected to the Arab national identity, and I will demonstrate through this dissertation that it is deeply rooted within the cultural, geopolitical and religious discourse of the Arab World. In fact, although the discourse of gender relations is perceived to empower men over women, it is highly dysfunctional and damaging for both males and females. The political voice of the Arabs is either absent or obscured within the international political voice, and this shows how gender relations have complicated the Arabs' representation of themselves globally. Arab men's illusion of power because of their relationship to their women have been harmful both to men and women and prevents them from defining themselves to themselves as well as to the Others within an intercultural global political discourse. The dysfunctional current gender framework will be further explored through my rhetorical analysis to Mahfouz's novel *Awlad Haratina*.

Mahfouz’s *Awlad Haratina* is significant in that it represents the world in a way that no other writer had depicted before. This novel presents the Middle Eastern world as one neighborhood and that its people are connected to one ancestor. Mahfouz's narrative is unique in that it blends the details of every-day life and presents them to the reader in a sharp, ironic, attractive and fluent style that appeals to both complex and simple audiences (See Mousa, 2001, Fadl, 2001). I believe that Mahfouz’s unique style and careful treatment permit the reader to develop a new insight about small, but critical, details of daily life. Mahfouz contributes directly
and indirectly to the philosophy of existence/survival of individuals within complex nets of forces, gender relations being one important dimension in this complex net. The rhetorical power of *Awlad Haratina* is the hidden agenda that it carries: it is an enlightenment project that aims to bring cultural and political changes not only to the Arab World, but also to all humankind through activating the rhetorical power of the family as a powerful concept. Mahfouz depicts Jews, Christians and Muslims (Gebel’s people, Rifaa’s people and Qaasem’s people) as heirs of one legacy of their common grand ancestor Gebelaawi (or Abraham), and only through the guarded application of knowledge and science, the three conflicted cultures would achieve peace, justice and prosperity.

Mahfouz has successfully woven the Arabic rhetorical and mythical heritage with modern Western and international rhetorical approaches to come up with a hybrid style that is highly suitable to both the sophisticated and the common Arab reader. The rhetorical power of *Awlad Haratina* (1959), translated both as *Children of Gebelaawi* (1981) and *Children of the Alley* (1996) provides us with a new framework to resolve the complexity of gender relations in the Arab World.

Finally, a research that focuses on Arab rhetoric about gender relations provides an opportunity to locate a starting point to encourage a rational dialogue between the Arab Middle Eastern culture and the Western cultures which reached a blockage that was exemplified by the terror of the September Eleventh incident, and its fatal consequences endanger and complicate the global peace. A new understanding of the worldview of “the Other,” is needed to keep the line of communication open between different cultures. Intercultural communication is the only way of survival in a world where nations have highly developed technical machinery of destruction. This dissertation situates itself in the field of intercultural communication, where
rhetoric and rhetorical criticism could be used as a tool to understand other cultures in order to create shared meanings and hope to step toward a better future for humanity. An aspect of my agenda as a rhetorical critic is to build an understanding of the Arabic culture to help my Western and international readers understand Arabs within a comprehensive historical and cultural framework. This dissertation also aims to build a new bridge between “the Self” and “the Other” to avoid more deadly wars and crisis that might lead us to another fifty years or more of alienation and miscommunication. This project attempts to use Mahfouz’s representation of gender relations as a key to encourage intercultural communication in order to achieve a new understanding between “the Self” and “the Other” in a different light to make the world a safer place for our generation and hopefully for many generations to come.

Situating Myself in the Study of Arab Rhetoric

As a researcher who has been raised in an Arab environment and who has had the chance to witness some of Mahfouz’s critical portrayals of characters in my visits to not only to Arab countries, but also to some Western countries, I found that some of Mahfouz's characters in Awlad Haratina could be reinvented in the reality even when the Arab individual is far from his/her Arabic environment. For example, Arab males and Arab females continue to live in traditional separate spheres when they reach puberty even within a gender-free environment. For example, most Arab males find it difficult to date Arab females even when they live in Europe, United States or Canada, where social freedom encourages such encounters between males and females as part of everyday normality. One could easily perceive the possibility of repeating the image of Awatif, Yasmin, Aysha and Lady Qamar, Mahmouz's (1959) female characters in Awlad Haratina, today among Arab communities. (Refer to Nadine Naber's (2003) research about the experience of gender relations in San Francisco, California). Both, my personal
experience and my research on gender relations on the Arab world have provided me with both an insider and outsider point of view on gender relations. Through the multicultural experiences that I gained between 1975 and 2005 through my work in Bahrain TV as a Television Director/Producer, and later as a university teacher at the University of Bahrain; through my traveling to some Arab countries such as Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Tunis, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt; through my traveling to some Western countries such as U.K, France, Switzerland, Greece, Cyprus and the United States, I had a valuable chance to interact with Arab communities and closely observe the politics of gender relations among Arab males and Arab females as an insider because of my Arabic identity, and as an outsider, because of my liminal location between cultures, which has been sharpened by my critical and intellectual interest in global peace and the growth of all human beings as one family.

Based on the complexity of idiosyncratic and dramatic changes in ideology or style, Andrews (1990) believes that the critic may adjust over time to radical rhetoric, rhetoric of conversion or transformation. My research tries to find its path in exploring a new meaning for traditional concepts such as Murouah, and try to examine the possibility of extending the concept of Murouwa to shelter gender relations globally.

My interest in gender studies is developed through encountering some difficulties in performing the expected gender role as a female in a conservative society. Throughout my maturation process, I have noticed that many intelligent women in my Arab-Islamic society choose to isolate themselves and discard their rights to live their lives to their full potential, fearing being outcast by their society. For example, the pressure of the gender discourse hinders intellectual women from forming friendships with intellectual men outside professional sittings.
Sexual stigmatization is a fear that any woman in my society confronts when dealing with the other gender. Most Arab women, in any age, within any social or intellectual setting, would find themselves trapped by the Arab honor code and the Virgin/Prostitute perception of women (See the work of Layla Al-Othman (1978); Muneera Al Fadhel (1988); Sahar Khalifa (1988); Hanan Elsheik (1980- 2004) and Nawal El Saadawi, 1970). However, by sheltering themselves from life experiences for the sake of securing social and cultural integrity, intellectual Arab women alienate themselves from their true essence: They are turned into outcasts ultimately by internalizing their split selves (See also Razan, 2003). This sense of alienation led me to question the conflict between social integrity and individual integrity within my Arab culture. Beside the importance of this topic to my scholarship in communication studies, my research on gender relations is highly significant to my existence in an Arabic context as well as in a global multi-cultural context. It is also significant to my role as a communication scholar whose mission is bridging the gap between the Arab-Muslim culture and the Western cultures.

My Childhood in Bahrain

In my elementary school education, the focus was on how boys became men. This piece of information that I learned as a child was literally a slap on my face, and probably on the face of other females from my generation when we were in the third grade. It is still painful to remember how the existence of a woman with full potential was ignored in teaching children of such a young age. Courses were taught by both female and by male teachers. Those teachers call themselves "Mutawah," its plural being Mutawa. Mutawa means a spiritual master who usually teaches the Qur'an and sometime mathematics. Western methods of education at formal schools were introduced to males in Bahrain in 1919. The females' Western form of schooling started in Bahrain in 1939, and met some resistance from the Bahraini culture in its beginning, for fear of
influencing the culture with Western norms. However, gradually people began to welcome the
education of their girls in formal public schools, and the home schooling by Mutawah gradually
disappeared. However, school books continued to use the masculine language and excluded a
feminine address. (I will trace the change in this attitude in the future). When I sarcastically
raised my voice to tell my teacher in front of the class: How could I grow up to become
“Rajulan” (A man), while I am a woman? She laughed disapprovingly, saying: "just cross it,
replace the word with 'Imra'ah' (Woman)". I never thought that that minor incident would leave
its shadow on me all my life and that I would never experience peace again for being a woman.
Ironically, Bahrain never became a land for my children, despite the fact that I grew up there and
became a woman. Maybe Bahrain would never be the land of my children, because I would
never grow up to be “rajulan or rajul” a man. Is it a prophesy that predicts my direction in life?

I grew up in a family atmosphere that made me question things from the early period of
my childhood. My mother got married without any slight education about men or sexuality like
any woman of her community at her time. She was around thirteen years old when she got
married and was probably shocked by the decision of her parents to marry her to a person that
she had never met. Her parents themselves were married as teenagers, and my mother was their
second child. Her mother bore ten children, only five of them lived. I never heard my
grandmother complain of rearing many children. In fact, she secretly mourned her lost five,
despite the big responsibilities that she carried on to meet the requirement of her demanding
husband, my grandfather, the perfect patriarch whom I never saw smile when I was a child.
Thank God, he changed tremendously in his fifties after he lost my grandmother. My mother's
love for her parents never allowed her to blame them for arranging her early marriage, but she
did blame my father for forcing her to leave her innocent childhood behind and held him
responsible for making her a mother at a very young age. I never comprehended this bitterness toward my father, whom I loved dearly. She always felt he was responsible for her stolen childhood. Yes, this project helped me to understand how my mother was ripped of her youth, and possibly raped legally because the tradition permitted it! It affected me more than anyone else in my family because I did love my father, and therefore, I had to receive the disapproval of my own mother from a very young age no matter how hard I tried to win her approval. I realize now that my mother was not more than a child herself, and did not know that she was hurting me. My young grandmother was pregnant when my mother gave birth to me. I became like a sister to my aunt; however, my mother always took the side of my aunt whenever we had a conflict as children, feeling the responsibility toward her parents more than toward her own children. Being a child, her parents were her only source of love, affection and protection. She never gave my father a chance to replace them. This feeling of alienation from a firm motherly love pushed me to strive to be a perfect child and to struggle further to earn it. I had to carry responsibilities more than my age would permit to win a gesture of approval. I was troubled by the adults’ angry faces. Gender relations are settled. Men negotiate their relationships with each other differently from their relationship with women. Patriarchal norms were pyramid like and hierarchical. Age and gender are acted out differently within the relationships of the family or the clan. Those gender roles are not a subject of discussion. They are taken for granted as the air that we breathe.

Such an environment that was charged with high level of symbolic interactions had deprived me of locating my position as a person. The search for approval for my existence as fully human has haunted me all of my life. I became an expert in deducing the gazes of angry women, the symptom that continued to force me to recall the pain and the resentment of my
helpless young mother. This struggle had conditioned me to face serious questions. What is my role in this existence and how did it become my main concern in life? I was never able to relate to a normal life, because I could not define what a normal life is, especially when one transcends cultural boundaries and travels to the other side of the globe.

The community of women that I was able to remember as far back as my first step still haunts me. I was strangely able somehow to remember my first step, maybe because of a picture that one of my mother’s cousins kept. It was like recalling a dream. I was surrounded with my mother’s sisters and female cousins in a Bahraini cozy atmosphere in the middle of an extended-family’s house of my mother’s uncle. The cheers and laughter of those women had encouraged my little feet to start their first step in life. I think it must have been a scary and painful step, but the cheers kept on and on and I probably did not want to disappoint them. Those brown faces with their warm beautiful and cheerful smiles and beautiful wide black eyes that showered me with rays of charm and love: How could I have possibly let them down? In the middle of my confusion between joy, challenge and fear of failure, my will was born. I found myself pushing with all my gut to make it to the other person whose arms were wide open to receive me in the other end. All of them were women. Most of them were single then, and as young as my own mother. All of them had struggled painfully with their women-hood in different levels and different ways and in different stages of their lives later. However, I, the little lovely doll that they perceived taking its first step, was never able to function properly in such system that does not permit a woman to reach her full potential as a person. I never stopped searching for my identity after that very first painful step. I never stopped searching for the meaning for my existence and the existence of many other women whose lives were given generously to the traditions: Creatures who were born to produce and nurture everyone else except themselves.
Those women who taught me how to take my first painful and joyful step are responsible for my research. Maybe my findings will help them see themselves in me and understand why my painful first step in life has become my only companion throughout the years when I was discovering that being a woman in my society has never been a privilege no matter what one does, and worse, when the person is the second female in the family. My family already knew the joy of the first female child before I was born, so the second female is no longer the little queen of her parents, grandparents or relatives. The pain that the second-born girl realizes while growing up is never comprehensible, only by those whose fate it is to wear the same shoes, not that of the Cinderella of the dreams, but the shoes of a person who is born to fly, when it is so painful to walk.

Women’s questions and gender relations have become a lifetime struggle for me: the struggle between my older sister and me, my little aunt/sister and me, and the struggle that I recognized in women’s eyes toward each other because the culture continued to teach them that their existences were only important as much as it was valuable to the men in their lives: their fathers, their brothers, their husbands and their son. There is no meaning or value for a female existence outside this cycle. Time has changed, but there is still so much truth in that equation.

In 2005, as I complete this dissertation, Bahrain established the first women’s political body, The Higher Council of Women, with the patronization of the Her Majesty, Sheikha Hissa, the wife of the King of Bahrain. Bahrain government have appointed three women to hold the position of the Secretary/Minister for three ministries, The Ministry of Health, The Ministry of Social Affairs, and The Higher Council of Women, in addition to appointing two women in the Bahraini Parliament, and opening the doors for women to elect and to appoint themselves to be elected to represent their Governorates (Districts) as Governors/ Mayors.
Mahfouz, with no doubt, has been the most popular and famous novelist in the Arab world according to several Arab and Western critics (Al-Muhanna (1996), Abdulla (1994), El-Enany (1993), Fadl (2001), Mousa (2002), Milson (1998), Mayer (2001). Mahfouz is considered the founder of the Arabic novel. He became the center of attention when he moved the Arabic novel to the international standard, especially after his winning the Nobel Prize in 1988.

Mahfouz was born on December 11th, 1911 in the al-Jamaliyya quarter in the heart of the old city of Cairo and lived there until he was twelve when his family moved to a new Cairo suburb, al-Abbasiyya. He started his literary life when he was about twenty years of age (in 1931) with his social and philosophical articles, until the end of 1940s. He became interested in writing novels because the short stories were not suitable to express his experiences and thoughts. He found that the novel is more flexible in its inclusion of other diverse artistic techniques. Some of the first short stories he wrote between 1932 and 1946 were not published because of moral issues and some for technical issues. Dr. A. Muhsen Taha Bader mentioned that Mahfouz was occupied then by his philosophical studies, and his literary work was not as progressed as the acceptable standard of that era. Mahfouz became a government employee in 1934 and moved into many positions until his retirement in 1971 (El-Enany 1993, Al-Muhanna 1996).

Mafouz witnessed the 1919 revolution against the British and the national struggle of the Wafd, the strongest political party in Egypt in the beginning of the twentieth century. This personal history had a lasting effect on his awareness as a young boy. Those political events are “widely recreated and affectionately celebrated in a great many of Mahfouz’s novels,” such as The Trilogy, Fountain and Tomb and Mirrors. (El-Anany, 1993, p. 4). Mahfouz’s consciousness
registered for the first time words such as “demonstration,” “bullet,” and about "the Englishman," as the representative of a new human race in his little life, (El-Anany, 1993, p. 5).

According to El-Enany (1993), Al-Muhanna (1996) and others, Mahfouz grew up in a stable family. He was the seventh and last child of four boys and two girls. The youngest of his brothers was ten years older; therefore, his relationships with some of his close friends provided him a substitute for the missing fraternity with his brothers. Mahfouz’s memory of his family’s house is associated with play, particularly on the roof, where house provisions were stored, poultry raised, and various potted and creeping plants grown. The roof is portrayed in Mahfouz’s work as an occasional scene for family gatherings and the secret assignations of lovers as in The Trilogy (El-Enany 1993; Al-Muhanna 1996; Abdulla, 1994).

The mentioned resources reveal that Mahfouz grew up respecting family values and did not rebel against the restricted authority of his parents. Mahfouz believes in patriotism, and he associated himself with Wafd party. He learned the traditional values from his father, as that was the public spirit which dominated the country during his childhood. The family atmosphere that Mahfouz experienced is related to his character Kamal in The Trilogy. The purely religious climate at Mahfouz’s home was another important value in Mahfouz’s family that has influenced most of Mahfouz’s novels.

Mahfouz started his writing carrier by studying the Egyptian identity during the Pharos’ period. Some authors classify Mahfouz’s novels into three stages: historical, social and philosophical or romantic, realistic and philosophical. Al-Muhanna (1996), for example, sees that Mahfouz’s philosophical interests became clear in the final stage which started by Awlad Haratina in 1959. Al-Muhanna (1996) classifies Mahfouz’s novels The Mocking Of The Fait (1939), Radobies (1943) and The Struggle Of Thaib (1944) under the historical romantic
approach. The context of these novels was derived from ancient Egyptian history. These novels address three distinguished periods in the modern history of Egypt. According to Al-Muhanna (1996), “The Mocking Of The Fait” condemns the oppressive political system and its control in an ironic way, while “Radobies” criticizes the corruption of the monarch, and “the Struggle Of Thaib” is occupied by the political and social liberation of the Nile valley. Al-Muhanna (1996) mentions that Mahfouz’s movement to the realistic approach was incidental because he lost his interest in the romantic historical writing after his early beginning.

Al-Sukoor (2000) provides an idea about the writing career during the period that Mahfouz started to write his first novels. He says that when Salama Mosa, an Egyptian intellectual (1897-1958), published Mahfouz’s first novel, *The Mockery of the Fates* in 1939, Abdul Hamid Judah Al-Sahar (1913-1974) was one of a small group of writers including Mahfouz, Adil Kamil, and Ali Ahmed Bakathir (from Hadramawt, Yemen, immigrated to Egypt in 1934). This group began their literary careers by writing novels on themes drawn from Egyptian ancient history as Mahfouz had done. Al-Sahhar printed the works of these three writers and other writers as well, in addition to his own work. Abdul Quddus, Abdul Rahman Al-Sharqawi, Yousuf Idris and Fathi Ghanim are among the generation that published realistic fiction in the 1950s in Egypt.

Al-Sukoor (2000) illustrates the beginning of the modern Egyptian novel, saying that literature critics have differed over the years as to how the modern Arabic novel first came into being. Some maintain that Arabs have written novelist narrative literature since very early times. They cite the epic folk romances of *Antara* and of *Sayf Ibn Dhi Yazan*, the *Hilali* cycles of chivalric romance, *The Thousand and One Nights*, Al-Ma’arri’s *Epistle of Forgiveness*, Ibn Tufayl’s philosophical romance of *Hay ibn Yaqzan* (*Alive, the Son of*)
Awake), and a host of other works. Another group of scholars holds the opinion that the modern novel is a new literary form imported from the West in the second half of the nineteenth century. (pp. 13-14)

The author believes that the roots of narrative literature, as known in tales, myths, and epic romances, have existed very early in every society—Arab, European, Asian, and African. However, Al-Sukoor (2000) mentions that English and French critics tend to agree that the art of novel began in the early decades of the nineteenth century and that the Arabs did not write this kind of literature until the late nineteenth century in Egypt and Greater Syria.

Al-Sakoor (2000) talks about the new trends of encouraging translations from Western writing during the government of Mohammad Ali, turning away from traditional folk literature such as the chivalric romances of Antara, Bani Hilal, and Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan. The Lebanese novelist Jurji Zaydan's (1861-1914)'s prolific novels were a popular start, but Hadith isa Ibn Hisham, by Mohammad Al-Muwaylihi was thought of as the real beginning of the Arabic novel. Other critics disagree and believe that Adhra Dinshaway (The Virgin of Dinshaway) by Mahmud Haqqi was the beginning, and some believe that Zayanab, which was written by Muhammad Hussayn Haykal (1913), was the real beginning. This shows how both Arab and Western critics completely ignored the fact that the One Thousand and One Nights is an Arab novel, and its complex structure has inspired many Western novelists until today. The reader could trace the influence of this novel on many Western novelists. (See the Harry Potter series, for example).

Mahouz explored different writing styles in his later novels. His style in “A Drift on the Nile” or Chitchat on the Nile, was thought of by Al-Sukoot (2000) as "one among the best work of Mahfouz in its commentaries and the penetrating speculative meditations, and the unanswerable questions… (The) variations of paradox arousing sad ironies during prolonged
periods of history and the link with exact parallels right up to the present moment," (Al-Sukoot, p. 32) was a source of admiration and astonishment among critics.

Abdulla (1989) believes that there is a serious shortcoming from the Islamic critics and thinkers in comprehending the creativity of Mahfouz. Salah Fadl (2001) agrees that Mahfouz’s novel *Awald Haratina* was banned by theologians who do not have enough knowledge of the techniques of creative writing. Fadl (2001) communicates his disappointment about the critics' lack of consideration of the significance of *Awlad Haratina* to the development of the Arabic novel as an art that has possible functions to mitigate lives and to add a new aesthetic dimension to them. Fadl (2001), Abdulla (1989), and Al-Enany (1993, 1994) share with Fadl (2001) the disappointment and the suspicion that an intellectual conspiracy had occurred because of the fear of violence, which contributes to the silence of critic. This silence from the critics to protect themselves from the anger of extremists ignores that the although the novel presents critical views about beliefs, to also presents characters and sayings that are considered an example for decent morals, healthy intention and pure faith.

Abdulla (1994) tries to defend Mahfouz from the allegation that he is biased toward the right or left wing or toward religion. He believes that Mahfouz is "specific in drawing the features of his society and in tracing the attitude of this society “objectively and comprehensively” (p. 53). Abdulla (1994) finds that Mahfouz is an analytic writer with comprehensive views about the society when he picks up a sample from it. He has a deep vision of the existence when he makes the human civilization, with its wide expansions, a subject of contemplation… He doesn’t perceive a society, any society, without a religion... Mahfouz is the first writer that pays attention to the importance of the religious factor in the life of a group. (Abdulla,1994, pp. 53-54).
Abdulla (1994) directs our attention to the careful treatment of Mahfouz in building the characters of his novels. He admires Mahfouz's ability to portray the human condition with its complex dimensions, which requires diving into the depth of the human psyche to reach the center of the conflict where the contradictions of the reality that transcend time and space settle down secretly under the acceptable social mask. Abdulla (1994) talks about the historical and political complexity of the period in which Mahfouz wrote *Cairo Trilogy* and how Mahfouz carefully dealt with the political and historical influence on the psychological, intellectual and behavioral aspects of his characters.

Many critics, including Fadl (2001), Mousa (2002), Al-Muhanna (1996), El-Annay (1993, 1994), Abdulla (1994) and several others believe that Sayyed Ahmed Abdul-Jawad, the main character of the *Cairo Trilogy*, represents a generation that was confronted heavily with Western civilization and its values in a critical time that witnessed conflicted political currents that rejected Europe altogether with an allegation that the Arabic, Islamic past would be able to supply the modern era with a foundation that fits the need to progress without reducing Arabs to becoming mainly followers or consumers of another civilization. The contradiction in the Arabic psyche was summarized through Mahfouz’s invention of the character of Sayed Ahmed Abdul-Jawad and the three grandsons, the nationalist, the Islamic and the Marxist.

Mahfouz’s work has been influenced by the writing style and techniques of several Western and international writers such as Charles Dickens, James Joyce, Tolstoy and De Marquise.

Mahfouz’s novels and characters have international appeal. Abdulla (1994) sees a similarity between Mahfouz and Katintazaki, and he believes that Syaed A. A.Jawad, the hero of *Cairo Trilogy*, is an Egyptian version of Katentazakis’ Zorba in his sincere approach to life with
all its contradicted dimensions. For example, the strong religious attitudes of A. Jawad toward God were clearly noticeable when he performs his prayers humbly and fearfully; his serous, strict expressions and attitudes when dealing with his wife and his own family in contrast with his loud, happy and playful nature with his close friends and with loose women away from the supervision of his culture were also clearly presented.

An Overview of the Novel and its Implications Regarding Gender Relations

Summary of *Awlad Haratina*

*Awlad Haratuna* is biographical novel about six male heroes: Gebelaawi, Adham, Jebel, Rifaa, Qaasim, and Arafa. The lives of these characters have shaped the history of the Gebelaawi neighborhood over several generations. My selection of Mahfouz’s literature, particularly *Awlad Haratina*, to represent Arab literature is founded upon several reasons:

First, *Awlad Haratina*, which is published in at least two English versions, the *Children of the Alley* (1959) and the *Children of Gebelaawi* (1988) has theo-political significance to Muslims in general and to Arabs in particular because it deals with religious and theo-political symbols from the Middle Eastern history.

*Awlad Haratina* is an attempt from a well-known Arab writer and thinker to rewrite the history of the Middle East from a critical, and rather comical historical perspective, to demonstrate the power dynamic that shaped the social and political life in his neighborhood and possibly any other neighborhood in the world. Mahfouz studied international history and literature and noticed the interplay between modern literature and the political history that produced it. He had a chance to reflect on the theological history of the Middle East, as well as on the classical Arab literature and rhetoric. His wealth of knowledge of the local and international history and literature provided him with a unique understanding of the human being
as living in a condition that couldn't be separated from time and place. However, using the novel or story telling as a critical approach in a conservative environment is costly. Therefore, Mahfouz employed symbol and allegory to address the social and political problems of his time. Consequently, time and place is critical in most of Mahfouz's stories and novels. In *Awlad Haratina*, Mahfouz selected a mythical time and place. However, the features of the time and the place of *Awlad Haratina* were selected by Mahfouz carefully and rhetorically to awake the collective memory of the Middle Eastern people in order to make the past a key to treat and to resolve the problems of the present.

As described above, *Awlad Haratina* is situated in an Egyptian neighborhood in a mythical time. *Awlad Haratina* is an allegory that represents five main characters in the religious history of the Middle East in a profane way. The aim of Mahfouz in this novel is to help people realize the lesson that was hidden in their religious heritage, which is a heritage that, for the most part, occupies their collective memory and expands itself to take over their present and their future without deriving its main lesson. Mahfouz’s interest in the minute details of the life of the average person in his local neighborhood makes his work relevant to the international readership.

The novel starts with the mysterious character Gebelaawi, the great ancestor of several generations that are represented in the five chapters of the novel. This mysterious character has survived longer than the normal life span of a human being. His presence influenced the memory of several generations through story telling and through his indirect communication with the heroes of this novel, until his death in the end of the novel, which was connected with a successful attempt of his grandson, Arafa, to steal his mysterious book.

In the beginning of the novel, Gebelaawi summoned his sons to communicate with them about his will. He appointed his youngest son Adham as his representative to manage the Trust.
His sons were shocked at his decision, but no one dared to speak up except his eldest son Idrees. It was clear that the appointment of Adham was a strong violation to the patriarchal order: Age, gender, color, ethnicity, social and economic class. Gebelaawi revealed that he chose Adham because Adham knew people by names, and he was able to write. We understood that Adham’s mother, a dark-skinned maid, taught him how to read and write in addition to accounting. Idrees was not satisfied with his father’s decision and lost his temper and was thrown out of the big gate forever. One day Idrees reappeared, however, and asked Adham to help him have access to the book that his father kept secretly. Omaima, Adham’s wife, encouraged Adham to steal the book so they could secure the future of their children by learning what was hidden within it. Gebelaawi saw Adham by accident and threw him and his wife out of the big gate of the house also.

The life outside the Great House was hell for Adham and his wife, and Idrees made it even harder for Adham to have peace. Eventually, Idrees seduced a girl from the Great House, who had been found pregnant and thrown out of the gate like Adham and Idrees. Later, one of Adham’s two sons impregnates Idrees’s daughter and they both run away after the son kills his brother Hammam, out of jealousy after Gebelaawi's invites Hammam to live in the Great House. Adham became sad after he lost his son, and before he died, Gebelaawi came to visit him and told him that he forgave him. Adham and Idrees died, and the neighborhood was occupied by other people. The neighborhood strongmen took control and ruled the people with powerful steel fists, robbing them of their belongings, while the Trustee’s only concern was to collect taxes.

The second chapter is about Gebel, an adopted child from the Hamdan neighborhood that Lady Hoda, the wife of The Trustee, raised and loved as her biological son. When Gebel saw a man from the Hamdan neighborhood tortured by an ally of the strongman of the neighborhood,
he interfered and killed the other man by mistake and then fled the neighborhood. In his journey to escape, he met his wife, whose father was a snake charmer. Later, Gebel returned to his neighborhood to rid it from snakes. Gebel lived among the Hamdan people and became their protector after defeating the strongmen of the big neighborhood. Over generations, Adham and Gebel became heroic symbols whenever the cycle of grievance returned again.

The third hero was Refaa, who married Jasminae to save her from being stoned to death because she was caught walking out of a strongman’s house. Refaa did not understand why Jasminae was the one to be punished and not the Strongman who seduced her. Being young and sensual, Jasminae felt that Refaa saved her life, but he did not present her with an alternative. Rifaa was only concerned about saving people's souls, but presented no solutions to their bodies. He, having heard a voice in the dark commanding him to save people’s souls, had learned how to change people’s lives and turn their evil energies into positive energies from a female exorcist. The strongmen sensed the danger Rifaa posed over their power and planned to kill him. Rifaa and his friends planned to escape, but Jasminae told the strongman of the neighborhood about their plan; Rifaa was killed, and his body was never found. His friends took revenge and killed the strongmen. People became free and lived in peace.

The next chapter tells us that after a few generations, people forgot the lessons of Rifaa, the strongmen regained control the neighborhood, and the Trustee cared about nothing but his own leisure. Qaasem was an orphan who lived with his uncle as a Shepherd. Qaasem helped resolve a conflict between the strongmen when a man was robbed in the neighborhood. Lady Qamar, a woman of high social-class status, was very kind to Qaasem and had him care for one of her ewes. Her maid, Haleema suggested to Qaasem that he marry Lady Qamar, and eventually they married against the advice of others, and they had a baby girl. One night, when Qaasem was
at Hind Rock contemplating, Gebelaawi’s servant came to him and told him that Gebelaawi sent him his greeting and appointed him as his representative to bring peace to the neighborhood. Qaasem felt empowered to overcome the evil of the strongmen. He designed a secret plan to train the poor people in fighting techniques, and when the number of his followers multiplied, he moved with those people to the top of the mountain. He and his followers fought the strongmen and won the battle, and he became the head of his people. The peace extended over the neighborhood for generations; but eventually, the neighborhood was controlled again by the oppressive strongmen.

The final chapter is about Arafa. Arafa and his brother Hanash came to the neighborhood from an unknown place. Arafa learned the craft of using magic to cure people. He met Awatif, a poor girl who was helping her father in his small coffee shop. The Strongmen were trying to have Awatif, but Arafa and Awatif got married secretly.

Arafa built a secret passage to the Great House and tried to steal the Secret Book of Gebelaawi. In his attempt, he ran into a person and pushed him away and then fled. The next day he heard that Gebelaawi was dead. He thought that he had killed Gebelaawi. Arafa became famous for his magic and was invited to live with the Trustee after he invented an explosive bottle that he used to kill the strongman. Arafa’s magic was used to empower the Trustee further instead of being used to bring fairness and justice to people. He indulged himself in sharing with the Trustee his nightly entertainments with drinks and women. Awatif left one night, and saw a black old maid waiting for him to tell him that he did not kill Gebelaawi; the person he killed was Gebelaawi’s closest servant. Gebelaawi died from grief after right after losing his servant, but before he died, he asked her to communicate to Arafa that his Grandfather was pleased with him.
Arafa woke up from his messy life with the Trustee and went to Awatif and asked her to escape with him. The Trustee learned about the plan and caught both of them and buried them alive. Hanash fled and came later to look for the book of Arafa, and then people started to disappear from the neighborhood to seek Arafa who secretly taught people magic in order to overcome their poverty and rid themselves of the strongmen and all-oppressive power. In the end, the narrator tells us that knowledge alone will not rid people from their misfortune; they need power and wisdom to watch out for evil and overcome it collectively.

*Awlad Haratina* is an opportunity to examine the duality of gender relations in the Arab world. For example, the realm of the female is always distinguished from the realm of the male, and there are different standards by which their behavior is evaluated. For example, a woman's virginity is considered the ultimate honor. In a conservative Arab environment, when a woman loses her virginity before marriage, no man agrees to marry her, and she lives the rest of her life in shame. This, of course, does not correspond to the men in the culture. They remain relatively unscathed by the sexual relationship (unless an angry male family member takes revenge; however, that action is not sanctioned by society and rarely happens, while the killing of a woman over the same offense has been quite common throughout Arab history). Consequently, women who break social norms are almost always dealt with much more harshly, often humiliated, outcast and even killed, even when they are participating in the same activities as men. As described, when a woman has sexual relations outside of marriage, dishonor is brought to the entire family, and even modern Arab society sometimes accepts the killing of the female as justifiable homicide if she has acted in a dishonoring way, against prescribed social norms.

With the exception of the five main male characters, the men of the novel are presented as angry, violent, authoritative, selfish and unreasonable. From the beginning of the novel, the
female realm is portrayed as mysterious. Mahfouz used the following details to communicate gender relations at Gebelaawi's time: the Women’s Quarter; the woman as a shadow emerging from Adham’s side; the exclusion of women in the decision making process, with their presence remaining mostly behind closed windows weeping, screaming with joy, or dying sadly; the power of women was obtained primarily through their sexuality, as in the case of Gebelaawi's wife; and women were powerful in their ability to teach, such as the black maid who taught Adham and possibly Gebelaawi how to read and write, and helped divert Gebelaawi from the traditional patriarchal norms in judging his own children.

Another strong phenomenon in Mahfouz’s text is the virgin/prostitute equation, which can be traced from the first chapter of the novel until its end, despite the passage of time. There are usually both types of women that appear in each section of the novel. For example, Omaima is a virgin, but Narjis is a picture of the sexually active female (a metaphor for prostitute); Yasmin is the prostitute and Aysha the virgin; Awatif is the virgin, Jehsah the Prostitute, and so forth.

The location of gender relations in the mythical time of Awlad Haratina communicates a strong connection with the beginning of the Arab and Jews as two races that are related in a complex and problematic way that is still causing conflict and misunderstanding between them. As described previously, Awlad Haratina was banned from Egypt and from other Arab countries because it was perceived as blasphemy and as an attack on the Arabic conservative culture and traditional value system of Arabs, in particular, and of Muslims in general. The rhetorical implications of Awlad Haratina are highly connected with the Arabic/Islamic theological and cultural worldview. I could claim that although Mahfouz (1959) was influenced by postcolonial discourse, he was ahead of his time when he produced a powerful rhetoric with
the potential to help his people suspend their Lamentation over their past, in order to be better able to function in the present and in the future. It is a sophisticated, complex method of applying the negativity and the irony of Lamentation to heal the defeated soul, so it could have the possibility of reemerging with strength and hope. Mahfouz's (1959) treatment of his novel reflects the duality of the Arabic rhetoric. For example, while Lamentation communicates despair on the surface, its power is hidden in its ability to penetrate deeply-rooted pain and create hope. Mahfouz's (1959) complex rhetorical style does not state the message of hope clearly. He rather leads the reader to figure it out for him/herself.

Mahfouz’s (1959) message in this novel appears to be easy to comprehend by the common Arab reader no matter what cultural or educational background this reader has because of Mahfouz's careful choice of vocabulary, symbols, characters and names. However, like many great works of literature, Mahfouz’s meanings are multilayered and conveyed through symbolism, literary allusion, and so forth, while at the same time, presenting characters that the ordinary reader can identify with. Ultimately, through its rhetorical devices, the novel works on many levels of consciousness that will resonate with the Arab reader, in particular. Mahfouz demonstrates through his novel that the rhetorical vision of the group, which could be communicated through bards, religious and authoritative figures, could be far stronger than an individual rhetoric.

Mahfouz’s rhetoric in this novel was considered a threat to the political agenda advocated by theologians because of his violation of the group's expectations. Although Mahfouz’s rhetoric in *Awlad Haratina* could be perceived as simple on the surface, it is, in fact, highly sophisticated and extremely powerful. His message tells us that if we only looked more closely to our history and its connection to our mythical heritage, we might be able to comprehend its power in
dictating our present and determining our future.

Mahfouz shocks his readers into a new understanding in the tradition of heterotopia. Mahfouz created a heterotopic space for his reader when he used a postmodern text to change the traditional meaning of the religious and mythical, shocking his reader by presenting a completely different social meaning than they are used to. The concept of heterotopia is introduced by Foucault (1989) in his book, *The Order of Things* to refer to spaces that are openly contested; sites have different social meaning for people, such as of the asylums, prisons and mental hospitals. Hetertopia has a shock effect that derives from a changed mode of ordering. Foucault’s (1989) places of Otherness are spaces whose existence set up “unsettling juxtapositions of incommensurate objects” which challenge the way we think, especially the way our thinking is ordered. It is the juxtaposition of things not usually found together and the confusion that juxtaposition causes. (Foucault, 1989; Hetherington, 1997)

Several other scholars have teased the concept of heterotopia and developed it further in application to such spaces as the factory during the industrial revolution, and how the politics inside and outside the factory relocated people and caused a reordering of society. Kevin Hetherington (1997) discusses creating new sources of power by hiring people in groups and arranging them and re-ordering them in distinct ways, both geographically and mythically. Hetherington (1997) considers bodies, social class and gender and they way they were reordered within and outside of the new industrialized space. Hetherington uses heterotopia to capture the significance of how sites/space can marginalize people and the way postmodern spaces creates resistance and transgression, because they become liminal spaces: spaces of total freedom and of total control; spaces of social ordering (Hetherington 1997; Turner 1969). Liminal is defined as “marginally perceptible” but when used in terms of a liminal culture, it refers to a very transitory
culture. “Liminal culture exists only minimally and at and for the moment. Liminal cultures appear and disappear as people move from one cultural identity to another, or consist of people or groups that have never been able to establish a clear social and cultural identity in their setting” (“Liminal Culture,” 2005, p. 1).

Hetherington (1997) explained that the term heterotopia originally came from the study of anatomy. "It is used to refer to parts of the body that are either out of place, missing, extra, or, like tumours, alien” (p. 239). Hetherington also explains that heterotopia can be textual sites or geographical sites bringing together heterogenous collections of unusual things without allowing them a unity or order established through resemblance. The heterotopic spaces might not be perceived as such for the insider, but it is usually from the standpoint of another perspective that make a space appear heterotopic.

Heterotopia for Foucault (1989) when found in literature changes the status quo by destroying syntax, contesting the very possibility of grammar as its source. It dissolves our myths and sterilizes the lyricism of our sentences. Hetherington (1997) argues that heterotopia is a surrealist theme regarding the alternative perspective that creates the fascination with the sites of Otherness.

Mahfouz, as mentioned, has created a heterotopic space for his audience through his novel, Awlad Haratina. My interpretation of Mahfouz's text is as a heterotopic effort to create a new chance for the reader to reflect on the possibilities that this new space invokes.

Mahfouz's message in Awlad Haratina never reached its intended audience, and the banning of his novel prevented a close examination of the power of Mahfouz's rhetoric in communicating hope. However, Mahfouz never abandoned his enlightenment project, and in 1977, he published the same message using symbols from everyday life, but having the same
features of *Awlad Haratina*. His hero this time, Ashur El-Naji, was a copy of Gebelaawi. El-Naji was an abandoned infant found by Sheikh Afra, a poor religious man who had no children. Afra and his wife raised the infant and gave him his name: Ashur El-Naji. El-Naji means “the survival” in Arabic. It is ironic that “Afra” is a play on the word Arafā, the name of the character at the conclusion of *Awlad Haratina*. The little boy is like Arafā, with no father, and this time, with no mother too. This also communicates certain facts about gender relations in the Arab World. For example, Arafā’s mother survived the cruelty of the strongmen who raped her by moving out of the neighborhood and raising Arafā on her own, while the mother of Afra might have been killed after giving birth to a child outside wedlock. This shows the complexity of gender relations and sexuality outside marriage. Children who are born outside marriage face the cruelty of the society, and women are forced by their sexual and social oppressors to give up their children or face punishment. This practice has persisted over time. In 2002, the Western news media addressed a case about a Muslim woman in Nigeria who was condemned to be stoned for having a baby outside wedlock, while the real father of the baby remained obscured and never punished by the same religious authority that condemned the woman to death. Her case is awaiting appeal, but the original sentence was only overturned because of intense international pressure. Such punishment is considered unconstitutional in Nigeria, but certain districts still practice ancient Islamic norms, even when most of the society condemns them.

Ashur El-Naji decided to become a porter, despite the pressure of the Futewwa, (Thugs, Strongmen, Protectors or clan) to make him one of them. El-Naji chose to defend the poor people of his neighborhood. El-Naji got married twice. His second wife, Fulla, was a prostitute. This shows how gender relations and sexuality is a pressing issue for Mahfouz. El-Naji was a copy of the perfect patriarch, Gebelaawi. However, despite his poverty, he maintained a good reputation
and became an inspiration for more than eight generations of his offspring.

Mahfouz's (1977) setting of his novel El-Harafish has the same atmosphere of the poor people who struggle in Hara, the neighborhood with the strongmen. Catherine Cobham (1993) uses the term clan instead of strongmen of the Alley in her translation of the Harafish. Mahfouz (1977) calls his novel Al-Harafish, which is a local Egyptian term used to refer to people who live in extreme poverty and have nothing in life beside their daily severe struggle to survive. The translated copy of Al-Harafish was called Ferr Far.

Here are some paragraphs from Al-Harafish (1977) to provide the reader with a sense of the same mythical and metaphysical atmosphere that Mahfouz (1959) employed in Awlad Haratina:

After midnight Ashur went to the monastery square to gather his thoughts alone under the stars in the ocean of songs. He squatted on the ground, lulled by his feeling of contentment and the pleasant air. One of those rare moments of existence when a pure light glows. When body, mind, time, and place are all in harmony. It was as if the mysterious anthems were speaking in a thousand tongues. As if he understood why the dervishes always sang in a foreign language and kept their door closed.

A creaking sound spread though the darkness. He looked at the great door in astonishment. Gently, steadily, it was opening. The shadowy figure of a dervish appeared, a breath of night embodied. 'Get the flutes and drums ready,' the figure whispered, leaning toward him. ‘Tomorrow the Great Sheikh will come out of his seclusion. He will walk down the alley bestowing his light and give each young man a bamboo club and a mulberry fruit. Get the flutes and drums ready.'

He returned to the world of the stars and the songs and the night and the ancient wall,
grasping at the tail ends of the vision; his fingers sunk into the waves of majestic darkness. He jumped to his feet, drunk on inspiration and power. Don’t be sad, his heart told him. One day the door may open to greet those who seize life boldly with the innocence of children and the ambition of angles. And the voices sang: 'Last night they relived me of all my sorrows - In the darkness they gave me the water of life. (Cobham, 1993, p. 406).

The expressions that are employed by Mahfouz (1977) in his novel, The Harafish reminisces the atmosphere of Awlad Haratina. For example, the darkness, the shadowy figure of a dervish, the Great Sheikh, the door that always kept closing and the songs are almost the same images that we experienced in Awlad Haratina.

Awlad Haratina has multiple dimensions. This novel not only talks about changes, it presents us with a demonstration of how changes are extremely difficult and how they could result with the ultimate punishment by both the initiator and by those who are influenced directly by the act of change, such as in the case of Gebelaawi. For example, it was not easy for Gebelaawi to give up his power altogether at once. He was ready to give up some of that power after thoughtful consideration. However, he still wanted the change to be in his own terms. He did not ask his children what they thought. He appointed the youngest, the weakest and the least prestigious son to represent him. He was introducing a new understanding of the qualities of humankind other than the traditional ones that only focus on the surface of a human being and not on that person’s essence. Instead of judging a person by his physical appearance, his strength, his color, his hierarchal location or his ethical background, the new system that Gebellawi seemed to introduce was focused on knowledge as a new measurement for evaluating the quality of the person. Adham was chosen because he was the only one who could read, write and
identify people by name. He also had knowledge of numbers, but the price that Gebellawi paid was to lose his favorite son and to live the rest of his life as a witness to the misery of his grandchildren.

One dimension of Mahfouz’s message is to introduce knowledge as a new method to evaluate a human being as he did by introducing the concept of knowledge and its importance when he documented the religious history of the Middle East through five significant passages that are deeply carved in the psyche of the Middle Eastern people, Arabs and Muslims, as well as the psyche of other global societies who share the two Middle Eastern religions, Judaism and Christianity.

Another dimension of Mahfouz’s message tells us that it has taken us all of recorded history to be able to understand the importance of knowledge to mankind, despite the fact that we recite the same history every day for thousands of years and over thousands of generations, without being able to get the message. Only five people understood the message and acted upon it. Adham, whose life was ended sadly because of Idrees’ jealousy; Jabal, who was only concerned with the welfare of his own people, the Jabalite; Rifaa, who focused on the purity of the soul and did not introduce an alternative to the complexity of human nature that revolves around the physical, mental dimension, spiritual and emotional needs, and those needs could not be fulfilled in isolation from “the Other.” Therefore, the collective life is central to Mahfouz in resolving the duality of the Self in its struggle to embrace the Other.

**Awlad Haratina as a Key to Understanding Arab Identity**

*Awlad Haratina* is a key to understanding the Arab rhetoric of identity through the following elements:
Symbolization through Storytelling

Awlad Haratina applies symbolism through storytelling, which is a method of education in most of the pre-writing cultures. Signs and symbols are connected to the technique of *Esti’ara* (metaphor of borrowing), the *Kenaya* (connotation) and the *Tawreya* (allegory, or metaphor of hiding or replacing the original meaning with a sign that indirectly reminds of the original meaning such as a parallel or opposite word). “The Great House” is a symbol that has big significance in the Arab and Muslims’ psyche. It represents The Holy Mosque of Mecca is where the house (the *Ka’aba*) was built by Abraham with his son Ishmael, and where all Muslims face in their prayers, no matter where they are. The usage of such a powerful sign as The Great House has the ability to bring two religious myths/stories alive in the psyche of the Arabic reader: The story of Abraham and his two sons Isaac from his wife Sara, and Ishmael from his Egyptian maid, Hager and the story of building the Great House. The other story is of Adam and Eve. Mahfouz’s selection to the names are: Adham and Omaima. Adham is close in pronunciation to Adam, while Omaima means mother, which is the connotation of Eve, the mother of human kind. Adham was born for Gebelaawi from a black maid like Ishmael.

The first chapter revolves around Adham and Idrees. The jealousy of Idrees when Gebelaawi appointed Adham to manage the trust brings to the mind the story of Adam, Satan and God, and the myth of creation and the temptation when the first human, Adam, was thrown out of heaven with his wife, Eve, for their attempt to steal the forbidden fruit, or the book of knowledge from the garden. Mahfouz blends the personality of Adham and Iblees with the personality of Ishmael and Isaac, the two sons of Abraham; however, the old testament mentions different details about Ishmael and Isaac than the Qura’an. The choice of Mahfouz (1959) is highly connected to Arabs’ history and their connection to their roots. Mahfouz hits two birds
with one stone through using the old techniques to introduce a solution to modern problem: his rhetoric has the power of identification with the Arabic psyche, which is necessary to convince the reader to act: In this case to believe in knowledge and responsibility to bring the needed change.

*Lamenting*

bell hooks (1994) argues that a society often needs a way to express its collective pain. She believes that modern societies often lack a way for its people to grieve loss because of "the absence of public spaces where that pain could be articulated" (p. 245). Conversely, the availability of such opportunities creates possibilities to reconcile the collective grief and then move beyond it. Without this process of mourning, many people cling to the past and cannot overcome their sense of loss, so they refuse to move toward the present and future. (hooks, 1994, p. 245). hooks addresses the importance of the confessional as a "transformation moment – a moment of performance where you might step out of the fixed identity in which you were seen and reveal other aspects of the self—as part of an overall project of more fully becoming who you are" (p. 210). She speaks against denial as "denial is always about insanity;" however, she warns against looking at this denial process as an invitation to despair, and rather take it as a sign of potential transformation in the very depth of whatever pain it is we are experiencing. Mahfouz uses Lamentation in his novel to bring about the collective transformation so that Arab people can stop clinging to a lost past and build an improved future. Hook uses the example of African Americans to explore these concepts, which brings to mind the Arab defeated self. Hook discusses the depletion that resulted from pushing down despair in the African American community, which further alienated it from the rest of American society. She calls for resilience to provide the imagination the needed fresh visions and strategies to confront the legacy of the
unreconciled grief "for it has been the breeding ground for profound nihilistic despair" (1994, p. 245). hooks refers to the tools used for healing as an “ethic of love,” which could be materialized within the Muruwa framework.

Because Lamentation is an outward expression of grief, mourning, wailing and deep sorrow and is connected to weakness and vulnerability, it is, therefore, primarily connected to women's behaviors and not men's. In classical poetry, however, the rules changed and Lamentation became an acceptable way of expression or communication among both male and female characters. While this form of poetic expression has become obsolete and is not expressed directly in modern Arabic writing, one finds that the Arab communication styles, both verbally and non-verbally are colored with the tone of Lamenting, especially in the twentieth century. This indirect Lamenting tone has been perceived as a negative and non-practical way of expression/communicating for it does not provide any substantial solutions to the problems that one faces. Furthermore, Lamentation is also perceived as a self-destructive method that leads to further defeat and disappointment. However, Mahfouz has managed to transform this negative communication style into a sharp and effective rhetorical tool to penetrate the Arab psyche in order to reach the deep rooted pain and disappointment and cure it within a rhetorical framework that has the possibility of bringing hope, which is "the Muruwa" I will refer to in this dissertation.

The dark humor, satire, and irony that was adapted by Mahfouz in Awlad Haratina into Lamenting is a highly sophisticated approach in employing the most common themes in Arab Rhetoric for communicating misery, loss and sadness through Lamenting, and blending it with the popular Arabic literary heritage of storytelling, symbolization, and metaphor is the framework for his novel. Although Lamenting has been commonly used by Arab poets to mourn
their dead, its usage by Mahfouz is an ironic style, implying that there must be someone lost or
dead to justify mourning, and maybe this “someone” is the Arabic dream which no longer can
find a way to be materialized.

However, Lamenting was also a successful choice as a psychological treatment to heal
the Arabic defeated psyche, a necessary stage to enable another stage to be born. Lamentation is
similar to the way African Americans slaves invented and practiced a musical form known as the
“spiritual” to help them mourn their lost civilization and cope with current oppressions.
Lawrence Levine (1977) explains that spirituals were part of a religious expression that slaves
used “to transcend the narrow limits and dehumanizing effects of slavery. It was through the
performance of the spirituals that the individual and the community experienced their God, a
God who affirmed their humanity in ways whites did not, and a God who could set them free
both spiritually and physically” (Levine, p. 30). The main function of the spirituals were
communal with a particular rhythm and pattern based on the call-response. One person would
develop a song about sorrow or joy, and then the individual experience was brought to the
community through the call-response action. So, the individual’s sorrow or joy became the
community’s sorrow or joy. “In this way, the spiritual became truly affirming, for it provided
communal support for individual experiences” (Levine, 1977, p. 33). The songs mostly concern
spiritual freedom, although physical freedom was a topic as well. The most important image,
explains Levine, is that of the Chosen People. Slaves believed, just as the Jews believed, that
they were chosen by God, and they also believed that they understood better than anyone the
meaning of freedom. “The spirituals functioned in different ways, but most importantly, they
anchored the enslaved persons to a reality that allowed them to transcend the harsh limits of
slavery. They helped the slaves to carve out a space in which they could live as human beings,
loved and affirmed by a God and a host of Biblical heroes, a space that allowed them to be human in dehumanizing circumstances” (Levine, 1977, p. 38). Although the spiritual was used to heal the psyche in cruel and crushing circumstances, eventually it too became seen as a negative form of music. African Americans wanted to distance themselves from this form because it is associated with slavery and inferior status. It was a reminder of a lost past. Eventually, though, in the early 1930s and later, the spiritual became a source of pride as a connection to a lost civilization and history. Lamentation has had the power to heal through grief, but in Arab history, it also has had the effect of clinging to a past that has been lost and will never be recovered.

This process of Lamenting the stubborn and guilty self is revealed in Arabic poetry, both ancient and modern, which makes me believe that Mahfouz (1959) has intelligently applied this genre of Arabic Rhetoric in his work as well. Arab songs since the second half of the 20th century adopted the sad rhythm of Lamenting the loss of the loved one or the beloved. It has been hard to find a song that does not depict this sad mood, except national songs, which mostly are directed to praise the king or the head of the country. Lamenting as communication is an art that has not been fully explored, neither within the Arabic modern rhetoric nor within the international rhetoric, and this dissertation offers the opportunity to explore it through the works of Mahfouz. Mahfouz set the precedent by applying the Lamenting technique to communicate the psychological defeat and disappointment of Arabs during the modern age and their continued behavior to mourn their loss instead of catching up with the spirit of the modern world and participating intellectually in international discourse through a constructive rhetorical vision.

*The Defeated Arab Self*

*Awlad Haratina* analyzes the defeated Arabic self by retrieving the mythical theological history of the Middle East to represent a resolution for the duality of the self/Other as it could be
derived from Mahfouz’s text, and offers a resolution for this duality through the application of a new framework, “Murouah” which is a framework that has the ability to work out the problem of gender relations from an Islamic, genderless, Universal perspective. The duality in Mahfouz’s text is presented through the following characters: God/ Satan (Jebelaawi /Idrees): The Superior Self and the struggle to tame it; Adham: Embracing the Other is problematic; Jabal: Saving the Self from the Other is not the solution; Rifaa: The Perfect Self: Healing the Self and embracing the Other is not enough; Qaseem: Embracing the Other and balancing the fragmented self by collective force and wisdom; Arafa: Working out the duality of the Self/Other, God/Satan, Virgin/Prostitute through Scientific knowledge and individual and collective responsibility (Embracing the Other and balancing the fragmented self by achieving collective and individual knowledge, wisdom, awareness and morality through time and space)

Mahfouz tries to solve the defeated modern Arabic psyche by connecting it to its far roots: to its beginning, hopefully this connection to the roots brings some insight to the present and to impart the lesson that it repeats itself again and again within the history of the Arabs and of mankind. Mahfouz applies intertextuality (“using one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance,” Michael Riffaterre, 1990) in addition to his wit and ironic style and his knowledge of the human psyche to reinvent the symbolic value of Middle Eastern history. His novel is a text within a text. It is a perfect usage of intertextualty (Worton & Still, 1990) to activate ancient religious, mythical and cultural symbols that still possess tremendous amount of power over the typical Middle Eastern or Arab individual. The divided self or the duality of the self is clear in the main character of the novel: Gebelaawi. We could see how his proud and silencing authority was used as a starting point to a chain of reactions that generated conflicts and violence that lasted for generations.
Whether this persona is God (Allah) or another persona that has strong influence on the Middle Eastern history is not my main concern in this dissertation. The duality of the Self/Other could be traced in every chapter of the novel.

*Awlad Haratina* is a narrative of consulting the defeated Arabic self and embracing the Other through five different stages Gebellawi and Adham’s Time; Gebel’s Time, Rifaa’s Time, Qaasem’s Time, and finally the Time of Arafa.

*Muruwa* as a Critical Perspective

Addressing gender relations through the notion of “*Muruwa*” framework is a feminist project whose outcome is for both men and women to develop positive attitudes toward each other. This framework does not focus on the gender role or the sexuality of the person. It focuses rather on caring and nurturing “the Self” and “the Other” with no regard to how one perceives his/her own or the Other’s gender role or his/her sexuality.

*Muruwa* is defined in the modern Arabic dictionary as “a psychological moral status that obliges the person to follow the highest standard of morality, enthusiasm, pride, dignity, perfect manhood” (Al-Basha,’s *Modern Arabic Dictionary*, 1992, p. 912, p. 921, p. 1011). I borrowed the *Muruwa* concept from the Arabic moral system for its ability to be a comprehensive framework that invites and encourages the growth of the person.

*Muruwa* in Arabic is equal to the concept of Chivalry in English. The word chivalry is defined as "behavior that is honorable, kind, generous, and brave, especially a man's behavior toward women. A system of religious belief and honorable behavior that knights in the Middle Ages were expected to follow" (*Longman Advanced American Dictionary*, 2000, p. 232). However, the Arabic term for chivalry is *Ferouseyya*, and Fursan are knights, (Al-Basha, 1992, p. 740).
I am using the concept of *Muruwa* for its ability to examine how "the Self" reaches "the Other," to aid the growth of humanity to its highest possible degree through the daily interaction with life circumstances.

The *Muruwa* encourages the exchange of love, respect, courage, honesty and other altruistic behaviors that contribute to the growth of the self in its relationship with the other. *Muruwa* could function as a universal, genderless framework that transcends gender, sexuality, ethnicity, color, age, origin, and social or economic backgrounds. This framework could be detected within the moral systems of most known religions or social doctrines, and its basic principles focus on the behavior of the person and not on his or her physical appearance or origin.

*Muruwa*, then, is a perspective that moves away from any gender or ethnic bias. I argue in this dissertation that this perspective has the possibility to solve the conflict in gender relations in the Arab World and create change and hope. This framework could also be extended universally to resolve the discrimination of people according to their gender, sexuality, physical appearance, age, ethnicity, social class, or origin by shifting the focus of people's worth to the constructive contribution of the individual to the growth of their societies and the growth of human kind and not to their appearances.

Under the *Muruwa* framework, which transcends both multiculturalism and diversity, both males and females can learn how to deal with their humanity outside gender restrictions, reducing the discrimination that hinders their full potentiality as human beings.

As described previously, the bell hooks (1994) creates a framework for transformation with the power of the “ethic of love.” Her ethic of love is very similar to the concept of *Muruwa*. It is the type of perspective that most religions advocate. It is a perspective that recognizes that
extending the self to reach the other is a measure of civilization, rather than consumption being the indicator of civilization. bell hook’s framework diverts emphasis from the competitive consumer capitalism, which views love "as a business deal" and regards life "as a market and love as a variation or free enterprise." (p. 246). hooks brings attention to the commercialization of love, which leaves people feeling emotionally lost. She invites a re-definition of love "to sustain a love ethic in a culture that negates human value and valorizes materialism" (p. 246). hooks talks also about an ethic of love to shape the direction of our political visions and aspirations, and the necessity of allowing the self to grow through love to become a passionate human being. She believes that having fixed identity boundaries does not allow for growth of the self. She criticizes the absence of powerful discourse on love within the modern group of politically progressive radicals or from the political Left, arguing "our efforts to liberate ourselves and our world community from oppressional exploitation are doomed" if we do not turn away from current practices (p. 243).

In order to recognize the Other, society has to avoid exploitation and allow a certain kind of negotiation that "disturbs the possibility of domination" (hooks, 1994, p. 241). Hook explains that this recognition of the Other requires one to consider the needs of the other and the mutual recognition of the subject-to-subject encounter, as opposed to the subject-to-object. She explains that we are mostly informed by a culture of domination, and the resistance to the possibility of domination has to be learned. "One has to cultivate the capacity to work rather than 'this is what I'm doing, fuck you', " (p. 241). bell hooks calls for resistance against war, sexism, homophobia, saying that "we have to pause, reflect, reconsider, create a whole movement instead of "let's do it all swiftly-quickly" (p. 242).

Like Mahfouz’s attempt to create a heterotopic space, the Muruwa perspective might
present a new paradigm of thinking globally: create a heterotopic space; a new social meaning for gender relations, and a new ordering of relationships between men and women; a new humanistic meaning that transcends judgments according to traditional classifications such as gender, sexuality, age, class, ethnicity, nationality or place of origin. The heterotopic space that I associate with the postmodern meaning of Muruwa is worthy of further examination.

In this dissertation, then, I have introduced the concept of Muruwa, which is much like hook’s ethic of love, to Mahfouz's Awlad Haratina as a critical concept for rhetorical criticism regarding the politics of gender relations and the potential for change. This dissertation also has the possibility of introducing a different and unexplored rhetorical criticism technique, Lamentation, to study gender relations. Together, the concepts derived from the application of Lamentation and Muruwa to an Arabic literary work can offer significant insights on the Arab culture and social structure from an Arabic perspective.

Outline of Chapters

The first chapter of my dissertation begins with an introduction of my topic that provides information about Mahfouz's (1959) novel Awlad Haratina, and its possibilities to render an understanding of gender relations in the Arab world, and about Mahfouz's adaptation of Lamentation as a rhetorical approach to critique Arab culture. This chapter also provides a rationale in choosing Awlad Haratina to examine gender relations within a rhetorical framework. I present information about my relationship to my topic to enable the reader to understand the importance of this topic to me as a researcher, as well as to my goal of making this dissertation a step toward a better understanding of Arab rhetoric about gender relations in the Arab World. This chapter also provides the reader with a background about the author, Naguib Mahfouz, and about his novel, Awlad Haratina, which is translated in two English versions, Children of the
Ally (1959), and Children of Gebelaawi (1988). In Chapter Two, I discuss my conceptual framework and methodology. I begin Chapter Two by explaining the concept of rhetoric and providing the reader with some background about critical rhetoric and about rhetorical criticism. I also provide an introduction to Arab rhetoric to help the reader locate Mahfouz's work and understand its relationship to Arab rhetoric. In this part, I address how the novel is used by Mahfouz (1959) as a critical approach to Arabic culture in general and to gender relations in the Arab World in particular. I also provide the reader with a background about Arab discourse on gender relations. The problem of translation is addressed in Chapter Two to enable the reader to reflect on the specificity of Arabic language, and how meaning is negotiated between different translators of the same novel. I explain the theoretical concepts that I use in this dissertation to direct the attention of the reader to the connection between knowledge and power, and how the selection of the words communicates certain agency and authority. I employ Said's (1978) meanings of beginning and intentionality to make the choice of Mahfouz regarding the setting of his novel in a mythical historical time relevant. I explain the importance of Mahfouz's process of naming his characters and his places within Derrida's (1978's) concept on naming and the power of naming. Then I illustrate how the critical concepts of discourse (Foucault, 1972, 1973, 1978), myth (Joseph Campbell, 1977) and storytelling (Minh ha, 1985) could be used as successful communication devices to understand and to recreate new possibilities for gender relations and gender politics. I address Lamentation or Lamenting and how it is employed by Mahfouz as a tool to communicate his critical perspective of Arab culture and Gender relations. I also discuss the concept of the Self and the Other and the duality of being from Allan Watt's (1967) social and psychological perspective. This chapter explains how the concept of the Self versus the Other could be explain the struggle between Arabs and Jews. The novel, Awlad Haratina, then
could be understood as an attempt to read the Middle Eastern theological world view within a
universalistic approach: A need to understand the Arab Self and the Jewish Other as a cultural
and theo-political struggle that survived for more than three thousand years and won’t be
resolved without the comprehension of the duality of the Self/Other, or the Social/Anti-Social
theory of being (Allan Watts, Joseph Campbell). This chapter ends by addressing gender and
sexuality and how power, positionality and sexuality intersects (Foucault 1978, Baudrillard,
1986). The concept of the father will be discussed in this part to understand how the origin of
this concept is related to femininity and masculinity. The female body as a space to negotiate
gender relations will be addressed here to understand the Arab discourse on sexuality and Gender
relations as a metaphor of the Virgin versus the Prostitute. Chapter Three explains how the novel
could be used as a critical and rhetorical approach to examine identity. Chapter three will provide
an answer to the following question: What are the primary elements of Arabic rhetoric and how
do these elements relate to Awlad Haratina? I will also examine some of the rhetorical elements
that are employed by Mahfouz (1959) in Awlad Haratina to communicate his critical idea of
gender relations. Those rhetorical devices are: the metaphor, the satire, storytelling as myth
making, and Lamenting.

Chapter Four will address the rhetorical significance of myth to gender relations in Awlad
Haratina through the following elements: Language as a vehicle to create and maintain myth
making; Meaning making, performance, and its relationship to the myth about gender; mythical
and religious history as representation of cultural discourse about gender relations in Awlad
Haratina; The rhetorical power of myth in Awlad Haratina in representing gender politics and
creating new possibilities to understand gender relations.

Chapter Five will study the rhetorical significance of time and place to gender relations in
Awlad Haratina through explaining the significance of time and place to understand the politics of Gender relations in Awlad Haratina through the following subdivisions: Time and place as a metaphor to organize human life; names of people, places and stories as a political strategy to communicate certain meaning about time and place; How men and women negotiate their space verbally and non-verbally in Awlad Haratina and how this negotiation reflects agency or power.

Chapter Six will study the ways that the construction of gender relations in Awlad Haratina rhetorically mediate aspects of Arab culture and create possibilities for new understandings and relations through the focus on following aspects: How men and women manage their sexuality in an Arab Egyptian context; How gender relations in the Arab World communicate a metaphor for the division of labor; How gender relations is a strategy to claim power, control and authority; How the metaphor of the Virgin/Prostitute problematizes the ability of the modern Arab culture to contribute effectively to the global discourse about gender relations; How Lamenting, which is an Arab model that communicates defeat and disappointment could be used to communicate hope; and finally, how “Muruwa” as an Arab-Islamic rhetorical approach, could be used as a new framework for gender relations that has potential to introduce new understandings for gender relations in the Arab World and could be introduced globally to build new understanding of human relationships globally. Chapter Seven will provide concluding observations on Muruwa and Lamentation.
CHAPTER TWO:
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

In analyzing Mahfouz’s *Alwad Haratina* and its ability to provide revolutionary insight to the tradition and history of the Arab culture, the Arab psyche, gender relations, and so forth, my methodology will combine different approaches, including: rhetorical and literary criticism, post-colonial criticism, feminism, and the Arabic non-linear, spiral or circular method which can be located in the body of work of most classic Arabic scholars such as Ibn Arabi in his book (Fusus Al-Hekma), *The Gem Stones of Wisdom*, and the book of Al-Jahedh, (Al-Hayawan), *The Animal*. I will also use an approach that considers the geological, environmental, cultural and linguistic background of the researcher as part and package of the knowledge production, which should be undertaken to broaden the scope of Western academic research in the future. Without this consideration, the knowledge that non-Western students could contribute would be lost, especially considering that language is political and never value free.

The non-linear method of knowledge production takes into consideration the fact that before the beginning of the Western Scientific revolution, there were other ways of knowing. Therefore, Edward Said’s (1987) *Beginning and Intentionality* is significant to my research because the method that I am defending here has a strong connection with the concept of beginning and intentionality. While adhering to the Western academic scholarship, the adaptation of the non-Western student to the Western academic norms should not deprive students of rhetorical study from being able to function as bridges between two cultures or two paradigms of thinking and processing information. Language as a means of communication
should not be used to intimidate non-Western scholars from contributing to the body of knowledge, especially in the field of international and multicultural communication.

Rhetoric

Rhetoric is a problematic concept that has been the source of dispute among intellectuals for thousands of years. While the ideal rhetoric promotes a moral responsibility to defend truth and human justice, rhetoric has continued to become an instrument to earn a living and defend one’s own interests since the pre-Socratic era. Rhetoric has regained the attention of intellectuals, especially in modern speech communication, for its significant role in shaping human lives, and in determining our worldview and our perception of the “Other.”

The etymology of Rhetoric came from the Middle English rethorik, from Middle French rethorique, from Latin rhetorica, and from Greek rhEtorikE. Literally, Rhetoric means the art of oratory, from feminine of rhEtorikos of an orator, from rhEtOr orator, rhetorician, from eirein to say, speak. Rhetoric is the study of principles and rules of composition formulated by critics since ancient times. Rhetoric is the study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion. To be rhetorical, means to possess skill in the effective use of speech. Rhetoric is the type or mode of language or speech. (2005, Miriam Webster’s Dictionary).

Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle, Rhetoric, p. 7) continues to prevail. Rhetoric is still closely associated with persuasion in political and public discourse. While influenced by Aristotle, contemporary approaches to rhetorical communication reflect a variety of new elements.
Contemporary Rhetoric

One contemporary definition of rhetoric is “the process whereby values may be changed, traditions discarded, class distinctions erased or redefined, and future action shaped” (Andrews, 1990, p. 32). It also can be “the theory and the practice of the verbal mode of presenting judgment and choice, knowledge and feeling. As persuasion, it works in the area of the contingent, where alternatives are possible. In the poetic, it is the art of imaginative appeal; in scientific discourse, it is the means of so presenting truth as to fix it clearly in the mind of the listener or reader,” (Nichols, 1963, pp. 7-8). Foss, et. al (1985) mention that rhetoric generally could be known “through the act of a speaker gaining the adherence of an audience to some claim presented for its assent…. And through criticism of rational enterprises or disciplines….and) when arguments are subjected to rhetorical assessment, rational knowledge results” (p. 248). Foucault (1978) employs archaeology or genealogy as a method to analyze discourse in order to determine the rules that govern it. This approach, according to Foucault, helps to describe the various relations among statements in a discursive formation in order to reveal the network of power that influences relationships.

Some authors distinguish between literary and rhetorical activity because literature is concerned with permanent values, while the orator is bound to a certain occasion and certain audience. The orator designed his message to fit the time, the place, and the background of his audience in order to achieve an influence or an outcome. The orator arranges his message to defend a situation, to change people's views about something or to bring change that fits the timely occasion. Rhetoric, since the classical Greek theorists, Aristotle, Plato and Isocratic, was centered on a certain universe of a writer and of an audience, while literary criticism is concerned with permanent values. For example, James R. Andrews (1990) believes that both
classical and modern rhetorical criticism focuses on the audience as a reference point. Therefore, according to Andrews (1990) and Wichelns (1966), criticism of oratory must regard a speech as a communication to a specific audience and must be concerned with effect, while permanence and universality are reserved for the literary critic, because of the complexity of addressing a universal audience. The particularity of the situation, according to this view, is left for rhetorical criticism.

*Contemporary Critical Perspective of Rhetoric*

"Critical rhetoric" generally refers to approaches that involve examinations and critiques of discourse and domination, power, and cultural tensions.

*Cultural Rhetoric*

Robert Shuter (2000) addresses the challenge that Asian rhetoric, principally Chinese argumentation, has brought to the Western perspective regarding the limitations of established rhetorical frameworks. Shuter (2000) offers "an intracultural approach to rhetorical analysis that situates discourse within the culture that produced and nurtured it," with a hope to "dig for unarticulated and often unseen national cultural axioms that drive every nuance of the research process, from questions asked to methods used (p. 11). Shuter (2000) directs our attention to the inseparability of culture and rhetoric, and to the bias of placing logic and reason above emotion, which has its roots in Western culture, where the separation of mind and body is central to the Judeo-Christian tradition. Shuter (2000) finds that the roots of Western rhetoric in the dichotomy between logos and pathos (which distinguished Aristotelian rhetoric), "has fragmented rhetoric, privileging logical appeals and diminishing the value of pathos, ethos, and style" (p.12).

This dissertation seeks to show how the work of Mahfouz grows from a cultural context and can be understood with reference to the Arab sensibility.
Postcolonial Criticism

The Postcolonial critique of the "Other" and “Othering” has further guided my rhetorical criticism to Mahfouz's (1959) work. I am borrowing the Postcolonial critique approach of Spivack (2000), Said (1978), Minh-ha (1986) and Foucault (1978) to examine the discourse of the Self versus the Other.

While Mahfouz’s awareness and exposure to world literature provided advantages in the writing *Awlad Haratina*, it aligns Mahfouz with the Arab romantic intellectual elites who believed that the salvation of their people was in adapting Western modernization and Western science. Many perceive Mahfouz as having adopted the colonizer's view of the Arab-Middle Eastern culture via his portrayal of the Arab intellectual heritage as problematic, shallow and never lasting as derived from the atmosphere of the desert in *Awlad Haratina*. However, despite Mahfouz’s presentation of Western modernization as salvation, revealed through his mysterious and magical character Arafa, Mahfouz ends his novel critically. The death of Gebelaawi and the death of Arafa were metaphorically employed to open a way to explore new venues beyond traditional heritage and beyond modernization.

The discourse of modernization has influenced Mahfouz's image of the Middle East as a barren desert with people that do not know how to elevate themselves from the daily struggle with poverty, hunger, and illiterate oppressive forces. The highest example of the neighborhood, the great ancestor Gebelaawi, managed to secure a high living standard for himself but was never able to help his children to resolve their conflicts and build a decent life. Gebelaawi’s method of communicating his vision to his children was a complete failure; therefore, he had to die in the end to make a space for a rebirth experience. This is typical of many modern Western scholars.
after the emergence of the First and the Second World Wars as a solution to what was called the Third World, or the Underdeveloped World, or the Developing World.

Mahfouz’s (1959) disappointment with the political circumstances in Egypt and in the Arab World when he wrote *Awlad Haratina* caused him to perceive current problems as an outcome of the religious and social history of the Middle East, without considering more modern influences. For example, Mahfouz (1959) in *Awlad Haratina* does not appear to pay attention to the psychological defeat and the economic depletion that are brought by colonization and imperialism. While *Awlad Haratina* presents a possibility of hope for the Arab individual, Mahfouz omitted several important details from the Middle Eastern history, and this has done injustice to the reality of his audience.

A postcolonial critique of Mahfouz's *Awlad Haratina* requires an understanding of the political history of the Middle East. For example, an important event that led to the marginalization of Arabs either in Egypt or in the rest of the Arab World, was the defeat of Arabs in Spain after more than eight centuries of civilization. Arabs and Muslims who expanded scientific knowledge, and who had gathered and translated resources and information both from the Eastern and Western hemispheres of the earth, were forced to leave Europe defeated and humbled. Arab Muslims that successfully established a universal civilization that was the first of its kind in its attempt to unify human beings on the merit of their knowledge and morality, rather than on their colors and ethnicities, became captive for more than two hundred years under several oppressive Ottoman rulers, who abused their authority and shut off the educational resources in the Arab countries they ruled, and left the Arab populations victims of poverty and oppression.
Other events that contributed to the psychological defeat of Arabs are the burning of the Arab Egyptian library by the Mongolian Tatars and the destruction of the Baghdad library, the largest library in the world at that time, during the crusades. By losing the Baghdad library, a new generation was born without having access to its resources. The defeat of Turkey in World War II made the Arab World an easy prey for European colonization until the second half of the nineteenth century. The divisions that were imposed on the Arab World by Great Britain and by France severely alienated Arab people and cut off their hopes to recover from decades of suppression.

Establishing Israel as a permanent state in 1948 was a cause for a new Arab resistance. Benefiting from the experience of several international liberation movements in the rest of the world and in countries such as in India, China and Latin America, Arabs finally decided to fight back. Under the slogan of the Pan Arab movement, the modern Arab World, for the first time in history, recognized itself as one entity under the leadership of the Egyptian leader, Jamal Abdul Nasser in 1952. Mahfouz’s narrative fiction started in the beginning of 1930s. He witnessed the first Egyptian liberal political movements against the British. When Nasser took control, replacing Mohammad Najeeb, the leader of the Egyptian revolution, he held some reservations for the injustice that occurred, but he lived in hope that the new president might bring some positive changes. During Abdul Nasser’s time (1952-1973), the intellectual elite in Egypt and in some other Arab countries such as Syria, Iraq and Morocco were not sure which philosophy would help them to build up their nations and locate their lost Arab identity.

The Islamic activists’ role became vital in this search for Arab identity and resulted in the emergence of the Islamic Brotherhood as a way of life; the Marxist Socialist current was new and was also perceived as a solution to Arabs and the rest of the world, especially after surviving
the experience of colonization by Europe; the third strong current was European modernization and development. The struggle between the three currents was very strong, and so Nasser’s project of uniting Arabs under the slogan of Pan Arab witnessed a severe failure in its first application between Egypt and Syria.

*Awlad Haratina* reflects Mahfouz’s disappointment with the Arab political leadership and its ability to end the history of oppression that the Arab public suffered for generations. *Awlad Haratina* Laments the oppressive history in the journey of locating a solution to salvage the Arabic spirit. The current Arab situation shows us that the historical struggles that the Arabic collective memory had stored has continued to identify with misfortunes and injustices that could be detected in most Arab countries by one way or the other, especially in populated areas such Egypt and Sudan. Unfortunately, the negative consequences were experienced by the majority; therefore, Mahfouz *Awlad Haratina* originally was targeting the audience of those unfortunate circumstances, but it never reached them because Mahfouz’s direct audience are those who could afford education. Despite the fact that what Mahfouz wrote is a version of certain truth, this version was considered a direct insult to the Arab identity, which was struggling to locate itself. The religious, and particularly the Islamic current, has been the only and the most dominant current for centuries, and the Islamic intellectuals have managed to restore their prestigious positions as community leaders because of Islam’s ongoing importance to the unity and identity of Arab people. Other sources of identity did not have the same mythical, historical, and cultural significance, and so failed to take hold.

Mahfouz is a product of multiple histories and cultures. Mahfouz emerged from old Egypt that has several thousands of years of civilization. He is also the son of the Islamic civilization that has survived for more than fourteen centuries. Mahfouz could claim that he is
equally the son of the contemporary international culture. Mahfouz, in his novels *Beginning and End* and the *Harafish* as well as in *Awlad Haratina* digs to the bottom of his society to search for his characters and confronts the society with itself. His rhetoric aims to reveal the audience to themselves and educate them about themselves and about what is hidden in their society. Like any other rhetorician, Mahfouz depended a great deal on awakening the common knowledge or the shared symbols of his audience in order to convince his audience, and alert them to a certain matter or provoke them to act upon that matter. Mahfouz establishes this common ground from the beginning of his novel through the concept of the *Hara* or the neighborhood, and refers to it as "*Haratina,*" which means, “our neighborhood.” When he says "our" neighborhood, he levels himself with his audiences and strengthens his relationship with each reader in awakening the feeling of bondage between his audience and himself as well as the sense of identity and belonging to the same place and to the same history.

Al-Qurtaji considers rhetoric as an essential construction or as a complete science that diverse types of symmetry and placement could be classified within its range, including the rhythm, which was seen first as a style, then as a balance between two weights, then as the time of the word/utterance. This musical rhythm of the word was connected to the dram beat or the weight of the hand beat (Al-Hashemi, 1990, p. 47). The rhetoric is the first base of the text, the generator of all its constructs and form” (p. 53). Al-Hashemi finds that Al-Qurtagini’s methodology is considered an early fundamental step to evaluate the phenomena of poetry and to analyze it scientifically, despite the influence of Aristotle’s logic and rhetoric.

Al Hashemi (1990) addresses the symmetry “*Al-Tanasub*” aspect of rhetoric in a poetry text. He mentions that the symmetry is divided into purposes, genres and types of genres. The meaning dimension is constituted of layers: The purpose, then the type, then another type as in a
pyramid. Each layer in the pyramid is constituted from a layer that has two symmetries. These symmetries could be positive or negative such as expressing comfort, interest, astonishment, consideration, satisfaction, anger, disagreement, apprehension, fear and hope. This symmetry has a synthetic nature. It is dualistic and moves in two directions, vertical and symmetrical. Its function is free mobility both vertically and horizontally. “The symmetry law is an advanced, lively, and subtle in its essential qualities” (Al-Hashemi, 1990, p. 51). This complex construction of the text moves in a circle between two dimensions, turning the text from a web to a fan.

Arab Rhetoric

Understanding gender relations in the Arab World requires the critic to examine Arab rhetoric and its relationship to the history of the Arab culture and tradition. The study of the mythical, the theological, political, and the socioeconomic within the specificity of the environment and its psychological influence on the people is necessary to understand Arab rhetoric within the cultural and traditional discourse that produced it. In an oral culture, people's memory is their only way to communicate their traditions, norms, and experiences from generation to generation.

"The best rhetoric is what it leads/guides, with the least words" is an idiom that Arab rhetoricians have always used competitively in their speeches. Arab idioms or Amthal are metaphors that have three elements: word choice, the arrangement of the words and the sound of the words. These features of Arab rhetoric have contributed to the preservation of the collective memory of Arabs for hundreds of generations. Arabs managed to preserve their cultural and ethnic identity because of the economy of their rhetoric. In an oral culture, the memory is the only archive known to pass the learned experiences and the wisdom from generation to generation. Arab classic poetry has continued to impress Arab modern intellectuals because of its
ability to bring the old culture alive through its powerful rhetoric that provide refined descriptive
details about an environment that no longer exists.

*Pre-Islamic Rhetoric*

Classic Arabic language is called "*Fusha,*" which means perfect sounds, for its complex
ability to capture the wide experience of human nature. Arab children, before and after Islam,
were taught to be eloquent because language was a survival tool, especially in the unpredictable
life of the Arabian dessert. The Arabic Bedouin was considered eloquent or a rhetorician by
nature. Al-Jahedh, an Arabic Islamic scholar recorded information about this rhetorical aspect of
the language of the Arab Bedouin (also called Urabi, plural Urban). Al-Jahedh says that the
Urabi does not think before he talks. The thinking process flows with the same time he/she talks.
The words fall in the right places to the hearer as being perfect without struggle or plans (Al-
Jahedh).

Al-Hashemi explains that the music in Arabic poetry is connected to the Arabic life in the
desert with its geographical, economic, social, aesthetic and psychological dimensions. The
fundamental musical law has the responsibility of saving the wisdom of Arabs as Al-Jahedh sees.
It is the foundation that made the poetry the *Diwan Al-Arab* (the ruling chamber) for it is
connected to the nature of their life, their circumstances, especially their memory and their
retention and story telling/recitation, which contains musical elements such as repetition,
arrangement, and the high rhythm/tune, and plays an important role in motivating it to carry its
function to perfection. Therefore the Arab individual experienced the peacefulness and the
serenity, no matter where imagination took the listener. The sounds produced a sonic guidance;
by the transgression of the echo in the ear and its persistence in the soul and its circulation
The word is the home of the Arab Bedouin; therefore, the verse of the poem is called *Bait* (Home). For thousands of years before Islam, Arabs perfected themselves in rhetoric as a method of survival, where the harsh desert forced them to live consistently in a movement that required them to travel unexpectedly, leaving behind any heavy belongings in their search for new residences. The harsh and the unpredictable weather of the desert caused words to be one of the most valuable means of living.

Arab rhetorical history could be derived from three distinguished periods in the Arabic history: *Al-Jaheleiya* (before Islam); Islam; and modern history. *Al-Jaheleiya*’s rhetoric could be found in a large body of Arab idioms (*Amthal* or Aqual Ma'thoura) that are communicated from generation to generation orally for thousands of years. Arabic poetry is also considered by Arabs as a rhetorical heritage, for it exemplifies what is considered rhetorical or *Baliq* (from Balaqa) by Arabs, which is the ability to communicate the richness of meaning with the fewest words possible. Arabic *Jaheleyya* or classic poetry that was preserved orally until the period of writing is remembered because of its economic and expressive ability to guide people, as well as to preserve their cultural and ethnic identity. Many of *Al-Jaheleya* (Pre-Islamic) poets adapted economic rhetorical styles in their poetry that made their poetry popular and prestigious until today. Emru- Al-Qays, Zuhair Ibn Abi Sulma, and Al-Khansa were among many Arab poets who won admiration by modern scholars and readers for generations to come. Al-Mutanabi is one of the poets who is unmatched in Arab history, and whose rich production kept influencing Arab poetry. *Muallaqaat* are examples of this Arabic rhetorical method of recording history. *Muallaqaat* are defined as "Pre-Islamic Arabic anthology compiled by the scholar, comprised of poems that were written in gold letters and hung on the walls of the *Kaaba* in Mecca during annual fairs. It consists of seven (or, in some versions, nine or ten) odes, all by different poets of
the 6th or early 7th centuries. They are generally esteemed the finest of Arabic odes, and they present an unsurpassed picture of Bedouin life before Islam” (Hammad al Rawiya, 2005, d. c.775).

*Muallaqat*, then, are archives that kept information about people, places, details of the environment, values, traditions, attitudes, and historical incidents about the period in which it was produced. The Prophet Mohammad mentioned one of the poets, Labeed, as the best rhetorician after the *Qur'an*. In Islam, the Qur'an is considered the finest example for Arab rhetoric. The Mouallaqa is a long poem that was chosen by a committee of scholars to be displayed on the walls of Ka’aba in Mecca at the Jaheleyya (Pre-Islamic) period. Labeed’s *Mouallaqat* is considered the most complete in its construction, its presentation, its language and its perception. It was communicated in 89 Bait (lines) through Al-Khateeb Al-Tabreezi. It introduces a unique interaction between the poet and nature.

The status of women in the Arab culture before Islam differed across time and place. Some stories about women before Islam demonstrate the status that some women had in their communities. The poem of Zuhair Ibn Abi Salma talks about the longest tribal war that occurred between two Arabic tribes/communities because a woman cried for help for having her female camel killed in the territory of her host. Those stories demonstrate that gender relations has been communicated and preserved in an oral culture through storytelling, *Amthal*, Poems, prose and in a later time the *Qur'an*.

Yaccub, A.et. al (1987) present a model of Arabic rhetoric that is divided into three parts: Meanings (Maani), Eloquent Illustration (Bayan), and Badee’ (creative expression). Their view of rhetoric as a science deals with words and how those words are used to communicate its intended meaning according to its relationships and connections. This science deals with
allegory, metaphor, metaphorical connotations (Kenaya), Tawreya (Euphemism). The rhetoric has the ability to present one meaning through different expressions and compositions. Al-Jahedh wrote a book on rhetoric called *Al-Bayan Wal Tabyeen*, where he collected the kinds of rhetorical expressions and speeches as the first initiative to establish the science of rhetoric. Yaccub, et al. (1987) mentions that Zemarkhshari (1144) as writing the first rhetorical source of Arabs in 1144 (538 H). Yaccoub et al. (1987) distinguish between the verbal or pronunciation aspect of rhetoric such as Jenas, Sajaa, (harmony, rhyme, rhythm) and the rhetoric of meaning such as: Tibaq (congruence); Tashbeeh (Similarity and sameness); Tashweeq or Tarrassud (Suspense ); Muzawaja (Coupling); Tadhkeem (Exagerration); Qalb or Aks (Opposition); (Istersal and Ejaz (Expansion and summarization); Jama or Rabt and Idhafa (Connecting and addition); Ekhtelaf, Qata’ and Taqseem (Differing, separation, division); Tajreed (Abstract); Talmeeh (Suggesting); Tawreya (hinting); Eshrak (Combination); Muzawaja (coupling); Ilhaa or Ilham (Aspiration ); Tawjeeh (Directing); Baraat Al Talab (Elegant request); Badeheeyat (Axiom/ common sense ).

*Islamic Rhetoric*

Some of the speeches and sayings of Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb, the Fourth Caliph/Successor of Prophet Mohammad, his cousin his son, are good examples of Arab rhetorical techniques. Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb's rhetorical sayings are collected in a book called *Nahj Al-Balaqa, The Method of Rhetoric*. This book has been cited in countless resources by Arab scholars for thousands of years since the first Islamic State. Arab children are taught some of the Arab rhetorical sayings, idioms and speeches. I remember one of Imam Ali's sayings that I learned as a child at school about companionship: *Al-Rafeeq Qabla Al-Tareeq* (The companion is more important than the road). The economy of the words is combined with the
effect of its sounds to make it easy to remember. The saying is also a proven wisdom, especially for the Arab Bedouin, because it can be deadly for the person to travel without a companion. This demonstrates the importance of the sound for the Arabic rhetorician as well as for the Arabic audience.

*The Holy Qur'an*

The Qur’an is considered the epitome of the Arabic traditional rhetoric. While Arab classic poetry aimed to communicate a way of living, defending a perspective or a situation, the holy Qur’an has introduced a whole body of laws that organizes relationships, property, and moral values. The rhetorical power of the Qur’an has made it an acceptable way of life and a successful legal system for diverse populations and ethnicities. Muslims in many places in the world, despite their ethnicities, colors or countries, have been oriented to accept the values of a patriarchal system as God’s given moral system through the teachings of the Qur’an.

The success of the Qur'an even in illiterate cultures was due to its powerful rhetorical style and its strong argumentative statements that focus on the weaknesses of human beings in the face of the timeless and eternal power of God. The Qur’an describes the pre-Islamic era where some men buried their baby daughters alive out of fear that their daughters would be needy and their honor would be contaminated as a result. Men are preferred over women, because of their physical strength and their ability to defend their communities, while women were thought of as burdens; survival in the desert required physical and emotional strength in addition to light movements and fighting skills to escape danger, slavery, abuse and competition over scarce resources. The Qur'an designates a chapter called "Al-Nisa" which means Women, while there is no chapter called "Al-Rijal" or Men.
The first Qur'anic verse is "Egra" which means Read. Prophet Mohammad's Hadith (sayings) invites Muslims to seek education from birth to death. One of his Hadith states, "Seek knowledge even in China," to encourage people to travel to the furthest places on earth to pursue knowledge in a time that reading and writing were not accessible by the majority of human beings. The memory of the people had to be preserved, and there was an absence of books and libraries. Most Muslims continued to memorize the Qur'an and Hadith by heart to follow the Islamic method correctly. The book of the Qur'an has met the admiration and the respect of highly rhetorical people of Arabia because of its rhetorical power. The rhetorical strategy of the Qur'an and the Amthal includes first, the economy of the word and the depth of the meaning, and second, its dependence on the sound in addition to the language.

*Arab Rhetorical Forms*

Arabic Rhetoric, especially the rhetoric of Al-Jaheleiya (Pre-Islamic stage) is considered by many Arab scholars as the most sophisticated and developed form of Arab rhetoric. Some of the traditional rhetorical forms found in Arab literature and discourse are: Praise (Madeh) is used to show loyalty; Satire or Ridicule (Zhamm, Heja, or Sukhreya, is used to minimize the worth of the enemy or the adversary; Description, (Wasf) is needed to communicate images and experiences to the audience, Enthusiasm (Hamasa) lifts the spirit of the audience or encourages them to act, (as to participate in a war); Lamentation, elegy, bemoaning, or mourning (Retha, Na'y or Beka Ala Al-Atlal), is used to express a lost of loved ones, and to remember the good qualities of the dead person. As I have discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, Lamentation, elegy, etc. is also used to start a long poem, as to set the mood of the poet. Sometimes, one poem encompasses several rhetorical forms, starting with description of the environment, or the wild life, then moving to mourn the loss of childhood places, then to praise, indirectly, the self and
show the good qualities that the poet has such as generosity, bravery, honesty, etc., then move to a completely different subject such as enthusiasm during a battle, or to an emotional experience with a loved one, using nature as metaphor to express that love.

Subhi (1993) explains that analysis, interpretation and evaluation require historical perspective that directs theory and practice to display the ways and methods of expressions, “because traditions are a silent consent between the writer and his audience that permits the writer to work within the territories of the mediated and inherited linguistic expressions” (Subhi, 1993, p. 1).

Subhi (1993) attracts our attention to the harmony of the word division, to notice that the mentioned division progresses with the split musical rhythm. He explains how the poet succeeds in creating a musical context that is progressive and highly fluid. This division process, according to Subhi does not assist in splitting the musical context only, but it is also artistically employed to separate the assimilation as we notice in these lines and other lines. Subhi explains how the rhetorical poet assimilates the generosity of his hospitality with the fertile generous land: When the guest and the alien neighbor come to his land, they find in it fruits and fruitfulness as they would find at Tabala. This portrayal of generosity that secures to the guest in the barren land all that he could find in a fertile land demonstrates the rhetorical power of the classic poetry to reveal aspects about the environment that we would never have access to, or knowledge about today without referring to the old poetry as an archive that provides us with information about an environment that might not exist anymore.

To have some understanding of my claim that gender relations in the Arab World are rhetorical, the reader needs to have some appreciation of Arabic poetry and Arab literature, and
how this oral and written heritage communicates a complex aspect of a culture that has preserved itself over thousands of years through the power of the word.

*The Rhetoric of Abbasees’ Modernism*

The history of the Abbasees is significant to the understanding of how the meaning of gender relations in the Arab World differs from time of time. The history of the Islamic Abbasi State reflects the modernity of Arabs during the golden Islamic era. The modernity of the Abbasees’ poetry, according to Subhi (1993), is the modernity of the city: The civil society and its religious, political and professional institutions.

The Abbassi urban society, Subhi (1993) reports, is a trade society: Transporting goods, ideas and organizational forms within the framework of freedom of exchange. This freedom has two centers: The Masjed (mosque) and the Hana (winery). In the mosque was the birth of the Arabic intellectuality: The theological conceptions of Mo’atazila and the (Imams) religious leaders of Sunna and Shey’ah, in addition to researching theology in other religions, provide feedback to it. The merchant did not use the oppression, but negotiation as an arm. Therefore, the First Abbassi era until the Mutawakkel’s time was not a religious or political suppression. The trade business was very active from China and India to Iraq and Syria as well as to Europe and Africa. When the states started to be independent, the new territories became obstacles to trade business. This slowed down the exchange of ideas, and suppression took place and increased with the increase of the appearance of more independent states, which blocked trade and the exchange of ideas simultaneously.

While the *Qur’an* states different roles and different treatment in the judicial system for males and females, in the Al-Rahman Chapter of the *Qur’an* it talks about Qulman and Jawari. Qulman is a plural of Qulam, which means a young male, while Jawari is a plural of Jareya,
which is a maid. Arab males are allowed to have sexuality with their maids or with the females they owned. Those women slaves are referred in the Nisa' Chapter as "Ma Malukat Aymanakum" or as stated rhetorically, what your right hand owned. (Slavery was known by most human cultures, and Arabs were among those slave owner-cultures. However, Islam transformed slavery through marriage as well as through free will. When a Muslim breaks an oath or breaks his/her fasting in the holy month of Ramadan, he or she has to liberate a soul. (Tahreer Raqaba) or liberating a nick of a person from slavery was demanded by God for every violation of the Islamic doctrine.) Women usually are allowed to mix with male slaves who were castrated from their childhood. This shows that those Ghulams are a group of people who are males, but are not treated as sexual beings. However, the poems of Abu-Nawwas, an important poet at the Abassi Caliph, Haroon Al-Rasheed's time had recorded his love to wine and to women in many of his poems. In one of his poem, he described his lover as "la Tahidh Wa La Tabeidh," which means that she/he doesn't menstruate or procreate, (Subhi, 1993). This example gives a faint idea about homosexuality among men, and how it was justified by the castration of the male.

Modern Arab Rhetoric

Al-Hashemi (1990), a contemporary Bahraini critic presents in his book, *Al-Sukoon Al-Mutaharek*, a review for the Arab rhetorical style. For example, he talks about Al-Qurtaji’s examination of Arab poetry’s rhetorical power. Al-Qurtaji, according to Al-Hashemi (1990), considers rhetoric as an essential construction or as a complete science where diverse types of symmetry and placement could be classified within its range, including the rhythm, which was seen first as a style, then as a balance between two weights, and as the time of the word/utterance. This musical rhythm of the word was connected to the drum beat or the
weight of the hand beat (Al-Hashemi, 1990, p. 47). “The rhetoric is the first base of the text, the generator of all its constructs and form” (p. 53). Al-Hashemi finds that Al-Qurtagini’s methodology is considered an early fundamental step to evaluate the phenomena of poetry and to analyze it scientifically, despite the influence of Aristotle’s logic and rhetoric.

Al Hashemi (1990) addresses the symmetry “Al-Tanasub” aspect of rhetoric in an Arabic poetry text. He mentions that the symmetry is divided into purposes, genres and types of genres. The meaning dimension is constituted of layers: the purpose, then the type, then another type as in a pyramid. Each layer in the pyramid is constituted from a layer that has two symmetries. These symmetries could be positive or negative such as expressing comfort, interest, astonishment, consideration, satisfaction, anger, disagreement, apprehension, fear and hope. This symmetry has a synthetic nature. It is dualistic and moves in two directions, vertical and symmetrical. Its function is free mobility vertically and horizontally. “The symmetry law is an advanced, lively, and subtle in its essential qualities” (Al-Hashemi, 1990, p. 51). This complex construction of the text moves in a circle between two dimensions, turning the text from a web to a fan (pp. 51-52).

*Modern Rhetorical Theory from An Arabic Perspective*

Like Mahfouz, I am a product of both Arab-Islamic and Western culture and education. I find that the combination of the linear and the non-linear way of academic writing could initiate a different or possibly a new academic method of writing within a multicultural communication context, in which my thoughts, while being conditioned by the Western model, still have the ability to contribute to both the Arabic and Western model of knowledge production and to the writing process across different cultures. This method of blending genres of writing should defend my scholarship in both cultures and avoid misunderstanding.
Carter and Spitzack (1989) address the issue of excluding women’s communication from mainstream communication studies under the complex process of patriarchal silencing. The authors talk about the way the feminist perspective challenges the existing research framework by considering women’s perspectives, meanings, and experiences as appropriate and important data for analyses. While gender is taken as a basic category of analysis, the feminist perspective shares with other new paradigms a number of principles that govern its methodology. Carter and Spitzack (1989) talk about a dilemma in the feminist perspective that leads some feminist scholars to alter the presentation of feminist notions in order to secure the publication of their work. This should ring a bill to those who defend knowledge outside gender, class or ethnicity’s biases.

Foss and Foss (1985) also point out several important points about methodological assumptions that should illuminate my methodological perspective in writing this dissertation: Wholeness: There are no parts, only patterns in an inseparable web of relationships. Process: Researchers should not study a phenomenon alone, for example if we study the women’s role in organizations, one need also to examine the process, which constructs those roles. Interconnectedness of knowledge: Knowledge is a process of interconnection that is not necessarily uncovered by a linear systematic progression. For example, the researcher could ask a group to define their communication apprehensive. Approximation: The Cartesian legacy about the certainty of scientific knowledge is replaced in Feminist thinking by understanding that knowledge is a process of construction. All knowledge is limited, approximate, and relative. Knowing something is only one perspective, but not whole. Cooperation: A feminist relies on cooperation rather than competition; cooperation among researchers and between the researcher and the participants. The authors focus on
subjectivity and objectivity as modes of knowing, analyses, interpretation and understanding. They believe that subjectivity and objectivity are not opposed to each other, neither they are independent of each other and should not be. (Foss and Foss, 1985, p. 250)

Foss and Foss agree with Spitzak and Carter that researchers must re-examine the relationship between the knower and the known, the researcher and the subject. Foss and Foss argue that female experience is ignored because the dominant group (men) lack interest in women's issues. I would argue that the problem is not a gender issue; rather it is a power issue. Phillip Corrigan (1989) contends that there is no gender-free human essence to be recognized and worked for as individual efforts of mind-changing will, and that a deconstruction is needed to be taken further to examine other authority claims and selecting-dividing practices which are "more important than those which abstracted and asundered surrealism into the tamed arenas of ethnology and art, and classed them…raising questions about any general claims concerning embodiment and empowerment. Cultural forms are not constitutive positions, but regulated plays, works" (p. 29)

James Clifford (1988) in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* states that:

All of us are caught in modernity's inescapable momentum. Something similar occurs whenever marginal peoples come into a historical or ethnographic space that has been defied by the Western imagination. Swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist West and by various technologically advanced socialisms, these suddenly "back-ward" peoples no longer invent local futures. What is different about them remains tied to traditional pasts, inherited structures that either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it, (p. 5).
According to the black and international feminist perspective, (hooks 2004, Spivak 2000, Minh ha 1989), not only Western traditional scientific method excluded the perspective of women of colors from their account, but Western White feminists have continued to generalize their views as representation of all world women.

As Said (1975) contemplates on the importance of beginning and contends that any scholar or researcher has to start from a certain point, his/her choice is guided by multiple of factors. Therefore, as Mahfouz could be read in the light of Burke, Dickens, Joyce and other Western and international critics and rhetoricians, he could also be equally read within the rhetoric of the Qur'an, One Thousand and One Nights, as well as the classic Arabic poems.

Mahfouz’s message about gender relations in the Arab World is very powerful and painfully clear in Awlad Haratina. He simply tells his audience that the problem of gender relations is linked to the beginning of the story or the myth of the Arab’s history, the history that gave Arabs their identity as Arabs. Said’s (1978) concept of the beginning and its importance to establish a certain theory or a certain perspective could help us to realize Mahfouz’s awareness of the problematic beginning of the Arab people. The story of Arab people is the same story of gender relations. Therefore, Awlad Haratina is needed to reintroduce the story to reflect on the fallacy of its logic. Mahfouz’s problem was his style, which uses irony and sarcasm to reflect his bitterness and disappointment in witnessing the defeat of his own culture, and the failure of Lamenting as a method that Arab intellectual applies as a coping mechanism. Ironically, Mahfouz’s himself failed in his message because of the same elements that led to the failure of other Arab writers and individuals to reach their audience. Criticizing a method through the application of the same method led to the failure of Mahfouz to establish identification with the
rhetorical vision of his audience. Furthermore, Mahfouz has produced the extreme image of Lamenting, which not only shocked his audience, but completely turned them against him.

The dedication of Mahfouz to his message led him to write *Al-Harafish*; this time he bluntly addressed the same problem, but his characters also “them”, the poor and the outcasts, not us. His audience did not reject it this time because it does not concern them directly, but it teaches them something useful about human beings in general. In my view, *Awlad Haratina* is needed, and only a text such as *Awlad Haratina* would be able to explain us as Arabs to ourselves and to explain the problem of gender relations. Arab intellectuals need to re-read *Awlad Haratina* in a new light, and face the bitterness of the reality, which Mahfouz sincerely believes is much more bitter in its effects on the Arab psyche than his portrayal in *Awlad Haratina*.

Nevertheless, while Mahfouz has produced his body of work from a patriarchal perspective, his method of using the novel as an instrument to critique the society still has significant meaning in contributing to the communication process that reproduces the value system in Egypt as well as in the Arab world. Mahfouz’s significance to my method is his spiral/circular way of story telling, which renews and validates the Arabic way of thinking as an alternative method for knowledge production. As an Arab woman, I find that my contribution to the international feminist research will be to validate other ways of knowing as a mode of knowledge production that could be considered for future research. While Western scholars have accepted the postmodern way of painting or writing as an acceptable way of expression, and Western feminist approaches have defended women’s personal experiences as valid ways of knowing, communication research has continued to adhere to the linear Western method of knowledge production as the only scientific approach to knowledge, forcing other non-linear
scholars to abandon their way of knowing and blindly following the linear method on the account of their integrity as non-linear scholars.

After spending six years of acquiring knowledge in cultural and intercultural communication studies, I do not wish to produce a knowledge that is mainly focused on the body of knowledge that already exists, and ignore the fact that I am a multi-cultural scholar and I aim to direct my research to a multi-cultural audience. It is not in the advantage of knowledge production to ignore my multicultural education to represent Western perspective. In spite of the effectiveness in being trained and disciplined in presenting my ideas to appeal to a Western audience, my intention is to produce knowledge that helps to bring two worlds that have two different paradigms of thinking together. After surviving the incident of the Eleventh of September, 2001, the 1980s Gulf War, the war on Iraq from 1990 – 2005) and the war of Afghanistan, I believe that what I need to say in this research is more important than adapting a linear methodology, especially when acknowledging that the methodology is part and package of the message. My message is not to claim that the only method of communicating is the Western method, and that “Knowledge” itself is not conclusively a Western Art, or a Western invention. If knowledge production is connected to a certain time and space, then it is problematic for me to contextualize my method of knowing or researching within the body of work of scholars that are only linked to a specific time and space.

Arab Discourse About Gender Relations

The Myth of Gender: What is Gender?

The concept of "gender" has not been well defined and is not well understood. Rizan Ibrahim (2003) examines studies that evaluated Arab Women’s writings. She mentions that Iman Al-Qadi, a Syrian writer, who believes that women writers were not able to reflect the
reality of the women within changing circumstances. There are two sides of a woman’s stance: The rebellious self and disappointment and the submission and the surrender to love.

Rizan Ibrahim (2003) has some reservations on the views of Al-Qadi. She believes that the Arabic Woman writer failed in many cases to realize the connection between the freedom of the woman and the freedom of the society that lives within un-humanistic economic, social and political circumstances. She states that the traditional woman is the most common picture in the Arabic novel. That woman feels that it is her duty to obey her husband, and hardly she complains when he cheated on her or married another woman, but then she forgave. “Despite her oppression, she stones other women with the same stone that she herself was stoned with” (p. 177). The author mentions that while men use masculine authority for social oppression, the woman also uses the social oppression against her own gender, but it is directed toward the social class that they came from.

Al-Saleh, N. (2001) addresses the Arabic collective mind and the remittance of the mythological thinking, and maintains that “This mythical aspects still has authority in our subconscious as a defensive mechanism that protect the consciousness from the unknown in one hand and to enable it to confront the spiritual emptiness that was produced by the modern civilization on from the adaptation to a reality that is pregnant of contradiction on the other hand” (p. 96).

Al-Nabelsi studies the concept of freedom in the Arabic modern novels In the Atlantic Winds for Al-Taher Water, he talks about the location of the woman or the new young woman. He finds that this novel demonstrates the life of the Algerian woman after the independence (1962- 1975). The novel reflects the perception of the woman by the society, which believes that the woman has to be a housewife after finishing school or college. The man wants her to be his;
nobody thinks of the needs of the society and the social construction that benefits from her education and her knowledge.

The female in the Arabic society, any female, is a sexual target in any place and in any stage of her life. This targeting is a natural matter, but to stress it and to assure it without the other aspects within the Arabic female is strange. .. to see the woman as a vagina, lips, legs, reproduction only is one of the social freedom problematics that the woman lives in general within the Arabic society. (Al-Nebesi, p. 33)

The novelist blames the Arabic man for not enjoying the social freedom that equates him with the woman in duties and in rights. “No free woman with enslaved man” (Al-Nebesi, p. 37). In the absence of the social freedom and its joy, the man becomes a cock that controls a society of hens. He became the practical owner of the patriarchal authority, who has to reject the priority of the woman to lead over him in any field. Whenever he accepts her authority, it would be artificial and not sincere. It is an abuse and not a foundation of the future to believe in the important humanistic role of the woman in building societies. The Arab who inherited this patriarchy fourteen centuries ago and lived it completely, would find it difficult to leave it behind, even after one hundred years of struggle against colonization. “The social freedom is a different battle and different struggle. This social freedom requires a decent standard of education, historical consciousness, and the ability to read the future, as well as it requires a decent civilized dimension, an open mind that is free of racism and taking sides.” (Al-Nebesi, p. 38).

Accad (1990) finds that most of the Arabic novels she examined by both female and male novelists are concerned with multiculturalism and the question of roots, exile, and pluralism that is mixed with violence and war and the reflections of those realms in interpersonal relationships.
For instance, terms such as exile usually mean freedom, and the search for roots can be an expression of nostalgia for one’s childhood or a need for security and love. Accad (1990) affirms that while multiplicity is seen as something positive by women, male authors depict multiplicity as confrontation. She asserts that Arab male novelists search for purity, and see multiplicity as dishonor. Accad finds that multiculturality increases male’s schizophrenia and makes them uneasy and depressed. “Roots are a search for identity, and exile is a terrible fate” (p. 169).

There is also examination of the situation of the man. Razan Ibrahim (2003) argues that the circumstance of woman as a prisoner is a fundamental problem, which leads to the often desperate search for a husband, connecting back to the financial circumstances of the woman, all within a social context dominated and controlled by men. This leads the woman, despite her education, to follow the traditional norms which teach that man has to be her ultimate social support as it is in the novel of Al-Yateem (the Orphan) for Al-Arwi, a novelist from Morocco. Afif Farraj believes that the struggle of women stops as soon as a comfortable alternative to conflict is found. “The man becomes the passport to shore that is populated and the social and traditional acceptance” (p. 172).

While the first model of the woman, according to Al-Arwi, communicates the need of a woman for a man to protect her within the social norms and traditions, the model of the woman writer shows the belief in her right to live (or not) with a man without consideration to the norms or the traditions of her culture. Her voice reflects the opposition to the requirement of the society and its forceful rules against the freedom of the human being.

Nawal el-Saadawi (1999), an Egyptian female medical doctor and a feminist writer, sees that men and women are two classes, and the struggle between them has no end. Fardous, her hero in the Woman at Point Zero reflects the extreme level of that model, where only hatred and
fear exist between a man and a woman. Rizan Ibrahim (2003) believes that although the patriarchal system reflects the distorted image of the other, and the duality of the relationship between the two, the correction does not mean to flip this equation. The equation, then, will continue to be wrong if we exchange one side for the other. The solution requires the deconstruction of the traditional system to reestablish it with a new foundation that considers a woman as the similar other and not as the counter other. The society will not rise without solving the issues of woman in a general framework that embraces both men and woman.

Nawal el-Saadawi (1999) was dismissed from her job as Egypt’s Director of Public Health in 1972 due to her writing and her political activities. She was imprisoned and her books were banned in 1981 under President Anwar Sadat, and in 1992 her name appeared on a death list issued by an Islamic fundamentalist group in Egypt, which caused her departure from Egypt for five years. El-Saadawi’s books are translated into English and several other languages. Her books, *The Hidden Face of Eve* and *A Woman at Point Zero* summarize the feminist perspective of the author. The *Hidden Face of Eve* is a personal documentary that addresses the sexual aggression against female children in an Arab Islamic society. El-Saadawi herself witnessed the experience of circumcision as a young girl from a small village. In *Woman at Point Zero*, the author chooses the novel as a framework to communicate her rhetoric based on her personal experience as a medical doctor in the village. She addresses how aggression against women led her hero to prostitution and later to become a murderer after she lost hope in the society that prevented her from living a decent life as a normal human being. El-Saadawi’s rhetoric is presented from a Marxist Socialist perspective, for her she is convinced that religion is abused by patriarchal religious theologians who discriminate against women. El-Saadawi believes that men and women are subjected by capitalism, and the Western Feminist perspective differs from the
Third World’s women’s perspective. El-Saadawi’s novels *God Dies by the Nile* (1974) and *Circular Songs* (1983) are directly connected to El-Saadawi’s struggle to free both men and women from the oppression of a political system that handicaps any attempt to seek progress and salvation for Arabs and Muslims. Her novel, *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor*, published in 1987, originally was serialized and published in 1957 in an Egyptian weekly Magazine, Ruz-el-Yousuf. These memoirs reflect the author’s experience as a female doctor at work, while mother and wife at home. Al-Saadawi’s serialized memoirs were censored by the government and resented by publishers for years for their controversialist views. El-Saadawi’s rhetoric was criticized by the Arab traditional audience as confrontational. El-Saadawi’s rhetoric is communicating a message of hope that tells women everywhere to never despair and never stop fighting for a definite brighter future. Ayda Nasser one of the El-Saadawi’s advocates who lived most of her life outside the Arab World, states that El-Saadawi provided her with an insight about Egyptian women, while Mahfouz provided her with an insight about social class. Nasser (2000) states that without those Egyptian writers, she would not be able to reclaim her Egyptian identity. Ayda Nasser (2000) works as counselor for the Arabic World Book internet library. She says (internet site): “As a westernized Egyptian woman, many doors are closed to me, it's books that let me act like a voyeur into Egyptians around me with different backgrounds and circumstances. Your social class confines you and literature is what breaks down those walls” (p. 1).

Sahar Khalifa (1974, 1975, 1979, 1980, 1986, 1990) is another important Arab Palestinian novelist. Her feminist novels are translated in many languages. She had an arranged marriage in 1959 after her graduation from high school, which ended after thirteen years with two daughters. She continued her education in Jordan and became active politically after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. She founded the Women’s Affairs Center in Nablus, and started a branch

Muneera Al-Fadel (1984) is a Bahraini novelist who published her first collection of short stories *The Remora* in 1984. Al-Fadel (1984) records the social exploitation and suppression of women’s sexuality within a double-standard system. She reveals the irony of this double standard even in a romantic relationship where the educated and politically informed Arab man still deals with the issue of virginity and women’s sexuality as his code of honor, which in a way removes the agency from women and turns them into subjects for men.

Layla A. Aziz and Alya Shu’aib are writers and two female feminist writers from Kuwait who both were condemned by religious conservative groups in Kuwait for their feminist writings. Both A. Aziz and Shu’aib are novelists who adapt the novel as a way to communicate their views about the struggle of women in an Arab Muslim environment, aiming to bring justice and enlightenment for women’s cause through story telling. Trinh Minh-ha (1989) in her book, *Woman, Native, Other* tries to give account to women’s voices and attracts our attention to the fact that story telling or story writing in itself becomes history-writing, “and history quickly sets itself apart, consigning story to the realm of tale, legend, myth, fiction, literature” (p. 120). She asserts her question about what is considered science and truth, and who said that and to what interest, “Since fictional and factual have come to a point where they mutually exclude each
other,” (p. 120). Minh-ha (1989) reminds us of the definition of story as a free narration, although it is not necessarily factual, but it is truthful in character for it gives us human nature in its bold outlines. Minh-ha validates women’s communication through story telling, gossip, fortune-telling, healing and prophecy, calling our attention to women’s memories as “the world earliest archives or libraries” (p.121). She relates her argument to Aristotle who considered Poetry as “truer than history,” and that story telling “as literature (narrative poetry) must then be truer than history,” and that “if we rely on the history to tell us what happened at a specific time and place, we can rely on the story to tell us not only what might have happened, but also what is happening at an unspecified time and place” (p. 120). Minh-ha (1989) examines how the meaning of Truth has been politically negotiated and has undermined women’s knowledge and women’s art. For example, she refers to the rich experiences of the African griot ad griotte who are well known for “being poet, storyteller, historian, musician, and magician -- all at once” (p. 121) without the magicality of the claims that overlook those experiences through transformation, manipulations or redistributions of events that ignore the fact that each society has its own politics of truth, and the truth itself is “in-between” and it embraces with it all other abstentions other than itself. The truth is “outside specific time, outside specialized space.” (p. 121).

Minh-ha (1989) argues that storytelling is “the simplest vehicle of truth and the story at ‘the natural form for revealing’ through “its power both to give a vividly felt insight into the life of other people and to revive or keep alive the forgotten, dead-ended, turned into-stone parts of ourselves” (p.123). Story telling, for some non-Western societies where the magic of story telling is woven by women, “is the living memory of her time, her people. She composes on life but does not lie, for composing is not imagining, fancying, or inventing…(but) it is total knowledge”
(p. 123). Minh-ha criticizes the Western science method in recording and arranging data concerning storytelling and the rules and taboos that are connected with it without paying attention to the connection of this tool which has provided primitive people with opportunities to train their speech, formulate opinions, and express themselves, to the privileges that we enjoy today in our civilized world. Minh-ha critically points to the high value of the “proof” that the Western civilization credits itself with in opposition of the “false” stories that the “primitive’ mind produced, without noticing that “true and false keep on changing with times,” and it depends on the stories and what they represent for their own people, (p.125).

The Arab Self versus the Jewish Other

Awlad Haratina could be an attempt of the author to read the Middle Eastern theological world view within a universalistic approach. I believe this will help the reader to understand the significance of Mahfouz’s work as a key to understand Arab rhetorical discourse about the current crisis in the Middle East, which the United States finds itself deeply entangled with. The incident of September Eleventh 2001 signifies the peak of the Middle Eastern crisis, and it brought the crisis home to the typical American citizen who never thought that this crisis would have direct effect on his or her own life. The incident of September 11th, 2001 shocked the whole world to the global consequences of the Middle East, and caused the world to be divided in to two wings in supporting the United States’ action to invade Afghanistan and later Iraq. No one imagined that the immune national security of the largest contemporary “empire” (Hameed, 1999), could be penetrated by a group that belonged to a system that is considered retarded, weak and dysfunctional such as the Islamic system (Said’s covering Islam, 1978). Hijacking three airplanes simultaneously and attacking twice the World Trade Center in New York turning it to zero ground, sacrificing more than three thousand innocent people, and crushing the third plane
in Pennsylvania, killing all its passengers in the morning of 9/11/2001, a day that is coined with a number that has significance in the American context (911, the emergency telephone number), was a highly sophisticated and severely aggressive plan that changed the meaning of war forever. For the first time, the American public found themselves face to face with this unexplainable aggression, which led them to raise a question that never been thought of on such a wide basis: Why does the world hate us? President George W. Bush’s comment in his speech that immediately followed that horrible incident was that “they” did that because they “hate us” because “they are jealous” of “our freedom” and “our democracy.”

Why anyone would hate freedom and democracy is a question that triggered the reality that one holds about the world around us. This incident and the questions that followed show the lack of information in a world that is very advanced in communication technology. In a world that one finds him/herself bombarded with information and news, suddenly one morning everyone wakes up with a big question mark, in part aimed at the American media and its failure to predict that “hatred” or that “aggression.” Why for God’s sake, would an Islamic group commit such a crime against a free democratic country? Who or what is Alqaeda? Alqaeda, a name that is pronounced with sounds that do not exist in the English or American vocabulary are now famous in daily news broadcasts. Foreign names such Osama Bin-Laden became familiar to the American public. The media succeeded in supporting President George Bush in his war against Afghanistan and Iraq, despite the unprecedented resistance on the streets in most of the countries around the world. The United Nations’ Security Council found itself incapable of preventing this war. For the first time in history, people from all over the globe united on one voice against the war in Iraq, and demonstrations were organized to express the resistance to the war either in the USA, Europe or other places in the world. However, the war became a fact, and
the USA went to Afghanistan and later to Iraq, and the USA’s military continues to occupy Iraq until today despite the thousands of the innocent people that were killed from those countries, as well as among the young Americans who found themselves in a second Vietnam war: a war that they do not comprehend fully; a war against terrorism; a war against a masked enemy. Moreover, freedom and human rights continued to be violated outside the United States and back home because the enemy is not fully defined. Any Arab or any Muslim has become a target for government harassment, surveillance, and deportation, whether the person has an American citizenship or not. Moreover, the Middle Eastern crisis continues to persist, and the American media continues to mostly ignore the relationship between the crisis in the Middle East and the attack on the World Trade Center at home.

_Awlad Haratina_ (1959) is a door to understand the Middle Eastern conflict from an Arabic perspective. Mahfouz (1959) published his novel eleven years after the beginning of the Middle Eastern crisis. Again, Mahfouz (1959) agrees with Said (1978) on the importance of paying attention to the “beginning” in order to understand the situation at hand. The Middle Eastern conflict was caused by establishing Israel as a legal Jewish homeland on an Arabian territory. _Awlad Haratina_ takes the reader back to the history of the problem. It takes them to an imaginary, mythical or theological time, in which there are no Arabs or Jews. This time could be established only when tracing the Jews and Arabs to their great ancestor Abraham, and the divisions that occurred between his two sons Isaac and Shmouel. To establish this beginning, Mahfouz employs intertextuality and benefits from the story of Adam and Eve and Satan, and their descent from heaven for violating God’s trust tempted by Satan. Mahfouz (1959) merged the two biblical texts about Adam and Eve and about Abraham and his sons, benefiting from the version of the Qur'an and the Arab religious literature in bridging the two texts or two stories in
one. Gebellawi is the perfect patriarch that could be traced in most of Mahfouz’s work as I will explain later. Gebellawi in *Awlad Haratina* is a version of Abraham, the great ancestor of Arab, Jews and Christians.

Mahfouz’s choice of Abraham is a highly intelligent and informed choice to explain the identity of both Arab and Jews, and consequently understand today’s Middle Eastern crisis and the political significance of the land for both. *Awlad Haratina* provides the reader with an opportunity to understand the Arab “Self,” and the Jewish “Other,” from a voice that claims neutrality. Whether this voice is neutral or not, *Awlad Haratina* is a successful attempt to tell the story from a fresh angle and illustrate new dimensions that are hard to be reflected by the nature of today’s mass media, which mostly interested in “here” and “now,” and do not have the patience or the ability to tell the whole story. Any news story would be covered in a speedy manner to a level that the news could hardly be classified as a medium that could generate solid knowledge. The advertisement and the commercial aspects of the mass media made news closer to entertainment than to information in the manner that they are handled, especially in the radio and television.

*Power, Personality and Sexuality*

Only a little more than a century ago, women were not allowed to enter most college classrooms. In the latter half of the twentieth century, there was still a debate whether women in a coed college would defeminize women and demasculinate men as mentioned by the president of the University of Michigan as cited by Myra Sadker and David Sadker (1995).

The authors mention that even today many social and educational institutions erect barriers to equity for women. Postsecondary education serves to preserve stereotypic differences between men and women in behavior, personality, aspiration and achievement. For example,
men outnumber women at all professional ranks and in administrative positions, especially at higher ranks job, where we find that there are few role models. Bias could be found in the curriculum, staffing patterns, and society at large. Research discloses that teaching acts in itself as the source of significant sex bias. It shows that elementary and secondary teachers give far more active teaching attention to boys than girls. They talk to boys more, ask them more lower and higher order questions, listen to them more, counsel them more, give them more extended directions, and criticize and reward them more frequently. Unlike women, men receive detailed instructions on how to compete on their own. When female students do participate, their comments are more likely to be interrupted and less likely to be accepted or rewarded. Female students are more likely to be invisible members in teacher-student interaction. Teachers reported that they are unaware of these biased patterns in student teacher interaction, (Myra Sadker & David Sadker 1995).

Miriam Cooke (1988) wrote about gender, myth, war and sexuality, women’s writing versus voice, the role that prostitutes serve in the modern Arabic literature, waiting as theme in some Arab female writers, the floating identity of some liberated women, the way that the war changed the identity of both males and females. Cooke states that, “In the Arab world, it was the male authors who first gave women a role but not a voice” (p. 25). Women were not yet sufficiently part of society to be able to use their own voice. Women could be characters in men’s fiction, but they could not create such characters. According to Cooke:

For most, writing was clearly a male occupation; for the few who defied such convention, it was obvious that the domestic was the only range of experience they could express. They were house angels who knew no other discourse than that of prudery and restraint with an occasional outburst at injustices so blatant as to overcome even a well honed
sense of decorum. Woolf would have approved of their proclivity to Jane Austen’s cool portrayals rather than to the fiery indictments of society favored by Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot. (Cooke, p. 25)

By 1930s there were a few isolated women, particularly in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, who had begun to write, such as Suhair Qalamawi’s *Grandma’s Stories* and Ahadith Jaddati, (1935). Cooke commented that women writers’ felt obligation or need to submit their writings to the traditions of the enterprise which was dominated by males. She mentions such writers as the Egyptian woman critic Nimat Fuat, the Lebanese poet Ansaf al-Awar Midad, Nadia Tueni, Egyptian writers such as Fatma Moussa Mahmoud, Latifa al-Zayat and Inayat al-Zayat. Their work was disqualified by male writers as creative art. Cooke observed that both genders were limited “by their experience – men in the public sphere and women, until recently, in the private” (p. 80). Arab women began to write about the lives of women who had had previously functioned in the literary realm as more or less “flat symbols” and readers finally put in touch with Arab women’s lives behind the veil of stereotype.

In 1964, Laila Baalbaki wrote her notorious *Spaceship of Tenderness to the Moon* which challenges the assumption that the Arab woman is a passive partner, supposedly devoid of sexual desire. The woman lived with her husband before marriage and wanted to have children then. After marriage, she changed her mind about her role as wife and mother and compelled her husband to think about their feelings for each other and to wonder about his own role.

Baalabaki doesn’t concern herself with the world outside the room, which most male fiction preserves. Only in the 1960s did women in all parts of the Arab world begin to write. Khannata Bannunah in Morocco published four collections of short stories and a novel between 1965 and 1981. In Egypt, Latifa al-Zayat’s *Open Door*, 1960, explores the socialization of
children in a culture that celebrates the birth of a son and mourns the birth of a daughter. In 1962 in Lebanon, Emily Nasrallah was also questioning the way her culture was thinking about itself, and particularly about its women.

In Tunisia in the late 1950s and early 60s, a number of women writers were denouncing the confining, traditional values of their patriarchal society. The stories of these women appeared in newspapers, journals and on the radio, eschewing the restraint of women in other Arab countries. Najia Thameour criticized practices such as forced marriages between younger daughters and old men and the abuses inherent in widows’ remarriages. Jalila Mehri addressed the issue of suicide as reality for those who do not yet have the strength to fight tradition. Zubayda Bashir wrote “Resignation is the beginning of madness in 1968” (p. 12). Restructuring the society to include women on an egalitarian basis with men is exemplified in Leila Mami’s work *A Minaret Ablaze* (*Saumaa tahtariq*, 1968). “The minaret becomes a quasi-phallic symbol of religion and corollary traditions oppressive of women” (Cooke, p. 80). Alifa Rifaat’s short stories are an example of these writings that challenge the assumptions that because women have been silent they do not think. “The violent or dramatic imaginations and thoughts are women’s approach for survival under conditions of extreme oppression” (Cooke, p. 80). Riffaat’s choice of the Islamic framework allows her to express a protest that “is not immediately identifiable and therefore suppressible; the exploitation of women both sexually and emotionally” (Cooke, p. 80). Riffa’s *My Secret World* describes a woman’s fantasy with a female snake. The snake offers male sexual fulfillment with the emotional fulfillment of female companionship. Cooke wonders if this is a lesbian fantasy. She comments that, “As long as men continue to be selfish and domineering, thereby reducing their women to symbols and functions, women have but one choice: they must gain satisfaction and find true pleasure from each other” (p. 83). Cooke
criticizes the uni-dimensional portrayal of women by men. For example, “What was Amina, in
Najib Mahfouz’s Bain al-Qasrain, thinking when she left the house for the first time since
marriage not in the company of her husband? As also her pain and fear when the stolen moments
of liberty so soon exacted their toll?’ (p. 84). Ihsan Abd al-Qaddus’ I Am Free does not deal with
the tensions of the new woman’s position in society, but rather exposes her daring as foolishness
in the light of an inevitable succumbing to love at the expense of all else. In contrast, Inayat al-
Zayat’s Love and Silence does examine these tensions, and the reader is made to share the
anguish of the woman in love who does not submit to her love. Cooke concludes that “women
only exist in as much as they reflect men’s lives. To carry, as a vessel, a husband’s dreams and
experiences is to become a person, even if at second remove; therefore, women’s literature gives
the reader a different perspective on society as a whole with more depth that reveals the tensions
and the confusions that male’s perspective does not satisfy” (p. 84).

Razan Mahmoud Ibrahim (2003) discusses the position of women in the social discourse
and in Mahfouz’s work. She finds that Mahfouz tends to present the weak side of most of his
female characters, and he mostly portrays the falling of the woman into sin. He sees that this
falling is caused by economic problems such as poverty and the corruption of the society. In New
Cairo, for example, his portrayal of the woman is parallel to what is happening in that social
reality. For example, Mahjoub Abd aldaiem, one of his characters, has double standards in his
relationship with two women--Ihsan, the poor woman whose poverty led her to her fall, and
Taheyya, the solid aristocratic woman. Taheyya went to the college without a particular goal.
Her education and culture provided her with the skills for interaction and discussion, but she was
snobbish and contemptuous of Mahjoub because of his low social class. This model of the
aristocratic woman, according to this novel, lives in the country but is not part of it. Mahfouz
thinks “that each of those woman wear expensive jewelries that could secure living for all the students at the university, but it is so sad that each woman is surrounded by a man or more, and most of them speaks French fluently…. As French is the official mother language” (p. 171).

Ibrahim, R. (2003) mentions two intellectual positions of women that were mentioned by two characters of Mahfouz, Redwan, the Muslim and Ali Taha, the Socialist. The first presents woman as “the security of life, and an easy way for the security of the life after” while the other see her as “a companion for man in his life, but this companionship has to be absolute in the rights and the duties” (Ibrahim, p. 172).

Femininity, Masculinity and the Concept of the Father

The role of the patriarch is one of the most important themes found in Mahfouz’s *Awlad Harafina*. Colman and Colman (1988) explore the concept of the father in mythology. They studied the role of the father in different cultural settings and found that the behavior of father is under attack, but the concept of father has remained relatively stable. They state that “Men who become a nurturant in the family often feel that they are “mothering” rather than “fathering,” and that it is difficult for each of them “to feel like a gentle, caring parent and like a man at the same time” (p. 1). The authors’ conclusion is that “if the child can internalize a man who is both nurturant and competent and a woman who is both nurturant and competent, gender does not become a limiting, stereotypic aspect of identity” (p. 200).

Jacques Lacan (1998) analyzes the effects of gendered identity and how this affects discourse. He focuses on sexuality and its enunciation in language's internal division, where sexual differences are viewed as a divide that challenges the unity of the subject and influences and the symbolic differences in linguistic exchanges that persist and promote gender differentiation. Mitchell and Rose (1982) find that Lacan further develops Freud's concept of the
phallus and the castration complex within the triangle of the relationship between father, mother
and child "which testify all to the problematic nature of the subject's insertion into his or her
sexual identity," and acts as a signifier of the difference between males and females, asserting
male privilege. He says that sexual difference is:

assigned according to whether individual subjects do or do not possess the phallus, which
means not that anatomical difference is a sexual difference (the one as strictly deducible
from the other), but that anatomical difference comes to figure as sexual difference and
becomes the sole representative of what the difference is allowed to be…The phallus thus
indicates the reduction of difference to an instance of visible perception, a seeming value.

Jane Gallop (1982) challenges Lacanian psychoanalysis through the agency of feminist
writing. She argues that Lacan's concept of seduction between the father and the daughter was
moved outside the family model to address larger social issues, where feminism "often falls for a
familial interpretation of power relations. For instance, when it complains about men in power, it
endows them with the sort of unified, phallic sovereignty that characterizes an absolute
monarch" (Gallop, 1982, xv). Gallop sees little that resembles actual power in our social and
economic structures. She argues for the necessity to escape the monarchic model of power that
reproduces the daughters' view of the father through the encounter between psychoanalysis and
feminism in order to dephallicize the father, which focuses the attention on the familial thinking
while ignoring "much more complex power relations that structure our world" (p. xv).

Gallop (1982) uses Lacan and the Freudian concept of the fear of castration or the fear of
losing the phallus to explain women's homosexuality as a way to solidify the subjectivity of the
woman and the need of women to establish their identity with the sameness as Other before they
relate to men. Gallop explains Lacan's discussion of the linguistic bias that maintains this patriarchal thinking, even within a feminist framework, because language and its historical references influence our perception of gender relations. Language, as an agency, speaks to us, according to Lacan, rather our speaking the language, because we are deprived from control over the metaphoric aspect of language. Lacan's idea of sexual difference emerged from the privilege of the phallus as presence and "the concomitant 'disappearance' of any female genitalia under the phallic order," which privileged the "sight over other senses," but Gallop reminds us of Freud's note that "the penis may be more visible, but female genitalia have a stronger smell" (p. 27).

Lacan also mentions another concept, which is the name of the father. He believes that the assignation of a Father's Name to a child is meant to call an end to uncertainty about the identity of the father. "The Name-of-the-Father must be arbitrarily and absolutely imposed, thereby instituting the reign of the patriarch. However, the father's penis is reminiscent of the extra-legal beginnings of the child. The Father's Name is, by law, unique; the father's penis is but one of many organs involved in the production of the child" (p. 39).

Chivalry, or devotion to the lady, argues Gallop "is a way of supplementing, making up for, getting away from, masking the glaring absence…of sexual relations," (p. 44). Again, Lacan explains that the name of the father "operates explicitly in the register of language. The Name-of-the-Father: the patronym, patriarchal law, patrilineal identity, language as our inscription into patriarchy. The Name-of-the Father is the fact of the attribution of paternity by law, by language. Paternity cannot be perceived, proven, known with certainty; it must be instituted by judgment of the mother's word" (Gallop, 1982, p. 47). The name of the father is "imaginary", "the imaginary of chivalry, the woman's presumed honor" (p. 48). Lacan explains further that Name-of-the-Father implies authorized possession of the woman, who since possessed can be exchanged.
Infidelity is a use value, the use of the woman one does not possess, one is not authorized to exchange" (p. 49). Gallop argues that "the exclusion of the woman is inscribed in her relation to the father. Any feminist upheaval, which would change woman's definition, identity, name as well as the foundation of her economic status, must undo the vicious circle by which the desire for the father's desire (for his penis) causes her to submit to the father's law, which denies his desire/penis, but operates in its place,…even procures for him a surplus of pleasure" (Gallop, 1982, p. 71).

In her study of the Saudi society between 1978 and 1984, Sandra Mackay (1978) talks about the political manipulation of the Saudi authority regarding gender relations and how this manipulation asserts itself in the attitude and the actions that the government takes to tame any resentment or resistance from women to any discrimination that is imposed on them by traditions. For example, she says that the ban of political parties and protests is defended on religious grounds and that politics is a violation of the Quran’ic injunction against divisive sects. Using Islam to justify politics and legitimize injustice is an example of how the idea of “fathering” is taken for granted--it is an idea of God and not open for negotiation. Mackay (1978) criticizes the dysfunctional aspect of this Arabic fathering mentality and its possible damage to the advancement of the society. She addresses the discomfort that some Westerners experience when dealing with this fathering explaining how this blocks any critical possibilities that are needed to improve any situation. She says that when a Westerner presents a business problem to his Saudi partner, he must first flatter the Saudi businessman before he delivers an unpleasant fact. And when these facts are laid out, they must be presented in such a way as to reflect on the incompetence of anyone but the Saudi.
The assimilation of the concept of father to the concept of God is clear in this demonstration. The idea of God, the ultimate authority, is hierarchal both in Islam and Judaism. In the Old Testament for example, God does not accept negotiation, and He gets angry and destroys those who do not follow his will. In Islam, the Prophet Mohammad states that “Everyone is a care giver, Patron or a shepherd (Raa) and responsible for his patronized individuals, care receivers (Raeeya).” Within the Islamic way, this is channeling responsibilities to each individual and for the family. The father’s responsibility to provide to his wife and his children is a matter of the division of labor, considering that the woman is the care giver at home and this is her main responsibility is toward her husband and her children.

Mackay’s (1978) accounts about the Saudi society make one realize the dysfunctional element of this “fathering” process, and how the misunderstanding or the abuse of the original concept of “Raa” has affected the meaning of responsibility and led to a strong cultural inclination for the individual male to place the blame for his mistakes and failures on others. She explains how transferring responsibility to others makes it easier to justify a potentially embarrassing situation, and defending one’s public image. She says that “When a Saudi fails, he never accept the responsibility but blames it on “bad luck”, the unfairness of the teacher, the difficulty of the material, and in the end, the will of Allah” (MacKay, pp. 118-119). MacKay explains how this aspect of fathering resulted in artificial relationships among men in Saudi Arabia. This artificial mood affects building productive work environments. Mackay provides us with an example to demonstrate such relationships and how the Westerners “who are most successful in dealing with the Saudis are those who are able to balance a tricky combination of flattery, subservience and authority. To begin with, a Saudi employer, loving exaggerated
flattery, usually will regard intellectual honesty in the form of criticism as a personal insult…” (Mackay, p. 122).

Sandra Mackay also describes Abdul-Wahab’s house in Diriyah which lays out in mud and stone. “The house is perhaps a little more grand. As I crouched through the low doorway…Built around its own interior courtyard, which allowed the women and children to get some sunlight and air, but screened them from the life of the house, were rooms shared by the women of the house and their female servants. This was the harem” (p. 124). The author explains that Hareem is simply the women’s quarters. It is not as the “harem” which is “a stable of concubines” as it has been depicted by Hollywood. (p. 124).

The concept of the father as God of the house (Rab Al-Bayt) is not equal to the concept of the mother as Goddess of the house (Rabbat Al-Bayt), as there is a Qur'anic verse that states “Men have a degree over them” meaning over women. Some argue that this degree of difference between the two is referring to men’s additional responsibilities of earning living and providing for their women, which is not required from women for they are the caregivers and the nurturers for their children and their husbands at home.

Mahfouz’s Rhetoric in Alwad Haratina

Mahfouz’s adaptation of rhetoric throughout his body of work has been a way of knowing the self, as well as a way to share his knowledge with his audience. In most of his work, he utilizes elements of the Arab classical rhetorical heritage, as well as from the Western rhetorical traditions in communicating certain truths about the ancient history of Egypt as well as the Islamic and political history of Egypt and the Arab World. An example of Mahfouz's employment of rhetoric as a way of knowing rather than persuasion, could be found in is his books Awlad Haratina (1959), Cairo Trilogy (1957), Respectful Sir (1975), The Thief and the
Dogs (1961), and Beginning and End (1950). Mahfouz does not impose his perspective on the reader. He tells his story without letting the reader sense his preference for one character over another. The reader is left to choose the character that s/he could identity with. Mahfouz's is a product of his culture, but at the same time, he acts as its critic. His work is a form of critical rhetoric that is intended to enlighten, to guide, and to transform. Catherine Kohler Riessman’s (1993) views on narrative analysis explain how story telling has the ability to provide us with the informants' perspective, which could be our research material. What one does with the narrative could also be a form of story-telling. She says that “The story metaphor emphasizes that we create order, construct texts in particular contexts,” and that we adopted this metaphor from the natural sciences, which implies that “we provide an objective description of forces in the world, and we position ourselves outside to do so” (p. 1).

Mahfouz (1959) uses words, names, symbols, characters, places and settings as metaphors to build shared understanding and identification within the audience. Mahfouz’s novel, then, Awlad Haratina, is an example of critical rhetoric. It is an attempt to reveal us to ourselves through the re-construction of the religious history of the Middle East in a secularized, comical and ironic manner. Mahfouz (1959) employs irony and sarcasm in portraying its highly respected and prestigious characters as metaphors where those holy and sacred characters are seen as profane and vulnerable as any one of the audience. Mahfouz tries to remove the sacred aura from those religious symbols to provide realistic and practical examples for the multitudes of his Arab audience, who lost their hopes after decades of colonization and oppression. However, Mahfouz’s choice of characters being deprived of any means of pride or material luxury demonstrates the critical aspect of his rhetoric.
Rhetorical Review of Mahfouz

I conclude this chapter by conducting a rhetorical review of the novel guided by a format proposed by Andrews (1990). When examining a text, Andrews addresses the following: What is there in the rhetorical situation that presents a clear indication of the rhetorical problems that a speaker/writer must solve? What are the rhetorical opportunities that exist to be used? To uncover these issues, Andrews applies a series of questions to the text. An initial question considers the political, social and/or economic context. Most of Mahfouz’s rhetoric was produced as reaction to the political, social and economic situation either locally in his country, Egypt, or the Arab World, or internationally. For example, his book, *The Cairo Trilogy* (1957) demonstrates Mahfouz's reaction to the influence of the international political arena on the local Egyptian life, especially on the social, cultural and political reforms. His main character Sayyed Ahmed Abdul Jawwad, was a descendant from Prophet Mohammad's family tree (Al-Sayyed means Lord). This character was portrayed as an example for the Arab man in his pride, his generosity, and his respectful reputation among his friends, his relatives, and his neighbors, but he also led a night life that was far from the life he preached at his own household. He hardly smiled at home or exchanged any conversation with his wife or his children, except when he was angry. He punished his wife by sending her to her mother because she left home with one of her children in a short visit without his permission. Sayyed was confronted with the humiliation from the British army who blocked his way to his house during one of those nights. His oldest son was killed in a demonstration. His two grandsons, who represented two different ideologies, Islam and Communism, represented the new generation who were born in the middle of the political transformation in the Arab World, and the search for the national identity in the 1950s. *The Cairo Trilogy* focuses on the modern Arab patriarch during the British colonization and the
relationship between men and women. Mahfouz's novel *The Thief and the Dogs* (1961) demonstrates the political corruption in Egypt and its effects on people's attitudes. His main character, Abbas, was encouraged by his wife to steal. When he left prison, he found that his wife and his daughter disappeared. Later, he learned that his wife, who divorced him while he was in the prison, took the money and ran away with a person who worked for him. Abbas spent the rest of his life trying to hide from the police again after shooting someone by mistake in his attempt at revenge. Noor (meaning light) is a prostitute who fell in love with Abbas and tried to help him. This novel reflects the contradictions in the values during this period of political and economic unsettlement. It contrasts the loyalty of the prostitute with the disloyalty of the wife and the close friends who shared the stolen money and lived the rest of their lives as respectful upper-class people. This novel reveals the corruption in the political power in Egypt and its effects on the individual. *In Awlad Haratina*, Mahfouz (1959) responds to the problem that is created by the Arab-Israeli conflict and how this problem has channeled resources to focus on the conflict and the military expenses, ignoring many other important issues related to education, politics and the economy. While *Awlad Haratina* digs down in history to come up with the first known patriarchal ancestor of Arabs and other Middle Eastern people, Mahfouz's mythical characters in *Awlad Haratina* represent Moses, Jesus and Mohammad. Mahfouz (1959) borrowed some features from the bible and the Qur'an to make his main character, Gebelaawi, a blend between Abraham and Adam. He made Adham and Idrees, the sons of Gebelaawi, and Umayma, Adham's wife, represent Adam, Satan and Eve and their descent from heaven. *Awlad Haratina* is a metaphor for the Middle Eastern people and their conflicts. This novel provides the audience with an opportunity to reflect on the development of the relationship between men and women, taking into consideration that very early beginning of the Arab race as a reference point.
Another question raised by Andrews is: what cultural values and practices in the society were relevant to the issue? In *Awlad Haratina*, Mahfouz employs some cultural values that are well-known in the Arab, Middle Eastern history such as patriarchal values: The father is the ultimate authority in his household. His older son has privilege over the rest of his brothers; males have more advantage over the females; men belong to the outdoor sphere, while women belong to the indoor sphere. Women are expected to follow the will of their husbands. Fathers do not expect to be questioned by their sons. However, those values have been exaggerated by Mahfouz as an adaptation in his employment of irony, in addition to his reaction to the colonial discourse of Arabs as the inferior “Other”. Mahfouz depicts the severe contradiction between the life of the Trustees and his protectors or Strongmen and the life of the rest of the people. The employment of Irony here is to the extreme to a level that no one is safe from the oppression of the powerful to establish a fair and reasonable life style that secures some dignity. We could only see a barren desert environment that does not permit any mode of production other than that of the very low social and economic class as street vendors.

Andrews asks a third question: what varying perceptions of the issue existed at the time the message was given?

Mahfouz’s Arab readers are shaped by the Islamic values and conventions. The Arab World was under the oppression of foreign powers since the 15th century, when Arabs and Muslims were forced out from Spain. Arabs witnessed their defeat and the increased prosperity of Europe because of the scientific heritage they had garnered from the Arabs developed over more than eight centuries. Arabs depended on gathering their knowledge from Arabs and non-Arabs equally. In Islam, knowledge is considered a shared resource for humanity. However, after their defeat in Spain, the Arabs became suppressed by most Ottoman rulers who ruled the Arab
World. After the World Wars, and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab World was divided among England and France. The religious doctrine was perceived as the only solution to preserve the Arab identity. Mahfouz's *Awlad Haratina* was produced in 1959, when the Arabs were fighting against the foreign colonizers to gain their independence. The time was critical for Arabs to focus on the positive aspects of their identity. Mahfouz's ironic style in adapting the religious symbols to the profane life was taken as an attack. Mahfouz's message and style were misunderstood by the Arabs. Liberal and modern intellectuals feared the outcome and kept silent. Mahfouz was perceived as a destroyer of hope, rather than providing people with hope. Mahfouz (1959) does not deny people’s need to believe in God or in spirituality. However, his employment of the religious history in a profane way completely alienated the majority of his audience.

Andrews’ fifth question considers which prevailing ethical standards were relevant to the message.

The prevailing ethical standards that were relevant to Mahfouz’s message were to reveal the truth to his audience about their situation. He has taken the risk in educating his audience through a metaphor that is directly connected to the core value of his audience. Despite the fact that he employs irony and a classical circular story telling approach, such as the approach of the Qur’an or the Arabian Nights, his treatment of sacred figures put his work and his life at risk. Islam for Arabs is not only a religion; Islam is the culture that created the Arabs and gave them their identity. It is the culture that connects them to the origin of the Christian and the Jewish faith. When Mahfouz or any other writer touches the sacredness part of this culture, he would definitely be rejected by most Muslims.
Andrews’ sixth question: what were the particular circumstances of the setting for a speech, and in what ways did they determine what a speaker could or could not do?

Mahfouz’s work has only been known in his lifetime, while the Arab religious heritage has survived more than fourteen centuries, and it is impossible to deconstruct an entire culture through a novel that does not take into consideration the defeated self and its need to survive. The Arab Muslim reader, who has survived the Turkish Ottoman severity and the Western colonization and imperialism, and who has witnessed the continuous attack on his image in Hollywood’s films and in the mass media, would rebel against destroying the last resort of him: Islamic religious symbols. Mahfouz's idea of employing religious symbols in fiction is an effective idea, but anyone who uses those symbols should be very careful in the manner of handling them to not lose the focus of the message. Mahfouz could have used those religious symbols in a dignified way to win his audience and direct them to correspond with his message. The radical ideology of discarding religious symbols has continued to be defeated even in the most liberal and democratic situation. For example, President George W. Bush won the 2004 debates consistently whenever he defended religious values. Despite the awareness of American public of the right of women to abortion, Christian activists continued to lobby against any president who does not respect the Christian ethics, using slogans as “Pro-life” and “defending our moral values.” Muslims are usually conservative, and Mahfouz’s treatment of sacred symbols was, not surprisingly, rejected by his Arab audience in the same way that liberal social concepts that appear to be anti-Christian are often rejected by the West.

Andrews' (1990) seventh question, what was the composition of the immediate audience to whom a message was addressed?
Mahfouz’s immediate audience was the educated Egyptian and Arab male. Those educated Egyptians were going through a phase that was marked by an identity search. While some of the audience is open to the Marxist Socialist and Western liberal ideologies, they continued to practice their conservative identities in their private lives, especially in their relationships with the females in their lives. Mahfouz (1999) himself has admitted in a television documentary that he admires the character of Ameena, who resembles the mothers of Mahfouz’s generation. Ameena, the main female character in the *The Cairo Trilogy*, the mother of Kamal, Khadeeja and Aysha, and the wife of S. Ahmad A. Jawwad, was an image of the extremely loyal wife, who has no life outside the world of her own husband and children. If Mahfouz, the intellectual writer, believes that Ameena is the model for the admirable woman, then he himself is a victim of his own contradicted message. Without the patriarchal order of Islam which places Ameena in her house among other women, while assigning to the husband the responsibility of the provider and the protector, the model of Ameena would be difficult to represent. After more than thirty years of writing the novel, Mahfouz does not seem to resolve his own gender issue. He still finds himself attached to the loyal, affectionate female. Ameena is an example that is much like Qamar, whom Qassem continued to search for by marrying several women in *Awlad Haratina* (1959). This duality in handling gender relations is a part and parcel of the Islamic package. Although both the Qur’an and the Prophet’s traditions state that people are created equally, Qur’anic verses that give men double the rights in the inheritance and in the judiciary’s statements, have contributed to the empowerment of men over women. Giving husbands the right to discipline their wives implies that women are followers and do not possess the same rights in their relationship with their husbands. This problematic and dualistic standard in dealing with gender issues has continued, unfortunately, to be used to distinguish between good Muslims
and bad Muslims, and to distinguish between bad women and good women. *Awlad Haratina* invites the reader gradually to accept a transition that removes the mentioned duality in the treatment of gender. However, the sarcastic and ironic style in presenting prestigious symbols cannot provide the typical Arabic reader with a model to identify with. Therefore, the message of Mahfouz was misunderstood, and the rhetorical power of his message was lost in the surrealistic portrayal of those important characters.

Andrews’ (1990) eighth question: who was the larger audience, or audiences, if any, to whom the message was addressed? The larger audience or audiences to whom Mahfouz has addressed his message was the Arab audience both males and females.

Andrews’ (1990) ninth question: in what ways were the audiences’ knowledge, group identifications, and receptivity relevant to the issue being addressed? Mahfouz’s message has two parts. While he succeeds in meeting the knowledge and the group identification by making his message about the importance of education in fighting oppression relevant to his audience, especially by revoking shared religious symbols, his employment of sarcasm and irony in his depiction of characters that have sacred symbolic meaning has alienated his audience and deprived them from the opportunity to have group identification.

It seems obvious that Mahfouz has benefited from the Western rhetorical technique and has succeeded in constructing a powerful rhetoric, however, his employment of irony and sarcasm in handling religious symbols has damaged his ability to create group identification and to consequently achieving the result that he sought from sending his message.

The information provided in this chapter should help the reader appreciate the cultural and the psychological circumstances that both Arab men and Arab women have encountered through the period of modernization. Gender relations’ problematic aspect is complicated by the
speed of modernity that Arabs, both men and women, are forced to cope with every day. The traditional cultural discourses about gender relations derived from the Arabic rhetorical heritage have continued to influence current gender relationships and are a cause of resistance to change.
CHAPTER THREE:
THE POWER OF THE METAPHOR

Throughout his works, Mahfouz employs classical Arab metaphors to appeal to his audience and trigger identification through the Arab collective memory. Although the rhetorical power of the classical Arab metaphor as it is applied by the traditional Mathal, by classical Arab poetry, and by the Qur’an, is traditionally used to preserve the Arabic community with its complex networks, relationships, and traditions, Mafouz often relies on these same metaphors to create tension in his audience rather than preserve the status quo.

Mahfouz’s novel Awlad Haratina (1959) depends heavily on metaphor. In fact, the whole novel is a metaphor for the world and the daily struggle of people against oppressive leadership or oppressive social and political systems. The Fetuwwa or the strongmen represent the leaders of the world who keep fighting among themselves and sometimes they cooperate with each other to maintain their power and their oppression toward their people. To understand Mahfouz’s rhetorical power, it is appropriate to have some background about the primary role of metaphor in Arabic rhetoric and how this role relates to Awlad Haratina.

The metaphor, Subhi (1993) explains, in traditional Arabic poetry, when remaining in its traditional contextual location, does not affect its collective meaning. The consciousness here becomes a storage place of the heritage in a simple semantic form that suits the current speech and brings the semi-perfect equilibrium or harmony between the mental meaning and the emotional tension. The construction of the poem (or the message), according to Subhi, (1993) becomes equivalent to Aristotle’s perspective of the world as an extension that reasons and causes are surpassing each other to reach the primary cause or the active subject that does not move, but becomes a cause for any new movement.
The Arrangement of the Word

The body of the poem (or the message) becomes organized/arranged and not molded as Subhi (1993) notices. The form of the Arabic poem, according to this perspective, represents this universal understanding of an arranged system in which a line follows a line (Bait) until the poem (Qaseeda) will be constituted of abstracted units: Sameness, description of ruins (Lamenting the loss of childhood’s friends, description of the she camel, praise and the description of the journey. Each paragraph is an abstracted unit of Baits (lines of poetry) that are organized through the objective that is sought by the image. When this objective is fulfilled, then the poem moves to another objective. This law does not only deal with Moallaqat (The oldest, most famous ten poems that were displayed over the Ka’ba in Mecca before Islam) and the praise poems, but it includes all the long poems, whether its topic was Qazal (Art of love or flirtation) as it in some of the Auzri poems (innocent or virgin love), or Retha (condolence or Lamenting), or even Wasf (description), such as Ibn AL-Rumi in his description of Basra, and Abi Nawwas in his descriptions of winery and social drinking events (majales Al-Sharab). Subhi (1993) concludes that these characters in general could be applied to the resonance stage which is represented by Al-Baroodi, Shawqi (Ahmed), Al-Rusafi (Omar), Badawi Al-Jab Arabic Rhetoric.

The primary elements of Arabic rhetoric are: metaphor, satire, allegory, analogy and description. The Arabs have developed a sophisticated approach to their application of the metaphor in their poetry and their prose. Arabic metaphor usually has the capacity to communicate two meanings: one is a surface meaning that shows a common wisdom, and the other communicates a subtle or a hidden meaning that is not as easily comprehended. An example of this kind of application to the metaphor is the Qur’an. The chapter of Al-Rahman has
this double meaning, for example. The entire chapter talks about the luxurious life in heaven. Most details about heaven are about sensual and physical pleasure such as about beautiful *Hoor* (virgin women with wide beautiful eyes), and about the rivers of wine, and the beautiful *Qulmans* (young male servants) who serve people and present them with all kinds of fruit, and those fruits are similar to the fruits that people experience on earth, “but not exactly.” The common reading of such a portrayal of heaven communicates an image that people can relate to, but when God tells us “but not exactly” then there is a margin for other interpretations on a deeper level. The surface meaning has the ability to influence the common reader, but the underlying meaning is targeted toward the deeper reader. Similarly, Mahfouz’s *Awlad Haratina* has the ability to entertain the common Arab reader while presenting him/her with realistic examples to follow in order to fight against oppression and approach life with hope. However, the same novel takes the intellectual reader to a journey or a pilgrimage into the past to search out the truth of his/her existence within the religious history in order to build a new understanding of today’s problems, and to benefit from past experiences while creating a better future.

The complex development of the metaphor within the Pre-Islamic and Islamic era has served political reasons. It maintains and restores the dignity of simple and linear thinking, while it satisfies the curiosity of those audiences who desire to know more deeply because they operate on a more complex level. Arab intellectuals applied this complex type of rhetoric to protect themselves from oppressive political leaders. One of the most complex Islamic translated rhetoric was *Kaleela Wa Dumna* (Kaleela and Dumna), which is a collection of stories about animals that were originally designed to teach wisdom to young royalties. Sometimes they are used as stories that are told by the bards to teach wisdom to Kings or Sultans through
entertainment, or to warn important people about a danger in a very subtle way. The metaphor was employed as a rhetorical tool to accomplish certain goals. The double standard metaphor is also a successful method of protection that people employ to save themselves from the anger of oppressive authorities.

Re-Making The Religious Myth

*Awlad Haratina* has multiple dimensions. This novel is not only Mahfouz’s strategy to introduce a new world-view of the Middle Eastern people to enable them to see their history from a completely different perspective, it is also a way to reveal that the sacred and the profane are interchangeable and docile and the truth is not fixed. Mahfouz (1959) has created a new text from the ancient religious discourse that Jews, Christians and Muslims have been familiar with. This thoughtful and intelligent multi-layered reading of the present within a previous text has secured a solid foundation that allows Mahfouz to present his message. The first text is that of Mahfouz’s time when he wrote his novel, in which the Egyptian citizens of the 20th century were confronted with Western ideologies. Several foreign or international ideologies such as Socialist Marxism, Capitalism, Democracy and Modernization were introduced to Egypt and the Arab World after the two World Wars. These new ideologies clashed with the ancient Egyptian ideologies that were conditioned by the Arabic culture, as well as Islamic ideology. In this context, Mahfouz perceived it to be his duty as a faithful son of the Egyptian culture to use his rhetoric to communicate certain truths to his people about themselves to enable them to make wise choices about their existence in a world that is inhabited by competitive ideologies and interests. His love for his people and his concern about their future placed a heavy burden on him to participate in the modernization movement and to introduce a new blend of the old and the new to solve the fate of the twentieth century Egypt in the face of the political corruption that has
continued to take place, even after its independence from the British. The departure of the Turkish Monarch and the national Egyptian revolution that was led by native Egyptians in 1952 failed in resolving the political corruption, and in bringing the long desired changes.

Muti’a Moosa (1997) mentions that Mahfouz in 1952, after the overthrow of King Farouk, and after seven long years of waiting, was “disillusioned by the outcome of the revolution [and] he wrote the allegorical *Awlad Haratina*” (p. 369). Another narrative that Mahfouz’s novel *Awlad Haratina/Children of the Alley/Gebelaawi* played against was the biblical and the *Qur’anic* texts about the most influential Prophets in the Middle Eastern History: Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Mahfouz portrays his characters: Gebelaawi, Adham, Jabel, Rifaa, and Qaasem to represent the mentioned five characters with some alterations. He blended the biblical two characters of Abraham and Adam, and made Abraham as the great ancestor Gebelaawi, and both Adham and Idrees as the two sons of Abraham. This different treatment of the original text is needed by Mahfouz to advance his argument about the battle between good and evil on earth that has persisted until the current time. Mahfouz again intersects with another text, which is the colonial discourse of knowledge, production and science; Mahfouz presents this discourse in *Awlad Haratina* through his character, Arafa, in the last chapter. Arafa is a new persona that Mahfouz invented to link the past of his audience to the present; and from the present he takes them to the future and its new hope.

Moosa (1997) says that Mahfouz is interested here “not in religious questions, but in social and political issues and the role that science plays in settling them” (p. 369). Mahfouz was aware of the difficulty of the mission at hand, and wove his plot intelligently, playfully intersecting texts to take his audience far back in history and bring them back to the modern day, where Western science is seen as a solution for all problems. This intertextuality had a double
mission: it provided him with the identification needed for his audience, and at the same time, secured him a way to avoid the political censorship of both the government and the religious authority. Giving his characters different names and qualities did not, however, allow him to escape the scrutiny and the punishment of those authorities; and he faced the same destiny that his hero Arafa faced. Arafa received the ultimate punishment by the Trustee and the strongmen, and Mahfouz was also punished by a Muslim extremist more than twenty years after writing his novel. Mahfouz survived an assassination attempt in 1994.

Awlad Haratina is a metaphor for a pilgrimage into the religious history of the Middle Eastern people. The relationship between Gebelaawi’s two sons Adham and Idrees and later between Adham’s two sons Hammam and Qadri are similar to the Biblical/Qur’anic story of the two brothers of Adam and Eve, Habil and Qabil; and again, it is blended with the story of Isaac and Ishmael, the sons of Abraham.

One sees that the first dimension of Mahfouz’s message is to introduce knowledge as a new criterion to evaluate people’s worth. This action is similar to what God did when he appointed Adham to be his representative on Earth because Adham knows all names, ignoring the other qualities of Iblees, who was most loyal to God before that incident according to the Qur’anic text. The second dimension is to document the religious history of the Middle East through the five significant passages or stages that are deeply carved in the psyche of the Middle Eastern people, Arabs, Muslims, Christians and Jews, which could also be applied internationally to those who believe in the Middle Eastern religions. The third dimension of Mahfouz’s message is to create a new comprehension for the deeply rooted religious stories, telling us that despite centuries of practicing those deeply rooted religions and reciting the same stories again and again
for thousands of years, the general public did not comprehend the message behind those
religions.

Key Metaphors

The Hara as the World

The theoretical framework of Mahfouz’s concept of the world as a Hara/neighborhood could be found in Edward Said’s (1975) Beginning and Intentionality. Said (1975) emphasizes the importance of the beginning in understanding the development of certain situation. The intentionality of the author is connected to the beginning that he/she chooses for his book or his novel. Mahfouz’s (1959) Awlad Haratina is an attempt to coin the beginning of his novel with the historical beginning of the Middle Eastern history from the point of view of Arabs, Muslims, Christians and Jews. This choice of Mahfouz shows a certain intentionality that is gradually developed in each of his chapters until he confronts the audience with his conclusion. The neighborhood of Gebelaawi, which Mahfouz, the narrator and story-teller refers to as “our” neighborhood, has been the beginning that Mahfouz chooses as a point of departure, and he travels back and forth in time to build his rhetoric around it. Through this center that Mahfouz solidifies, he establishes a strong identification with his readers/audience, aligning himself (despite his authority as a writer and a myth maker) in one construct with the audience. Stretching the rhetorical power of the construct “Hara” to refer to the whole world reveals the rhetorical power of Mahfouz to reach international audiences and meeting the expectation of diverse audiences on a structural level and on a psychological level by awakening the feeling of belonging to and identifying with one neighborhood that has always been located in our consciousness (especially the consciousness of Jews, Christians and Muslims).
The novel *Awlad Haratina*, therefore, demonstrates that Mahfouz is a product of multicultural backgrounds: The Egyptian, the Arab-Islamic and the Western culture. His search for a common shared language between himself and his Arab audience is stimulated by his knowledge of the local and international rhetorical trends of his time. For example, Mahfouz’s narrative and rhetorical style show some awareness of important Western rhetoricians such as Kenneth Burke (1962). When Mahfouz began his writing career in 1930s, he benefited from the translated literature available at that time as he himself declared in the documentary “Naguib Mahfouz” (1990).

The metaphors of *Awlad Haratina* are charged rhetorically with the power to awaken the collective Egyptian mind. However, Mahfouz’s metaphor of the *Hara* as a place that hosted the religious history of the Middle East has expanded Mahfouz’s message to all human beings in other settings. His application to make the Hara (the neighborhood) the home for the theological and mythical discourse of most Eastern and Western cultures has the potential to make the audiences perceive themselves as members of one global family. The “*Hara*”, is a powerful, yet very simplistic site, to negotiate the meaning of global relations or global communication. The concept of the *Hara* for the Egyptian Arab audience has the same meaning as the concept of “neighborhood” for the Western audience. The term Alley or Quarter does not communicate the richness and the complexity that Mahfouz intends to communicate through his selection of the Arabic word “*Hara,*” however. Mahfouz’s choice of the *Hara* or the neighborhood as a metaphor has rhetorical potential to be extended globally to bring all humans together as belonging to one cozy neighborhood. This feeling of belonging to one origin is widely applicable in most human cultures. The term *Hara*, with its specific significance for the Egyptian audience, has the possibility of bridging the past to the present, and connects the poor with the rich.
Modernization has affected the way people relate to each other in Egypt. The people of the old Hara in some Egyptian films are looked upon as inferior compared to the professional and modernized people of new Egypt. However, any member of modern Egyptian society has his roots in the old Hara or old neighborhoods. Therefore, this term has the ability to make any Arab Egyptian feel at home.

The Setting of the Hara

Through the setting of the Hara with its local coffee shops; the bards and their story telling sessions; the Sheesha; the Hashish or the Houcqa; the Futuwwa (Chivalry, Strongmen or Protectors of the Hara), Mahfouz has provided a realistic portrayal of the Hara. His descriptive details of the poor local Egyptian characters and their familiar funny names or nicknames communicate certain implications about that environment. Names such as Scwares (Horse carriage), Batikha (watermelon), Kunfus (beetle) are associated with the old Hara and its unique life style.

The names and the details of the places such as Jebel al- Moqattam, Jamaleyya, and Kafir al Zaqrani and the Grund Bazar are also connected with the history of the Egyptian Hara. People’s names, local places, and features of the environment have the possibility of bringing Egyptians home through first-hand experience even if they are no longer living in Egypt. Some of the features of the old Arab neighborhood possess the power to bring all Arabs “home” through the circular narrative style of the novel. This style that Mahfouz (1959) employs also has the same rhetorical power that creates a shared common ground among Arab populations for its connection to the Arabic narrative style of the Jaheleyya poetry, the holy Qur’an, the novel of Alf Layla wa Layla (One Thousand and One Nights), and Kalila Wa Dumna for instance.
The features of the Arab Islamic environment are awakened in the Arab collective memory through the bard. The bard was often a feature of the old Hara as well as a voice for its people. The art of storytelling, combined with traditional Arab music through the *Rabab* (an Arab musical instrument that has some features of the violin), has survived in the Arab culture, especially within the Bedouin communities, until the twentieth century. The employment of the bard, then, by Mahfouz as a symbol that Arabs use to pass shared cultural knowledge from generation to generation has the potential to awaken an important historical period in the Arabic collective memory. Mahfouz’s narrative technique is the same story telling technique used in the Arabic traditional environment both in the café shops, as well as in the family private atmosphere of rural Arabs, Bedouins, or urban citizens.

Any visitor to Egypt will observe that the *Hara* has survived in Egypt within a modern Egyptian system. The complexity of the Egyptian society has the upper-class Egyptians coexisting side by side with the lower class. One could easily find poor families living within an extremely rich Egyptian neighborhood. These contradictions are part and parcel of the daily experience of any Egyptian citizen.

The Egyptian film industry and the Egyptian television industry have succeeded in bringing the Arab audience together for more than fifty years of production. This Egyptian media created a common local Egyptian dialogue that Arabs use to communicate with each other, in addition to the classic Arabic language. Mahfouz’s Arab audience is already familiar with the Egyptian community with its specific atmosphere of the *Hara*, its *Fetuwwa*, its multiple classes, its diverse population and its rich and complex lifestyle that preserves the old side-by-side with the modern and new. Mahfouz’s Hara/neighborhood not only represents the mythical history of the Middle East, but it has the power to represent the current global history with its conflicts and
its oppressive forces. The concept of the global family by Mahfouz can be associated with McLuhan’s (1999) global village. Mahfouz’s choice of the “Hara” and the eternal struggle of its people with the Strongmen have the potential to awaken the conscious of his international reader to perceive current global violence, organized wars and terrorism within a comprehensive framework. The new vision that Mahfouz has provided us with helps us to study the political history of mankind as a line that is extended from the past to the present. The rhetorical power of perceiving the whole world as a Hara, or as one neighborhood, has the ability to create new possibilities for the future of mankind.

The Song as a Counter-Lamenting

Throughout his Awlad Haratina, Mahfouz diversifies his delivery style. He communicates his message by weaving different styles to teach through entertainment. For example, he adapts music and poetry to achieve group identification through the Bard. Mahfouz’s use of song throughout the novel becomes a vehicle to counter the sad tune of Lamenting. The Lamenting song in the Arab World is mostly colored by sadness, especially when expressing emotions toward the other gender. One could examine Arab songs in the last fifty years, and find the same tone of Lamentation in most of the songs. The songs of Muhammad Abdul-Wahab, Umm-Kulthoum, Farid Al-Atrash, and Abdul-Haleem Hafez represent this Lamenting theme. Mahfouz employs the song differently in Awlad Haratina, however. The Lamenting theme of the narrator in all the chapters is multiplied by the Bard, whose stories are about the lost past of Gebelaawi’s neighborhood. The song for Mahfouz became a way to break that Lamenting tone. The song functions as a fresh breath that prevents the reader from getting bored. It is like the comedic break in a tragedy that allows the audience to
take a few minutes of break from sorrow, so they can come back to it enthusiastically after the comic relief.

The song has a special and powerful role in Mahfouz’s work in general and in *Awlad Haratina* in particular. While it has the ability to express feelings smoothly and effectively, the song tells us a lot of information and facts in a very simple way using very few words that flow and are communicated very easily. This economic value of the song is very important for illiterate cultures, where word-of-mouth and the memory are all that people have to preserve their history and their traditions and to communicate it from generation to generation, as well as to escape the taboo and the restrictions that is imposed on gender free exchanges. In such scarce environments word of mouth has significant value.

Arabic culture before Islam depended on rhetoric and eloquence. Arab intellectuals and poets used to have sessions every year for contests. Akadh is one of the most famous places in the Arabic peninsula for intellectual debates and cultural exchanges and expressions of love and emotions, as well as for conducting business. During the *Jaheleyya* era, Akadh was a capital to exchange news, conduct business and express intellectual talents through poetry competitions and contests, story telling, entertainments and sports. The expression of romantic feelings also was channeled skillfully through the intellectual poetry to demonstrate the rhetorical power of the poet.

The following examples are translations of the songs that Mahfouz employs in *Awlad Haratina* to paint a certain color of the setting that he needs to communicate to his audience. I cited songs from the two translations that I am working with, in addition to my own translation of the texts, to reveal the different interpretations of meaning. This selection of songs is taken from *The Children of the Alley*. 
Songs that express love, sexual gestures and flirting between males and females in a conservative environment that prevent and censor direct expressions of desires by portraying them as rude, shameful, disrespectful and tasteless.

*First Song*

First, oh! These eyes of mine.

Second, oh! These hands of mine.

Third, oh! These feet of mine.

What entangled me first with my love were my eyes.

When I greeted my love it was with my hands.

Now I’m guided along to my love by my feet! (p. 277)

*Second Song*

What is my one- oh? One’s for my eyes -oh.

What is my two-oh? Two’s for my hands-oh.

What is my three-oh? Three’s for my feet-oh.

When love did snare me, ‘twas through these eyes – oh.

When I did wave -oh, ‘twas with these hands- oh.

When I did reach her,’t was by these feet-oh (pp. 303-304)

The two translations are saying the same things using different expressions. Comparing them with Mahfouz’s original text in *Awlad Haritina* (1967, p. 339) reveal that Theroux’s words selection is closer to Mahfouz’s words.

The *Oh*, or *Ah* is a sound that expresses emotions and lust.

Another example:
First Song

I hope to drink with, and to, my beauty.
And you’re the most beautiful thing I see,” (p. 380).

Second Song

“Lovely creature hear my tune
You’re as radiant as the moon.
Fill my cup of joy soon! (p. 421).

Both songs reveal the joy of Arafa for the admiration he felt for Awatif; however, the first song expresses joy, admiration and desire through the following words: proud cheek, beauty, drink with, most beautiful. Stewart’s choice of words is: lovely, radiant as the moon, Fill my cup of joy soon. Mahfouz’s Arabic words are more economic in my opinion: He used the following words:

Graceful cheek, Oh my moon,
Fill the glass for me soon
You are the most beautiful person in my sight.

Mahfouz uses the vocabulary of love that is common to his environment: the graceful cheek is a sign of beauty. Cheek might follow the eyes and lips to describe a face of a beautiful woman who looks like a fruit or a moon in the way she shines. “Fill the glass for me soon” reveals the thirst of the lover to drink from the wine from the juicy cheeks or lips. It is also a common expectation that the lover sees his beloved as the most beautiful person in his sight. Mahfouz did not use the expression “the most beautiful thing” and this is a distinct difference in
the translation. Arafa is an educated person, and he sees Awatif as a person and as equal to him as any man. His love for Awatif, as we see from the novel, is not mainly a sexual attraction such as in the previous male’s experiences, therefore the word “thing” is not acceptable in this regard, even if the expression “the most beautiful thing” could be conclusive and could imply everything either animated or material things.

The songs act as a musical theme as in the background of a movie, as well as between scenes. In Qaasem’s chapter, Mahfouz communicates to us the emotional tensions that Qaasem was experiencing. Qassem’s emotions toward Lady Qamar, before she became his wife, were expressed through the following scene: Qamar told him:

We saw you shepherding the people as you shepherd your flock. Goodbye and bless you!’

He set off with Grace, and, with every tenement-house he passed, he added a belly goat or a nanny goat or a ram or a ewe to the procession. Every one greeted him. Even the strongmen, who had always ignored him, returned his salutations. He followed the long file of sheep and goats up the path by the wall of the Great House on his way to the desert. He was met by the burning heat of the sun, which was just up over Muqattam, and by warm puffs of morning wind. At the foot of the Jebel could be seen some shepherds. A man in tattered clothes passed him, playing a bamboo flute. In the cloudless bowl of sky kites circled. Every breath of air he took was pure and clean. He imagined the great Jebel must contain hidden treasures, hopes and promises. His gaze roamed over the desert with a strange satisfaction and his heart was light with joy. He began to sing: ‘Dear love from Upper Egypt’s land, Your name is tattooed on my hand. (Children of Gebelaawi, 1981, part 68, page 295).

At Qaasem’s bridegroom’s party, the singer began in a sweet voice:

What is my one-oh? One’s for my eyes-oh.
What is my two-oh? Two’s for my hands-oh.

What is my three-oh? Three’s for my feet-oh” (Children of Gebelaawi. 1981, Part 70, 303).

When Qaasem was holding his baby girl happily, “A voice sang under the window: When love
did snare me, ‘twas through these eyes-oh” (p. 328). When Qaasem was satisfied with the
number of people who joined his training camp,

A pony cart passed under the window and the people in it were singing:

Pray for the soldier who took off his fez!

Now he’s a holy man, everyone says., (329).

When Qaasem celebrated his marriage to Badria,”Wagtail sang in a sweet voice: Here I go a-

fishing. Better than just wishing! (p. 371)

Throughout the novel, the songs function as a counter to the Lamenting that is
communicated by the people of the Hara on many occasions, as well as by the bards in their sad
stories about the great ancestor and how he isolated himself in his Great House, leaving his
children to suffer from poverty and oppression. It is clear that Mahfouz values songs, and he
makes very effective use of them. Songs are short poems that are easy to remember and recite
because of the aesthetic nature of the rhyme and the lyric, in addition to the economic meaning
of the message they communicate to the public. Mahfouz’s use of songs to communicate
messages demonstrates his sophistication and his ability to interact deeply and successfully with
a diverse audience; he is employing an entertaining, highly intelligent, and effective technique
that has much to say with a few simple words that the targeted audience can relate to easily. With
this intelligent, ironic style, Mahfouz manages to say whatever he needs to communicate to his
audience safely and economically in most of his work, despite the political censorship that
strains many writers in his country.
Mahfouz’s choice of delivery for his message in *Awlad Haratina* reflects his rich awareness and knowledge of his particular Egyptian and Arab audience. His delivery style has succeeded in building the familiar ground between him and his broad audience (both the selective elite and the local middle class) across the Arab World. Music is a significant and successful method of delivery in a stagnant environment that lost a lot of its pride through colonization and social, economic and political oppression. Music is a method of healing the defeated soul and for Mahfouz himself as an intellectual writer who cares about his people and who believes that there is an important message to be communicated urgently. Music, then, has been a conscious choice to soften the harshness of reality that *Awlad Haratina* reveals to its audience, while dealing with the conflicting emotions that such reality could provoke.

It is clear that Mahfouz’s employment of the songs has multiple dimensions. First, he provokes the Arabic psyche to identify with the song as a modern approach to the classic recitation of the popular poems. Songs act for the Arab audience like the short poems or short wise idioms that are easy to remember and recite for their aesthetic value and for their entertaining nature, in addition to their ability to communicate emotions and express feelings and ideas more than speaking on some occasions. Combining rhyme and lyric has a psychological effect on the audience, in addition to the economic factor to communicate deep thoughts and meanings through few words. Mahfouz’s application of songs as a medium of expression in *Awlad Haratina* to communicate love, joy, victory and playfulness is in contrast with the gloomy setting of the bard reciting the same stories over and over to the same people every night. Mahfouz also employs the song rhetorically to express a political stance toward contemporary situations indirectly through contrast or irony. This kind of satire is an intelligent and safe technique to express both irony and paradox. This paradoxical application of the song is adapted
by Mahfouz in most of his work. We could see this attitude for example in *Al-Harafish* (1977), *A Drift on the Nile* (1966), *Midaq Ally* (1947) and other novels.

Mahfouz has used music and lyric in his narrative for several reasons. Besides the needed change of the narrative rhythm, Mahfouz was able to break the seriousness of the events by employing an art that is loved by an Arab audience. The song for Mahfouz is a method of teaching through entertainment. The words of the songs that he chooses have the power to trigger images from the past and the present life of his audience. Occasionally the songs hint at political implications that the traditional narrative could not possibly communicate without angering the authority of the state. Mahfouz skillfully uses simple words in moments that make those words charged with political implications. This rhetorical power of diversifying the narrative style is distinctive to Mahfouz in most of his novels. He relies on this method in his novels *Al-Harafish*, *Respectful Sir*, *The Searcher of the Truth*, and in the *Cairo Trilogy* (1956/57) as well as several others. In *Awlad Haratina* most of the songs are recited by males, and communicate emotions, feelings and lust toward females. Some of the songs that are sung by pedestrian children or older women make fun of male masculinity. No single song was communicated from a female to express her love to a male except Jasminae, the young woman that Arafah married to save her from death and who ended up being a prostitute later, which demonstrates the silencing and the objectifying of the female’s sexuality as well as the female’s voice.

Mahfouz uses the bard to take his readers on a pilgrimage or a journey to the beginning of the religious history of the Middle East. Using *Awlad Haratina* as a metaphor for a spiritual pilgrimage is a unique rhetorical strategy, especially since Mahfouz’s audience, including the imaginary audience of the bards, seem to ache for such a pilgrimage to the past. In fact, the pilgrimage journey of the Middle East is part of the Islamic religion. The experience of the *Hajj*
(The Muslims’ pilgrimage) is similar to the experience that Mahfouz portrays in *Awlad Haratina*. There is a chapter in the *Qur’an* called “M’raj” which means a labyrinth or a limb. This chapter tells a story about the experience of the *M’raj* by the Prophet Muhammad. The biography of Prophet Muhammad provides details about the spiritual journey of Prophet Muhammad to heaven, and about his meetings with God, and many other Prophets such as Abraham, Jesus and Moses. This story mentions that the Prophet Muhammad was taken by the angel Gabriel on a Pegasus to Aqsa, the Holy Mosque (The mosque of the Dome) in Palestine (Philistines), and from the Holy Rock in the Aqsa mosque, Pegasus lifted the Prophet to the sky. This spiritual journey of the *M’raj* is still celebrated by all Muslims. *Awlad Haratina* has activated all the holy symbols of this spiritual journey. Therefore, *Awlad Haratina* in my view is a renewal for the *M’raj* experience, although in a profane way. Mahfouz’s activation of the mythical symbols through recreating his mythical text is a powerful strategy that would be recognized by the targeted audience.

Moving the characters from their remote sacred aura and grounding them in human reality should inspire the reader to follow their example, so one could see them as practical role models rather than exceptional phenomena that are supported by supernatural or metaphysical power. The reader of Mahfouz is invited to think that if this action is possible by those ordinary characters such as Jabal, Rifaa, Qassim and Arafa, then it is possible for me and you to follow their models.

Representation symbols, time symbols and narrative symbols are used by Mahfouz rhetorically as a metaphor for performing a mental pilgrimage to the far past and to the same holy places that Muslims are required by the *Qur’an* to visit at least once in one’s lifetime. The pilgrimage journey that Mahfouz takes us through from the first chapter of Gabelaawi and
Adham to the chapter of Qaasem retrieves the experience of the Muslims’ yearly pilgrimage to Mecca. The details from Islamic traditions reflect Mahfouz’s agenda of taking his reader into a mental and spiritual journey through the chapters of his book, as well as through the religious history that has been saved for thousand of years in the psyche of the Middle Eastern people and in the *Holy Bible* and the *Holy Qur’an*. Mahfouz ends this journey with the same battle between good and evil. The Overseer has the same name of Adham’s son, Qadri, who was a copy of Idrees, his uncle. The Overseer represents Satan. When Arafa is killed at the end of the novel, his brother Hanash took over the responsibility of teaching his people magic. Magic, then, is the wisdom and the knowledge that is intended in the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca and the Great House. This fact is not clear for most Muslims; therefore, Mahfouz’s book *Awlad Haratina* sends important message behind the Hajj of Muslims.

Storytelling has been a method of communicating about the Arab culture from generation to generation before the Western model of Education. The storytelling technique and the bard is chosen by Mahfouz for its ability to preserve the balance between the description of the fine details of the environment with its people, characters, and values as well as the dialogues that could be used to communicate messages either directly or through digression.

The storytelling technique is a successful method to preserve the rhythm and the flavor of the events and the sequence of the scenes. The sequence of the characters’ appearance was used to avoid giving more importance to one over the other. *Awlad Haratina* is presented from a point of view of a film director, who manages and controls all movements of his characters and his scenes. Therefore, the documentation mode was used rather than one of depth. The intended meaning was produced through the development of the events and the movement of the
Mahfouz’s rhetorical power could be noticed further through his tight control over his narration. His images could be seen through a skillful montage that connects the scenes to secure specific meaning without the declaration of any motives or goals, which leave the ideological and the emotional aspects almost unnoticeable on the surface.

Lacan (1998) insists that without written documents, no history is possible. Mahfouz does not claim that he is writing a history; however, his storytelling serves as documentation. Most of his novels and stories are created to express a certain political era. Even his novels about ancient Egypt are related to certain modern political history. For example, *Mockery of Fates* (1939) represents his disappointment with the political leader Saad Zaqlool, and the Wafd political party in Egypt. *Rhadopis of Nubia* (1943) represents ancient situations that faced Egypt in the past related to today’s experiences. *Modern Cairo* (1945) talks about the new attitudes of people during a period the Egyptian people joined the world in search of their national identity. *The Cairo Trilogy* (1956/57) is the period that Mahfouz himself reflecting on his own journey in life, his childhood, his early manhood, and his maturity. This reflection took place through three generations when the Egyptians struggled to find their new national identity within the international society. *Awlad Haratina* is Mahfouz’s way to start a cultural reform through the activation of the Middle Eastern religious symbols in order to connect the Arab people to the future, while looking to its past.

For Mahfouz, writing is similar to documentation, especially in that he has the ability to register the details that do not concern history, such as recording the psyche of the people that he imagined lived in a specific historic period. His writing could be more sincere than realistic writing, because he could say in his fiction things that he could not talk about in reality, especially when his margin of freedom was limited. Mahfouz’s writing is a pilgrimage journey
that takes us from our busy life to new horizons, only to find ourselves face-to-face with today’s reality. Without our knowing, the skillful writer makes us see things in a new light. We read his books and his novels for entertainment, but through this reading, we can be transformed. The reader will not easily remain the same. Therefore, Mahfouz’s text was perceived as dangerous. In a conservative environment, anything that deals with the mind would be judged as dangerous. I do agree that Mahfouz’s work could be dangerous because it has the ability to open our eyes to bitter realities. After the pilgrimage with Mahfouz throughout his journey in his neighborhood, we could emerge free from our fears of losing our illusions about the past. We grow and get energized to be like his character Gebel, or Rifaa, or Qaasem, or Arafa, or even Hanash if we dare to combine wisdom with knowledge and continue the journey to the future without any hesitation when faced with oppressive forces. It may be that each of us can become one of Mahfouz’s heroes who succeed in ridding people of their fears or their demons.

Although what Mahfouz tells appears as mere assumptions and fiction, his understanding of human psychology contributes to his success in bringing to our mind characters that we could relate to or identify with. Mahfouz tries to awaken in our minds the myth that constructs the theology of the Middle East to enable us to see the mythical characters as real ordinary people who are as vulnerable as any other human beings. This treatment is guided by Mahfouz’s awareness of the role of literature in bringing change to the living social context. Mahfouz’s knowledge of the rhetorical power of the myth on our subconscious made him think of reinventing the myth and reversing its power. Mahfouz tells his audience that unless people realize that mythical heroes could be ordinary human beings, their role would remain static and absent.
The metaphorical representation of the Muslims’ Pilgrimage by Mahfouz’s book *Awlad Haratina* reveals a unique rhetorical power that might not possibly be recognized by a traditional Arab reader without a careful rhetorical criticism of the text. The choice of Mahfouz to communicate this journey through the conventions of the bard and storytelling is a successful rhetorical strategy to bring the audience to their origins, and take them to the deepest level of their consciousness. Storytelling was a successful pilgrimage for Sultan Said or Sultan Scheherayar, the husband of Scheherazade in *One Thousand and One Nights*, and this morality tale is firmly implanted in the Arab collective consciousness. It still has the possibility of being a successful pilgrimage for the Arabs and possibly for other Muslims to emerge healed from their cleansing journey to the past, and ready to participate effectively in shaping their future.
CHAPTER FOUR:
NAMING AND GENDERED TIME AND PLACE
IN AWLAD HARATINA

Mahfouz used many literary devices to establish the nature of gender relations within a traditional Arabic context. One of the many dimensional layers employed by Mahfouz is the rhetorical application of time, place and movement to reveal the politics of gender relations in *Awlad Haratina*. He also tapped into the power of naming in the Arab world and its political significance in relation to time and place--the way that men and women negotiate gender relations through the manipulation of space, and how this negotiation reflects an agency or power.

Space, Movement and Relation to Time

Gebelaawi, the Founder, summoned his sons to attend him in the "lower" drawing room. They respectfully stood in front of him, and then he made them sit down on chairs arranged around him. “For a while he fixed them, hawk-like, with his piercing eyes, then stood up, crossed to the great door to the veranda and stood there gazing out at the huge garden… The garden was bursting with life and song, but in the room there was silence” (*Children of Gebelaawi*, p. 6). The spatial relationship between Gebellaawi and his sons reflects the hierarchy of the patriarchal system: The sons coming to their father in the “lower” room: Moving to the lower floor could be symbolized here as preparation to surrender, to give in, to take steps down. The chairs were arranged around the father, so he is in the center of the space, controlling them with his piercing, hawk-like eyes. He is: "Standing up, crossing to the great door to the veranda and stood there gazing out at the huge garden… He turned towards them without moving from the spot where he
stood, and he spoke in a deep, raucous voice that filled the great room with its tapestried walls” (p. 6).

Gebelaawi’s manipulation of the space demonstrates power and domination. He continued to control the space by turning toward them without moving from the spot where he stood, making himself distant and unreachable, while he was communicating his message to them: “I’ve decided it will be best if somebody else manages the Trust… He examined their faces again…. then went on.... I’ve chosen your brother Adham to manage the Trust under my supervision…. Their faces changed at this sudden shock, and they exchanged furtive glances of consternation…. Gebelaawi turned his back on them and said impassively: That’s why I sent for you.” (p. 6).

Gebelaawi’s body gestures and movements maximize the tension, the fear, and the expectation of his children. While the body movement is presented in its exaggerated capacities, the absence of verbal communications is used here to increase suspense. Mahfouz’s application of the silence in this scene has complemented the strong effects of the body gestures (fixing them with piercing, hawk-like eyes, standing up, crossing all the way to the door). Silence is the ultimate control, maximizing suspense, then holding their suspense further to state the ultimate control over the situation by saying nothing.

“They exchanged enquiring glances… This was how he was when he had made an important decision… They were worried, because he was as despotic at home as he was outside, and compared to him they were nothing” (p. 6). Gebelaawi’s movement and his control over the space tell the audience that he was a despotic and remote person. Foucault (1978) observes how power is established through the manipulation of space by using the example of this exercised as used by medical doctors in modern clinics. First, the patient has to go to the clinic instead of the
old method, when the physician went to the patient. Also the series of procedures that the modern clinic follows, such as the patient staying first in a waiting room, then moving to a separate room to see the nurse, and staying alone for some time before meeting the doctor, establishes the doctor as a dominant figure within the space. This process of waiting, while experiencing the remoteness of the doctor, leaves one vulnerable and full of expectations. The remoteness of the medical doctor has a powerful psychological effect on the patient. The power and the control that is experienced by the patient communicate the same psychological effect that Mahfouz wants his reader to experience. It is a shared moment of intensity that is experienced by both Gebelaawi's children and Mahfouz's audience.

Gebelaawi's movement, silence, and his scarce language, the way he looked at his sons, the way he moved, and the way he speaks communicates authority, control and power. Then his scarce words become compliments to his strong gestures: “It’s my decision; all you have to do is to hear and obey… I assure you I’ve made my choice for everybody’s good” (pp. 7-8).

Mahfouz unveils gender relations through the time and the place of the event itself. The audience develops a sense of the mythical time through the descriptive details of his character, Gebelaawi, and through the setting of the Great House in the desert or the wasteland, and through movement of his characters: ”The Strongman of the Desert…With his great height and breadth he seemed superhuman, a being from another world” (p. 5). From the mentioned details and the development of the event, an historical time period is created where the patriarchal system is in full control over gender politics: Males accept the norms of this patriarchal system without question, especially those who benefit from it. For Idrees, it is a matter of survival to fight against his father's will to take his right in such a strong, and “ancient” patriarchal system. Idrees's reaction is justified because the hierarchical chain is interrupted unexpectedly.
The movements, the manipulation of the space, the verbal and non-verbal communication and gestures of both Gebelaawi, the father, and Idrees, the son, display the power and the authority that the male had in such a mythical time: "Gebelaawi took two ponderous steps forward and said quietly his contorted features warning of the worse: ‘Hold your tongue,’" (p. 8).

The manipulation of space by Idrees demonstrates the hierarchical position of the oldest son within his family. His selections of words and his body language support that position. Mahfouz tells us that Idrees “strode across to Adham till he was almost on top of him, puffed himself up like a cock in full display, to point up the contrast between himself and his brother in stature and complexion and beauty, and spat out his words with the violence of a sneeze” (p. 7).

Mahfouz’s choice of words expresses the movement of the time from complete silence to an intensive moment, nearing a point of explosion, through a fast dialogue between Gebelaawi and Idrees:

this creature. . . .the son of a black slave…Me and my full brothers are sons of a real lady, the best of women,’ then pointing to Adham, telling his father: He’s the youngest of us. Why you should prefer him to me, or is this the age of servants and slaves? Hold Your tongue, you idiot, for your own sake! Death to any man who helps him or allows him to come back! (Then, raising his eyes to the shuttered windows of the women's quarters): Immediate divorce for any woman who helps him!’ Again, the time stopped after this explosion, and the reader experience silence again. It is like the time has reached to a stop after the density of the moment (p. 7).

Mahfouz (1981) controls the time of the dramatic moment through his maneuvering of the space, the setting and of the movements of his characters as in the example I illustrated. He manipulates our attention through the descriptions of the tone of voice and the facial expressions
of his characters, so we get a complete image of the intensity of the situation. The psychological
time that is experienced by the audience takes one on a psychological journey into the psyche of
Mahfouz's characters. When the intensive moment ends, the reader experiences relief: it is
finally over. Silence again. This is a break that the reader needs badly after the exhaustion that
s/he experiences in the escape from Mahfouz's intensity. It is the joy and the pain that the
skillful author puts the reader through. Mahfouz's (1959) poses, actions, or silences are
experienced powerfully through this movement of narration across time and space. With this
device, Mahfouz exercises a high level of control over the rhetorical outcome of the message he
sends to his audience. Using the language of actions and feelings, he communicates the intended
violence, intimidation, fear or even terror in order to break any resistance that the reader might
have to follow to the end of the moment. Mahfouz's ability to control the emotions of his reader
helps to prepare the reader for the intended message.

Objectifying Women

The status of women complemented men’s existence such as seen through the
confrontation of Idrees and Gebelaawi. The status of either the mother of Idrees, Radwan,
Abbas and Jaleel or the black slave girl, the mother of Adham, were equal in the eyes of
Gebelaawi; both are under the threat of immediate divorce to face their harsh fate outside the
great house if they violate their space. Women were only felt and not seen. They are behind the
“shuttered windows of the women’s quarters….Adham went to the garden house, followed by
many pairs of eyes on the veranda, in the garden and behind the windows” (pp.10- 11).

Mahfouz communicates through his portrayal of the meeting between Adham and
Umayma that man and woman are part of a great melody. However, the woman in this portrayal
is a subject. She is hesitant; she is supposed to not be seen; she is not allowed in the garden
despite the fact that she is part of the great melody of the garden with its beautiful fountains, birds, and trees:

Suddenly another shadow grew out of the side of his own… He turned and saw a brown girl about to retreat on discovering him. He signaled her to stop, which she did. He took a good look at her, then asked gently: Who are you? She answered hesitantly: Umayma… He felt a desire to talk to her and asked: What has brought you to the garden? Her eyelid dropped as she replied: I thought it was empty. Adham's response: But you’re not allowed. Her voice was almost inaudible: I’ve done wrong, sir. She retreated round the corner. Then he heard her running away. He murmured with feeling: ‘you lovely girl!’ He felt that he had never been more truly one of the creatures of the garden than he was now, and that the roses, the Jasminaa, the carnations, the song birds, the doves and he himself were part of one great melody. He said to himself: ‘Umayma is lovely—even her thick lips. All my brothers are married, except proud Idrees. She is the same color as me, and how beautiful it was to see her shadow grow out of mine, as she was part of my body with its confusion of desires. My father will not disapprove of my choice, or how could he have married my mother? (p. 14).

Women are silenced, and they are not allowed to be seen or heard. The reader is allowed to sense the presence of women behind closed windows. Mahfouz tells the readers that some women die out of grief and resentment, such as Idrees' mother: “She sickened and lay dying. Gebelaawi came to take leave of her, and she pointed at him an accusing hand, which showed no sign of disease” (pp. 18-19).

Another example is Narjis, who was a victim. Mahfouz tells his reader that she was seduced by Idrees, the fine, noble, his father’s kind of man. However, men are not blamed by their society for their sexual activities outside marriage, while women become outcast as in the case of Narjis.
The Space Between the Husband and the Wife

Adham “found Umayma by the mirror, her face still veiled in white” (p. 23).

Umayma is an object whose main concern is to beautify herself to please her husband. Umayma was “standing by the mirror. Her face is still veiled in white.” “Veil communicates mystery, exotic flavor mixed with purity or divine image, the virgin, the taboo, the innocence, the untouched, the child-like creature” (p. 23). Women are to be raised from childhood to be a gift for their husbands. They have to preserve their virginity until the package, which has to be delivered very carefully to the master, is wrapped as carefully as a new gift should be wrapped. She has no right to be eyed by any male except her husband as we noticed from the first encounter between her Umayma and Adham in the garden. This represents the extreme segregation between men and women in such cultures as Afghanistan. While this encounter could occur accidentally, it might not be forgiven if it is repeated because its repetition might communicate a diversion from the acceptable. There are two messages here. There is a need to see women, but that only should happen by accident; otherwise, women would face harsh consequences such as in Narsis’s case. Narsis was seduced by Idrees who made her pregnant and led to her being outcast by the leader of the Great House.

Mahfouz describes Umayma after her marriage to Adham as talkative, compared to Adham who enjoys silence and beauty: “The more he wanted silence, the more she insisted on talking, for she hated silence as much as she loved the garden” (p. 24).

What silence signifies here for men is different from the silence for women. Silence is power for Gebelaawi, and it is harmony for Adham when he becomes one with the nature, but for Umayma, silence means losing her only chance to express herself with a male, especially considering that her voice is already silenced by traditions. Umayma’s voice here is the only way
to express her feeling of being alive. It is not more than the voice of nature with its singing birds and trees. “Her favorite subject of conversation was their life together, but she was also not unwilling to chatter about recent events in the house, especially whatever concerned the wives of Radwaan, Abbaas and Jaleel” (p. 24). She demands listening: “You’re very far away from me, Adham… you aren’t listening to me” (p. 24). She is hardly ever silent and Adham then learned “to listen with only half an ear, nor not listen at all.” It is like that the voice of women are not worthy of listening to.

Women’s voices are described as gossip. “Don’t these flowers deserve our attention rather than gossip about my brothers’ wives? Umayma said sadly: The flowers are more beautiful; but your brothers’ wives never stop talking about you and the management of the Trust, always the management of the Trust, and your father’s faith in you, over and over again” (p. 25).

Although women are confined, within that confinement, they are able to compel their husbands into actions they cannot take themselves. Umayma was concerned about the future more than Adham, and through her influence, she manages to let him act upon her desire: “Look at our future as hard as you look at the branches and the sky and the birds,” she tells Adham (p. 26). Later the reader sees the result of Umayma’s influence on Adham. Umayma is made responsible for making Adham violate his father’s instructions, like the case of Eve and Adham, and how the women are held responsible for God’s punishment for all human beings on earth. Without women’s sin, men would still be enjoying heaven.

Within their space, women also establish and/or reinforce norms in the society. Adham’s mother tells her son, “I’ll speak to your father about (Adham’s desire to marry Umayma), and perhaps I have the joy of seeing your children before I die” (p. 19). In Rifaa’s chapter, Lady
Zakia, the wife of a strongman of Gebel Alley, visits Rifaa’s mother with her daughter, and Rifaa’s mother, Abda, knew that that visit was a sign that Lady Zakia was interested in marrying her daughter to Rifaa. Women strengthen the patriarchal tradition by admiring those who conform to the expectation: Umayma was portrayed as looking after the husband and maintaining a good relationship with his mother, in addition to bearing children. The role of the wife is expected to be an extension for the role of the mother. The wife looks after the husband like his mother. Women meet the expectation of their surroundings by serving their husband, but there is no expectation from the husband to serve his wife.

_Men Are Ignorant About Womanhood_

Adham asked Umayma:

Why she had stopped coming and she made various excuses such as work or tiredness....When he made advances to her, she accepted them without real passion, as though she were humoring him reluctantly... He wondered what could be the matter...He could have been harsh with her, and wanted to very much at times, but her fragility and paleness and her politeness held him back. Sometimes she seemed unhappy and sometimes confused. One time he caught a look of repulsion on her face, and he was both angry and sad, and said to himself: I’ll be patient a while; either she’ll improve, or to hell with her! (p. 27).

The reader learns here that there is no sexual education between males and females. The traditions do not address this significant topic openly. Adham only learned from his father after the father’s investigation into their relationships and the changes in Umayma’s behavior. Then only Adham learned that the changes in Umayma’s behavior toward him were due to her
pregnancy: “Be gentle with her, you ignorant fellow, and don’t make advances to her till she asks you to. Soon you will be a father,” Gebelaawi said to Adham (p. 27).

*Women Express No Voice, Only Emotions*

While everyone who loved or feared Gebelaawi joined Adham’s bridegroom procession and the great troop of singers, dancers and admirers of Gebelaawi and Adham shouting out their greetings, women only expressed their feelings through “whoops of joys,” which “awakened the district” (p. 20). In Adham’s bridegroom procession, there is no mention of women. The gender of the singers, the dancers and the drummers are not mentioned. “The Great House was awake till morning with singing and drinking and merry-making” (pp. 22-23). We assumed that both males and females were happy, but there is no single gesture to women participating in this occasion other than “Women’s whoop of joy.”

Because women are silenced in many ways, body language is employed to communicate interest between men and women. Eye contact between lovers is the first sign of emotional or sexual expression. The eye means a lot to a conservative environment. The Holy Qur’an orders Muslims to avoid the gaze and to avoid sexual arrestments. The Prophet Mohammad advises Muslims to avoid the second look when they see themselves drawn by the beauty or the infatuation of the person that they are exchanging with to discourage any sexual temptations or desires.

The contacts that the social rules allow between males and females are casual greetings with hands, but it still means a lot for lovers. The lover takes this chance to communicate his feeling through the way that s/he reaches out to the other hand. Handshakes are common greeting gestures in most known human cultures. They communicate peace, kindness and good intentions. However, people can also communicate opposite feelings such as carelessness and distance
through handshakes. Some people can barely hold the extended hand which communicates hesitance and discomfort. Pressing on the hand and squeezing the fingers could communicate mixed feelings when it is between different sexes. It could be an aggressive and a clear sexual gesture, especially when the other person is resistant. However, it is common between male friends to communicate strength, masculinity, friendliness and humor through contact of hands.

The time that is spent in hand shaking and hand embracing is critical. It could be very quick and it could last few seconds. In case of rejection, the unaccepting person pulls out his/her hand quickly to show his/her discomfort. However, the lover could communicate his feelings through holding the hand longer and pressing on it warmly and gently while looking at his lover’s eyes to make sure that her/his gesture is understood.

A smile from the opposite person could confirm the reception and the acceptance of the message. In a conservative culture, usually males take the lead in exposing their feelings and taking the first step toward the opposite sex.

Time

Time is reflected through the development of relationships, particularly the relationship between the perfect patriarch Gebelaawi and his sons, as well as among the sons. The following scene illustrates the use of time. Gebelaawi:

summoned his sons to attend him in the lower drawing room…They all came….dressed in silk jellabas….They stood in front of him, so respectful that they hardly dared look at him directly. He made them sit down on chairs arranged round him. For a while he fixed them, hawk-like, with his piercing eyes, then stood up, crossed to the great door to the veranda and stood there gazing out at the huge garden…The garden was bursting with life and song, but in the room there was silence. It seemed to the brothers that the
Strongman of the desert had forgotten them. With his great height and breadth he seemed superhuman, a being from another world. They exchanged enquiring glances; this was how he was when he had made an important decision. They were worried, because he was as despotic at home as he was outside, and compared to him they were nothing… He turned towards them without moving from the spot where he stood, and he spoke in a deep, raucous voice that filled the great room… He examined their faces again…. (pp. 5-6).

Fadl (2003) finds that Mahfouz in *Awlad Haratun* as well as in the *Harafish*, employs the macro technique, which differs from his previous work, in which he uses the micro technique to magnify the life of his characters. For example, Mahfouz stays very far from his characters to let his audience have a panoramic view of the time and place of his Characters. Fadl finds that Mahfouz’s narrative time does not correspond to realistic time. However, Fadl believes that Mahfouz's arrangement of his text and the reflection that he applies from time to time to lead his reader to meditate on the connection and the repetition of incidents, making time one of the most distinguished metaphors of the novel. Mahfouz (1959) sheds some light on the conflict of the human psyche through the magnification of certain intense moments that enable the reader to grasp the emergence of the humanistic conflict. The reader could notice the condensed life of Adham and his brothers in the beautiful garden, and the departure from the Great House, and the hard life Adham experienced outside the Great House with the evil Idrees, until the murder of one of his sons Hammam by Qadri, Adham’s other son, who then runs away with his female cousin. All this extension of life time was condensed in one chapter in a very concise manner, leaving out long centuries and prophesies. Mahfouz continues in the next chapter with Jabal/Gebel, and the same with Rifaa and Qaasem’s chapters, and then he appoints Arafa as their
fifth and the last rival in the final chapters. Fadl (2003) notices that Mahfouz does not hint in any way to the flood that is recorded in religious history, and that is possible according to Fadl, because of the role of Iblees and his offspring. This has significance in the continuation of the crisis in the text. Therefore, Mahfouz's new subtexts are independent from the original one in its organization. I will push the argument of Fadl (2003) further, and present a new reading to Mahfouz's concept of time and space in *Awlad Haratina* as well as in most of his other novels.

The reader could notice in Mahfouz's text a collection of metaphorical symbols such as time and place symbols in addition to narrative symbols, such as the bards and the story-teller. The rhetorical power of Mahfouz's distinguished style is its ability to let his reader deduct the mythical and metaphysical atmosphere of his Characters and their stories. The text is a representation for the story of the human being's journey on earth. Both the invention of the bard and the application of the story-telling approach have the ability to bring the Arab collective memory home. While Mahfouz (1959) secures identification with his Arab audiences, his rhetorical choice helps him to preserve the balance between the description of the details and the dialogues. Furthermore, the story-telling technique has the ability to preserve the rhythm of the events in *Awlad Haratina*. His novel, *Arabian Nights and Days* (1981), is a good example for this crafty manipulation of his characters in a way that transforms the traditional meaning of time and the space and turns it to a journey or pilgrimage in the psyche of the human being. In the dilemma of time and place, which is a consistent struggle of the human being, one could see in most of Mahfouz's work, a gradual resolution in his latest novels. Again, his novel, *Arabian Nights and Days* (1981) demonstrates that his earlier quest in *Awlad Haratina* (1959) is resolved by completing the circle and returning to the same starting point: the journey has to be in the imagination before one could step out to the reality. *One Thousand and One Nights*, then, was
Mahfouz's starting point, and his final destination in his quest to find an answer to the complexity of the human being.

The Significance of Place in *Awlad Haratina*

Like many Arabic writers, Mahfouz (1959) applied metaphors from his environment as described by Paramenter (1994) in her critique of Palestinian novels. Paramenter (1994) finds that stones and deserts in the Arabic novel are symbols of alienation; defining space, values and intentions; geography, planning and architecture. They are used as metaphors to communicate the alienation from the place itself. Paramenter (1994) addresses how the stone is used by Arabic authors to communicate the experience of place as home: an inside and an outside experience; rootedness and sense of place; the attachment to the place and the distance between self and place with the awareness of the outside world and the flow of time; the difficulty of delineating a universal experience of a place; landscape as a text; reading the landscape of home; the landscape of exile; Exile and the dialectic of space; the concepts of struggle and loss in the Palestinian poetry and stories; poetry of conflict; poetry of resistance; Western images of Palestine; the struggle of encounter: The shepherd image of the Arab: rendering an educated Arab who lives by words to a mute and powerless figure who needs to understand his powerlessness before he is allowed to speak “In a parlance acceptable and comprehensible to Israelis….the mute Arab remains powerless and homeless, despite his act of rebellion” (Paramenter, 1994, pp. 93-94). She explains the relationship between the quest for home and the Palestinian identity: “The articulation of home as an abstraction and objectification: drawing the boundaries of nations although it is an act of abstraction, it makes the lines vulnerable to argument, negotiation, assault and dispossession. “Boundaries become objects open to
manipulation” (p. 95). What is home? Home for the Palestinian Poet Mahmood Darwish is between memory and a suitcase,

It is not a map, nor a birth certificate. It’s not where you were born, nor where you will die. It’s not the land of your ancestors because the adversary claims the same; it’s not a question that you can answer and continue on your way. It’s your life and your cause bound up together. And before and after all of that, it’s the essence of who you are. (p. 96).

Darwish describes how the meaning of home evolved in his life as a child who fled to Lebanon in the dark of night during the 1948 war when his village came under attack from Jewish forces, “The home of a mother is her child, and the home of a child is its mother… It’s the thing that is lost, the awaited return” (p.96). Darwish finds that he is the one who is lost. Like the mute Arab, he cannot utter the word Palestine, nor admit to having been in Lebanon for fear of being labeled an infiltrator: “The moment they arrived on your land, they defined the parameters of their existence and those of their children. And at the same time they defined yours. The moment they became natives, you became a refugee: the meaning of home as a struggle between two memories. The Israeli refuses to coexist with the Palestinian memory, refuses to recognize it is forgetting their slogan regarding the Holocaust “We shall never forget”” (p. 96). Darwish says that being Israeli “does not give you prior membership over him who knows the time of the rain from the smell of the stone” (p. 96). Palestinian writers, Parameter concludes, attempt to maintain this essential meaning of stones as a means of confronting and resisting Israeli versions of place, history, and identity. Stones become an intellectual effort for Palestinians that grant rhetorical power and expose the vulnerability of
words, “for when words fail in confrontation with power, stones become weapons” (Paramenter, 1994, p.98).

It seems that the only woman who was able to escape the cruelty of the restricted space is Arafa’s mother, Jehsha (She Mole). We learned that she was raped and humiliated by the neighborhood’s strongmen and lived as an outcast until she moved out of the neighborhood to an unknown place, where she was able to raise and educate her children, and taught them how to claim their home and change the fate that was stuck to their mother.

The strongmen are violent, and their behavior is criminal and it shows the extremity of the aggressiveness of the male when it is not tamed by female energy (Gilder, 1973). This kind of behavior is also enhanced by the limited resources, which push people to violence in order to survive, and obviously, it reflects the resulting low economic and social class, with no education or health facilities, and no established legal system to control and supervise the violations of human rights.

Naming in *Awlad Haratina*

Mahfouz (1959) uses the names of people, places and mythical characters as a political strategy to communicate certain meanings about gender relations. Naming is power, and it reflects knowledge and power over the environment. When God in the Qur’an chose Adam to represent him on earth, His justification is that only Adam, by the authority of God, is taught all the names. Similar myth is portrayed by Mahfouz in *Awlad Haratina*, when he made Gebelaawi select Adham over his prestigious brothers because he knows the tenants by name. Names are not the thing, but they are symbols and sounds that generate images in our mind about things (Hayakawa, 1986). Without names or symbols to generate meanings and images in our mind, there would be no communication. Language, then, is a chain of symbols or names according to
Hayakawa (1986). This view reflects the fact that the progressed societies are those who have more symbols to communicate to each other about their environment, and the person who possesses more symbols has more power over people and over the environment as we could deduct from the power of rhetoric. Rhetoric is a higher level of generating meaning through language to influence people and consequently influence the circumstances.

The Problem of Translating Arabic Names

Stewart (1981) claims that his copy is “the only version in any language to take full account of both the original sources” (Al-Ahram, 1959 and in Beirut 1967). "Waqt" is translated by Stewart (1981) as "Trust." He explains that Trust “is the technical term for property held in trust under Islamic law to provide an income in perpetuity either for an institution, such as a mosque or school, or, as in this novel, for the descendants of a particular family. The rationale for such a trust is that it avoids the division of the property between various heirs, which would otherwise be required by Islamic law” (xix).

The word "Hara" could mean alley as both Stewart and Theroux agreed. However, neighborhood, in my opinion, is closest in meaning to the Western reader’s experience as well as to the Arabic psyche and could be used interchangeably with synonyms in most Arab countries. In Arab countries you could say, "so and so are the children of our Hara (neighborhood), Hitta (literally means piece) or Fareeq (Quarter) and all these words mean neighborhood. Philip Stewart (1981) mentions in his introduction that Alley is the best translation for Hara. Since Hara is a single thoroughfare (chapter 67) short enough for someone at one end to follow what goes on at the other (Chapter 104), and narrow enough for conversation to take place across it (chapter 97). Its people live in apartments opening on to the stairways to the
central courtyard of tenement-houses. These form two facing terraces, and their flat roofs provide alternative routes from one end of the Alley to the other (Chapters 33, 60, 83). (xix).

In the *Awlad Haratina*, when people say “the Alley,” they mean Gebelaawi’s Alley; however, calling the novel *Children of Gebelaawi* without stressing the Alley switches the message from connecting people to a place to a persona. The novel tells us about the people’s continuing pride in relating to Gebelaawi, but Gebelaawi as a person is symbolized by the place. The Alley could carry his name like in the case of Gebel, Rifaa or Qaasim. However, the Alley has a strong meaning as a place that holds both the characters and the actions. The connection to the place has significance to the Arabic psyche. This is one of the major conflicts between the Arab and the Western politicians. The place might have the same importance for many people. Jews attach equal importance to the place. After realizing the power of the place to strengthen their identity, they managed to build the old myth about “Israel,” the land of God’s chosen people. The awareness of the Jewish people of the importance of the place caused them to be insensitive about the determined efforts to alienate Palestinians and prevent them from claiming their connection to Palestine or Phalistine (Philistine) as it is mentioned in the Bible and as it is pronounced in Arabic. Some people do not make connections between original or ancient names and the pronunciations of the native language for the same names, and this is problematic.

Stewart (1981) also explains the meaning of the *hookah*. He states:

The hookah that the men of the Alley use for smoking hashish is not the heavy narghile, which stands on the floor or on a table, and which is smoked through a flexible tube. It is a smaller version, in Egyptian Arabic the *goza* “coconut (a smoking device) from the shape of the brass reservoir that is held in the hand of the smoker. A vertical stem carries
the smoke from the clay bowl, on which the drug is placed with glowing charcoals, down to the bottom of the water in the reservoir, and a bamboo pipe draws the smoke up to the smoker’s lips. (xix–xx).

The translation of the names of Mahfouz’s characters is problematic because if one translate the names to a foreign audience, the irony or the satire implied by Mahfouz might get lost because the foreign reader does not have firsthand experience with the Egyptian environment and its significance that is linked to Mahfouz’s choice of names. On the other hand, if the names are left without translation, the foreign reader would never understand the power of naming in Mahfouz’s work. Mahfouz carefully names his characters. Sometimes the name reveals an important feature of the character, and sometimes it reveals the contradiction that could be found in that character. Naming, then, becomes a critical issue in Mahfouz’s work, and it might need an insider’s point of view to grasp the depth of this phenomena in Mahfouz’s body of work. One example is the choice Noor for the main female character in the *Thief and the Dogs*. The character Noor is a prostitute who fell in love with Abbas, the man who spends his life in vengeance against the people who caused him to go to prison. Noor means light, and in *The Thief and The Dogs*, Noor is living in dark, but she still seeks light, and she is more faithful than Abbas’ wife, Nabaweyya. Another example, is Abbas, which means the non-smiling, which completely agrees with the description of the angry character of Abbas who seeks revenge until the end of the novel. Nabaweyya is derived from Prophet, which communicates sacredness, which is exactly opposite of what Nabaweyya, the wife of Abbas, did when she sent her husband to prison and married his closest friend and ran away with him. The same method is applied in *Awlad Haratina*. Gebelaawi means the man of the mountain, which corresponds to the persona of Gebelaawi who was the strongman of the *Hara*, who is feared by other Strongmen, and at the
same time is connected, to the solidness and the strength of God-like persona. Gebel is a metaphor for Moses, who spoke with God when God revealed himself to him through the fire of the Mountain, according to the Qur’an and the Torah. Rifaa means the exalted one, and this is also a metaphor that stands for Jesus who was raised by the Lord according to the Bible and the Qur’an; and Qaasem is a metaphor for Mohammed. It is one of Prophet Mohammed’s names, which means the divider between good and evil; and finally Arafa, which is a metaphor for knowledge. Here are some other, more comic, names of Mahfouz’s supportive characters in Awlad Haratina: Jahsha (She Mole), Battikha (Watermelon), Kunfus (Beetle) Yasmeen (Jasminaa) or Um Bi-Khaterha (The Mother of Her Choice) or Sawares (Schwartz). These names reveal to us certain features of the Egyptian environment, mostly of the marginalized lower social class, where those names still are applied, despite their comic nature. The names are connected with a history of bitterness in an illiterate environment where having more children means more pain and stress in a scarce economy: an economy that is dysfunctional and does not provide hope for its people. The insider point-of-view of Mahfouz realizes how Egyptians transform their desperate pains and sorrows into the comic. This is deduced from Egyptian films, as well as from the reality of every day life in a modern capitalist free enterprise economy where those who have nothing suffer. After about five decades of writing Awlad Haratina, the same culture that rejected Mahfouz’s message, still suffers from the same problematic issues: an insufficient educational system that does not respond to today’s problems; a dysfunctional political and economic system that ignores the basic needs of those who are marginalized; a religious system that focuses on spirituality without connecting it to the current economic system that forces most people to accept corruption and bribery as a way of life, which as a result, pollutes the spiritual and moral system.
Stewart (1981) mentions that he took “slight liberties with some of the food and drinks, replacing them with the nearest equivalent familiar outside the Arab world. Buza is translated as ‘ale’: it is an illegally brewed drink, based on stale bread soaked in water” (xx). Proper names, he states, have presented the most difficult problem, and several solutions have been adopted side by side. Place names have been given a standard guidebook spelling, except that the jebel of Jebel Muqattam has been spelt with a J in order to retain the form familiar in English. Jebel, usually translated ‘mountain’, is such an important word in the book that the Arabic form has been preferred; ‘mountain’ in any case has the wrong associations for readers from more humid countries; besides, jebel Muqattam rises only a few hundred feet above the level of Cairo. (xx).

Stewart (1981) refers to the problem that he encountered with proper Arabic names as "the most difficult problem." He admitted that most of the nicknames he uses in the novel have been translated, "with a great deal of freedom," for:

They constitute almost the only comic element in an otherwise serious book (though it is often sinister comedy), and to fail to translate them would be a loss for the reader, besides depriving the translator of a rare opportunity for some amusement. Note that the spelling of ‘Bullrush’ is deliberate; the Arabic has the meaning of impetuosity as well as botanical sense. The name ‘Omnibus’ is particularly interesting; the obsolete colloquial word ‘Swaar’s’ is from Herr Schwartz, who gave his name to the horse-drawn omnibus service that he established in Cairo in the mid-Nineteenth Century (xxvi).
Stewart’s treatment of Mahfouz’s names have created another problematic issue for the Western reader. Stewart has done his best to save the Western reader from the discomfort that one might confront when encountering different names of people, of places or of food and drinks. I had a chance to read some translated English texts as a child, and it has been certainly confusing and difficult for me to remember some foreign names or to pronounce them correctly; however, this encounter with a foreign culture, while harsh, is a necessity for cultural and intercultural exchange, especially in a world moving toward a global culture. While translation of the names might be necessary to make the reader understand their comic meaning, which has the potential to communicate the hardship of the time and the place, it does affect the metaphorical power that Mahfouz (1959) tries to communicate rhetorically.

Stewart (1981) might have succeeded in preserving the comic aspect of the names by his translation, and this might have increased the numbers of English readers to Mahfouz’s work; however, adding the translation of names in an appendix in the end of the book would serve the intention of the author and restore the power of Mahfouz. One of my American friends who read the English translation of Mahfouz’s work found it tasteless for Mahfouz to “make fun of his own people and make others laugh at their misery.” This kind of view explains the translation problematic that I addressed here. The comic names of Mahfouz, are immediately understood by an Arabic reader as a humor that has the ability to hit you right at the heart and makes one want to laugh and cry in the same time, and this is the mysterious power of Mahfouz’s style and strategy in the naming process. Translation of the names for the Western reader, then, might not lead to the intended effect.

The Western reader is already placed in an ivory tower by the Western media, and the novel with its problematic names could further complicate and alienate the native English reader
who is protected by the Western media from being fully exposed to the reality outside the American dream. The translator then, confronted by such complex text, is left with no easy choice to communicate Mahfouz’s message through naming, which tells the reader: you are involved as a significant part of this novel, and not merely a tourist who is visiting a poor site to buy cheap entertainment.

Names in Mahfouz’s novels, therefore, communicate certain cultural aspects that an English reader might not be able to grasp through translating the name. While culture is a specific phenomenon that develops within a certain context, communication is very much the same except that we set new rules when it comes to inter/intra or cultural or global communications. In the later case, we need to establish a certain grounds to create a shared space, or a shared meaning/understanding.

Names in the Arabic culture remain the same from birth to death. Women do not adapt their husband’s names when they get married as the case in the Western cultures. Arab children carry their fathers’ names forever, and this has gender significance that shows the power of the patriarchal system. However, Arab women are able to preserve some pride in keeping the name that is given to them by birth. If people do not like their names, then they have the freedom to seek legal permission to change it; however, that does not happen very often. On the other hand, some Arab countries who adopted Western systems have started in the last century to follow the Western style in giving women the name of their husbands, something that Western Feminists have paid attention to recently, and a few women have started to violate the traditional naming process after marriage, opting to preserve their birth names.

Unlike most Western names, most Arab names still have identifiable meanings to their “owners.” Both males and females’ names have meanings whether they are modern or ancient
names. Most of the comic names in the Children of the Alley are nicknames. Nicknames are not registered in the legal papers as in the Western culture. They are officially registered when the person chooses the nickname as his last name or surname. Some male’s names are compounded names such as Mohammad Akbar, where the person could be called either Mohammad or Akbar for short. Some Arab and Islamic cultures give the name Mohammad to their older son, and sometimes they add to it another name such as explained. Mohammad is usually added to Muslim names because it is considered a blessing to carry the Prophet’s name. Some other compounded Muslim names carry Al-Deen or Al-Islam, or Allah, such as Noor Al-Deen, Ruh Al-Islam, Nasr-Allah, Fathullah, etc. Most Muslim males names also carries the prefix Abdul, which means server. God has ninety names in the Qur’an, and all those names could be given to males with the addition of the prefix Server.

I believe that a name is a culture. It is a gate to a culture. When I came first to this part of the United States, I was confronted with a pressure to change my name to make it easier for American colleagues to pronounce it. I found this tradition of indirect pressure has accomplished its goal in many American contexts. This pressure of protecting the Self from confronting the different Other, could be a universal phenomena, as I witnessed people change their names when they become Muslims to communicate their new Islamic identity. However, within the American context, people are pressured to change their names even when they keep their original religion or identity. Most of my international friends, for example, have two names--one is among people from their own ethnicity, and the other is commercialized and presented to others for consumption. When my Chinese, Japanese or African friends address people from their own ethnicity differently, the issue of the relationship between naming and cultural identity on one
hand, and the insider and the outsider on the other hand arises, and with it comes the violent act of stealing the identity of the other albeit elegantly and gently.

I claim to have more advantage in my rhetorical analysis to Mahfouz’s work because I have the ability to go beyond the meaning that is communicated via the translated copies of his work, and a non-Arabic speaker might not have access to this insider point of view. When using a different language that is not my mother tongue, I find myself trapped in the same disadvantage that I addressed earlier, because communication becomes an ideology and a site for negotiation, and to communicate our thoughts either verbally or through writing with a person from another linguistic framework, one could easily be trapped within the hegemonic framework of the other culture, and it is hardly a winning situation, when we consider the rhetorical power of the language and its effects on the communicator.

Mahfouz (1959) addresses the Egyptian environment of his time, where Egyptians are highly influenced by complex political and economic factors that left their scars on the lower classes of the social spectrum. However, in *Awlad Haratina*, Mahfouz has been able to address gender relations from a new perspective. He contextualized gender relations into time and place to examine its problematic roots. Mahfouz has succeeded in his attempt to communicate a mythical time and place that exists in the psyche of the Arabs or the Middle Eastern people: A time and place that has the ability to trigger the current problems of gender relations and its influence on other political and socio-economic domains. This leaves the audience with a responsibility to shape the future within the light that Mahfouz successfully borrowed from the problematic past.
CHAPTER FIVE:
THE MYTH OF GENDER AND MODERNITY
IN AWLAD HARATINA

Mahfouz creates a mythical narrative in *Awlad Haratina* that attempts to awaken the reader’s consciousness through rhetorical and symbolic strategies to face his or her reality in order to transform it. Myth and its relationship to gender relations becomes an important aspect of this journey in *Awlad Haratina*. This chapter, then, discusses the rhetorical significance of myth to gender relations and the significance of both as found in Mahfouz’s novel.

Gender is a myth that was invented by language and through separation between the species of human beings and their activities into two separate categories. Gender is thought of as "a grammatical category contrasting distinctions of sex or animateness" (*Britannica*, 2005). However, this linguistic categorization, which might have been started for medical reasons to distinguish between males and females from the moment of birth and during puberty based on their different sexual organs, has complicated the relationship between men and women for generations, and it reached a critical point in our time.

The Arab and other societies divided people’s activities into two different spheres. While males have been encouraged to have outdoor activities, females were encouraged toward indoor activities. Men are raised to be breadwinners, while females are raised to be care givers. Therefore, the psychological process of gendering starts during the parenting process. Parents encourage certain activities in the child and suppress other activities, especially the activities that deal with exercising power. For example, young females are turned away from aggressive behaviors which give young males the feeling of supremacy. This creates the gendered self. This process of creating stereotyping through our language affects our activities, our identities and our
self-definitions. It also imposes restrictions in our ability to experience our full potential as human beings. Gender relations have affected our economy, our political activities and affected the direction that is needed for our future as a human species.

The myth of gender is imposed and encouraged by the socialization process. In order to be accepted within a group, one learns how to conform to the accepted norms. Gender requirements differ from culture to culture. However, within the framework of Western modernization, many old matriarchal cultures, such as the Native American culture and some African cultures, were pushed to conform to the modern model of gender relations.

The Arab culture is a patriarchal system shaped by its historical and environmental legacy. Arab men were raised to be warriors, while Arab females were raised to be care givers to maintain the tribal societies. That type of socialization process did not necessarily establish women as inferior to men. For example, when the Prophet Mohammad emigrated to Yathrib (The Madina), some of his male followers complained that their women imitated the behaviors of the Madinite women in the way they competed with their husbands, and sometimes, they had power over their husbands. Nevertheless, gender assignments in Arab societies were primarily differentiated by a strict hierarchy with men wielding all the power in the public sphere, offering women some power within the sphere of indoors. In modern times, intellectual Arab males and females find it almost impossible to function in such a cultural and social binary that alienates the Arab Self and hinders its growth and ability to contribute in today's intellectual discourse.

The concept of "gender" has been blurred by the issue of sexuality. The biological sexual organs are used as a criterion that distinguishes males from females at birth, and later during puberty, and they became a signifier for gender relations or the relationship between men and women. Gender identity and sexual activities became a site of negotiation between "the Self" and
"the Other." Feminist and Gay and Lesbian studies argue that sexual organs do not always
determine the person's sexual preference or gender identity. Gender identity refers to the
gendered self and the idea of the person about the gender that one belongs to.

Gender identity is driven by the cultural norms, customs and myths that are a part of the
culture’s history. The Arab myth of gender originated within the Middle Eastern religions of
Islamic, Judaism and Christianity. It is the same story of Adam and Eve and the descent from
heaven that Mahfouz addresses in *Awlad Haratina*.

Al-Saleh, N. (2001) addresses the Arabic collective mind and the remittance of
mythological thinking, and maintains that “This mythical aspect still has authority in our
subconscious as a defensive mechanism that protects the consciousness from the unknown on
one hand and to enable it to confront the spiritual emptiness that was produced by the modern
civilization on from the adaptation to a reality that is pregnant of contradiction on the other
hand” (p. 96).

Gender relations in Islam are problematized by the United Nations' notion of human
rights. Islam authorizes males to be responsible for disciplining their wives, and even beat them
when they do wrong until they repent (*Qur'an*, Nisa Chapter). Although this verse was justified
by some Muslim scholars, this verse built on the fact that women marry their matches, and the
Muslim male is educated to protect his family, and women are emotional beings and because of
their emotions, some of them get carried away by their emotions and disturb the norms.

Sharee’ah (Islamic legal system) depends on the interpretation of *Qur’an* and Prophet
Mohammad’s traditions and Hadith. The modern Sharee’ah has stopped evolving, and it is fixed
on the interpretations of the four famous Sunni Islamic scholars/Imams, whose schools are
named after them: The Malik, The Shafee, The Hanafi, The Hambali, and the Jaffari Islamic
Shi’at School that is considered by the majority of Sunni Muslims as a departure from the Prophet Mohammad’s traditions. When studying the sayings and the traditions of the Prophet Mohammad himself, we discover his recognition of women’s intellectuality through his relationship with his first wife, Khadeeja, and his second wife Aysha, whom he referred to in one of his sayings as a source of Islamic knowledge: “Take half of your religion from this red-haired woman.” Aysha had been active politically and participated in a battle against the fourth Islamic Caliph, Ali Bin Abi Taleb. This built resentment against her among Prophet Mohammed's followers that still exists today. The fact that modern Islam has made gender relations a focus of its merit provides its rivals with reasons to attack it.

Despite the arguments of Muslims that Islam is the only religion that gives people human rights and treats them equally without discrimination because of skin color, ethnicity, or origin, Islam does maintain that the role and the responsibility of a man is different from those of a woman, especially in marriage, in property, in the legal system, and in the battle field. The Islamic system maintains that while women are equal spiritually in front of the creator, they are different from men emotionally, psychologically, and physically.

Gender relations in Islam have taken for granted the values of the patriarchal system in which the man is the provider and protector of the family, and women are the care givers and the family maintainers. Within the current global economy, where patriarchal values are under heavy attack by most known intellectual thinkers, gender relations and sexuality as a category to classify or identify people is a hot topic that most intellectuals find themselves entangled. After centuries of taking for granted the duality of gender, we are approaching an age in which we find ourselves forced to find a new definition of what it means to be a human being with integrity without having to be entangled by the manner of the physical appearance or sexual preference.
Whether the person identifies oneself as a male or a female, a man or a woman should not undermine the contribution of this entity to the meaning of humanity as a whole. In this research, this attitude will be referred to as “Al-Muruwa”.

The Roots of Arabic Mythical Thinking

**What is a Myth?**

Rowland, (1990) states that “Myths are stories which symbolically solve the problem facing the society, provide justification for a social structure, or deal with a psychological crisis," and explains that myths possess "a unique power to symbolically ‘solve’ social problems not possessed by other symbolic forms, because the rules of discursive logic do not apply in a mythic story," and the inconsistency of the mythical event could also be taken as truth (p. 103). A.J. M. Sykes (1970) defines myth to mean “the expression of abstract ideas in a concrete form” and “the story and the ideas it embodies are accepted and believed to be true” (Sykes, p. 17). The myth is constructed to appeal to emotions and to enlist sympathy for the ideas that it expresses (p. 17). Sykes (1970) states that “Myth is a very concise way of conveying a perception, and that within the form of one short story, it can convey a perception of a situation and the complex of attitudes, beliefs, and values that were used to structure the situation” (p. 18). He further explains that “myth is often more concerned with communicating an emotional response to a perception than it is with communicating the perception itself” (p. 20). Sykes (1970) borrows McLuhan’s expression that myth “is the mode of simultaneous awareness of a complex group of causes and effect” (Sykes, p. 21; McLuhan, 1959, p. 266).

Satton (1997) agrees with Dorgan (1979) and Fulmer (1990) that “mythos provides a means of healing the psychological wounds of war” (p. 213). He explains how a people:
who have experienced a military defeat have seen their most cherished attitudes, values, and beliefs, their core assumptions about themselves and their way of life put in doubt. They had always been told that their hearts were pure and their aim straight, but still they met with defeat. One can see how this disparity between objective and subjective reality would cause an inner tension that needs to be relieved. A defeated people find such relief in their long-treasured stories. Out of their corpus of sacred and secular narratives comes the raw material from which a people may construct new subjective interpretations of objective events. Through public discourse, e.g. sermons, speeches, editorials, novels, play, films, etc., the newly constructed narratives are molded, disseminated, reworked, and ultimately accepted as true by those who have need of them, (pp. 213-14).

Waldo W. Braden (1975) believes that some myths are responsible for keeping alive "sectional isolation and even racial hatred" (p. 20). Braden (1975) employs Kenneth Burke’s term “consubstantiality” to explain how persons identify with each other, through the development of common sensations, concepts, images, ideas and attitudes through shared myth. He says that myth provides "an effective means of establishing identification or consubstantiality" (p. 21) and that when the speaker:

activates the myth, listeners develop feelings of kinship or oneness with him. Setting imaginations in motion, he stirs up many connotative implications. A single sign may stimulate a variety of emotional responses, drawn from the unexpressed longings. The listener is thereby transported from his present complexities to a simplistic place, often romantic and dreamlike. Fantasy sometimes replaces reality. When the identification is strong, the speaker may produce near mass hypnotism; his slightest suggestion becomes a command to the faithful. This is the stuff that leaders like Hitler or some evangelists
exploits to move their followers. And hence, when they lose control of their rational judgment, listeners come under the influence of snake oil of a vicious kind that may result in great harm, (p. 21).

Braden (1975) explains how the myth-user (orator or writer) "seldom needs to present the myth in a full blown form; instead he suggests or insinuates it through a sign, a phrase, passing references, or a gesture. A physical symbol may heighten consubstantiality,” (p. 21).

Myth, according to the mentioned scholars, gains acceptance and strength through repetition. Myth functions to help people solidify their attitudes and amplify their sentiments through acting upon beliefs that are already possessed. Myths also provide an escape for those who can not face reality. The comfort that people experience from the rationalizations, the escapes, and the fantasy that they derive from the myth push people to defend their myths as truths. The myth acts as a powerful argument against change, or the needed change (Barden, 1975).

In his mythic criticism, Robert C. Rowland (1990) stresses the fact that myths became a center of critics’ attention because “myths, both in primitive society and also today, wield great power… Over the last half century most anthropologists have concluded that myth is not a primitive form, but a key aspect of all human culture” (p. 102).

Language and myth

Language conveys mythic thought everyday though socialization. Language is biased, and one of language’s limitations is the sexist aspect of it. This bias in the language is due to the complexity of human communication. The myth of gender is created within a specific environment in a specific time and place. Gendering the self must have been a useful strategy to manage the resources in a primitive environment, where people depended on their physical
power. Women have to go through different biological stages such as menstrual periods with all the emotional confusions and sometimes pain, pregnancy, which often hinders their mobility and prevents them from joining men in outdoor activities, such as hunting or fighting. El-Saadawi's (1981) comments about the history of sexuality support this view. The gendering of language has created two separate spheres for each gender; however, those two spheres might have been no more than the practical solution for division of labor. The development and the complexity of the life that the human race reached brought many changes that liberated women from being confined by their biological makeup. Women have been able to perform the tasks that were restricted to the male sphere through training and education. Women drive powerful machines, join the army, travel to far places alone, and contribute to the discourse of knowledge in the same way men do. However, despite the progress of women, the gendered language still restricts a lot of women and a lot of men from establishing a mutual respect for each others' merits. Women in most countries are still struggling to earn the prestige that is endowed to the man as a birth right. Women's sexuality is still misunderstood and abused by many cultures because of their mythical heritage about gender relations. The myth of Adam and Eve that depicts Eve as the evil temptress who turned Adam against God still has power in modern societies. Women are accused of tempting men to have sexual relations outside wedlock. This myth has continued to exist, in my view, partly because of our gendered language. However, the legacy of the female gender to bear children must have also created an eternal separation in the psyche of the human beings. Men depend on women to produce their children, their legacy for the future and, for some men, a sense of immortality. Therefore, sexuality between men and women might have been influenced by the economic aspect of human existence in an environment that depends on reproduction to secure power for men.
The gendered language of the primitive society has continued to make people perceive men as laborers and protectors, while women are perceived only as producers of children. This mythical aspect of language created a problematic gender myth that complicates the relationship between men and women, as well as all aspects of our lives. Language became a discourse of power, where the interests of powerful elites get served through the selection of everyday vocabulary. Because males have more power compared to females, our language is heavily influenced by male logic and male interests. Foucault's (1978) thoughts about the male gaze could explain this view.

The Knowledge and the Authority of the Word in the Arab Psyche

In the ancient history of humankind, knowledge used to be sacred and scarce, and only a few people knew the secrets of knowledge, such as the ancient Egyptian civilization as well as the Phoenicians. The Qur’anic story about Adam and Eve and their descent from heaven is connected to this secrecy of knowledge. Adam was chosen to be representative of God on earth, because he knew "all names", according to the Qur’anic text. God taught Adam the names, but kept this valuable knowledge limited to Adam and not extended to the rest of the angels, including Iblees. This Biblical myth is portrayed by Mahfouz (1959) in Awlad Haratina through Idrees, who managed to convince Adam through the curiosity of his wife, Eve, to steal the Secret Book of Gebellawi in order to gain hidden knowledge. In Mahfouz’s story, Al Adham’s knowledge of tenants’ names and the ability to read and write gave him the advantage over his brothers to take on the role of the patriarch. Now, when we learn that Adham’s mother is Adham’s teacher, a question is raised about who taught the mother, and how did she receive knowledge? We also know that Gebellawi has a secret book, in which he records his thoughts or notes things that he does not want to share with anyone, including his own children. Idrees wants
to steal the Secret Book. He wants to know, but he might not be qualified to know. Maybe Adham is his bridge to knowledge. Umaima, Adham’s wife, also wants to know (which represents the curiosity of women toward forbidden knowledge), and Adham again was her bridge to knowledge. Knowledge then is a privilege of the elite, and the elite do not necessarily belong to the highest economic class as we could deduce from Mahfouz’s text. Adham's mother was a black slave, but she was the main teacher for Adham and possibly Gebelaawi.

If Gebelaawi’s time is thought of as connected to the biblical time, then the tradition of Western science and the prestigious right of the selective elite to access knowledge could be perceived as an extension of the ancient tradition. However, the science of the modern age, which is Western science, has become a commodity, and it is not necessarily available for those who seek it, but only those who can afford to pay a price for it. The price is not necessarily financial only, but also conformity.

The traditional Western knowledge invented a social hierarchy that is exported to the rest of the world. Western mass media has pushed that tendency further. People no longer have credibility to those who do not submit themselves to this Western hierarchy. Knowledge is no longer pursued for itself as such, but knowledge is used as a commodity to fit into certain social classes, as well as to gain economic benefits. Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain this legitimization process in their discussion on the construction of reality. They explain that those who wish to climb the ladder of the hierarchy have to join universities to be credited as knowledgeable. Those who inherited knowledge from their ancestors became isolated, and some were dealt with as outcasts, and their knowledge viewed as heresy. People of the world have to be legitimized by the Western standard of knowledge to be recognized as knowledgeable. They have to pass Western conformity tests to demonstrate their eligibility to be accepted within the
organization or within the corporate system. Every single person has to pass through the eye of the needle to be legitimized as a teacher/advisor/professor/professional citizen of that idyllic land of knowledgeable people. No question should be asked about the credibility and the morality of the organization and its members as soon as they pass through that needle’s eye. Everyday life became separated from sacred legitimization and the theoretical intelligibility that would link it with the symbolic universe in its intended totality as Berger and Luckmann would advocate.

Knowledge is power, and those who posses knowledge can have power over those who do not have it. Knowledge also could be a metaphor for modernity. The old problem of preventing the majority of people from knowing has persisted, or maybe it had become worse, because the gap between those who know (modernized, developed, or progressed) and those who don’t know (the retarded, the undeveloped or belonging to underdevelopment) have became separated and are further apart after the accommodation of the previously secret institutions to be accepted as universal. The lay member of society no longer knows how his/her universe is to be conceptually maintained, although he still knows who the specialists of universe-maintenance are presumed to be according to Berger and Luckmann (1966).

It happened that the Industrial Revolution was led by males, both laborers and intellectuals, and gender relations have been moderated through time to suit the needs of the people in power. While the World Wars directly affected gender relations in the Western world and led women to join men in the industrial revolution, and later to question their identity, the traditional gender relations remained unchanged within the non-industrial world. Some non-industrial cultures have matriarchal systems, but most have patriarchal systems.
The rapid modernization process has displaced almost everybody despite the advantage that was gained by early adapters. The modernization philosophy is an imported philosophy, and it has brought with it both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is the modern luxuries and attractive lifestyle which that is dazzling and enticing to a level that not many could resist. The disadvantage was that the modernization depended heavily on importing foreign instruments and products that could not be maintained locally. For example, the maintenance of modernization put Egypt under heavy loans, and through the years, Egypt could not cope with those loans or with their interest. Thus, Egypt became strangled in the mud of the new situation that forced some people to seek their personal salvation. This led gradually to corruption both on a higher official level and on a local level.

Mahfouz’s novel was written within a transitional, liminal period, in which Egyptian people were searching for a new national identity. Industrialization, which was the symbol of modernity, required women to leave their traditional roles at home to participate with the males in the factories to cover the shortage in manpower. The people were torn between their need to progress and their need to preserve their culture. Intellectual currents were clashing with each other over the direction that the country’s leadership should take. Mahfouz was born in this boiling environment. His novel, *Cairo Trilogy*, tells us something about Mahfoz’s childhood. He witnessed the foreign representatives killing demonstrators. He also witnessed the leaders of his country repressing his people as they fought for control. He saw the women of the higher class obtaining a Western education and prosperity, while women of the lower or middle class were tied by the strings of their culture which limited their movement.

*Awlad Haratina* Laments the struggle at that time, and it is a call to start a new age and to point out the need to redefine the problems and the roles for both males and females. *Awlad*
Haratina was written so people could understand the sociology of knowledge, and how the role of each individual, male or female, could be shaped within the emerged needs and the requirements of their time.

Mahfouz has brought up a whole complex culture, with its significant gender roles and gender rules through an art that is connected to the female power of circular storytelling, as he himself borrowed from the female character, Scheherazade, the narrator of One Thousand Night and One Nights. This is almost three decades before the Western feminist movement realized its important as a vehicle to reveal the power of the female (Minh ha, 1988).

The women in the novel are enveloped by myth, and their methods of coping with mytic realities depended on their class or their time. The gender myth originates with Eve being created from the rib of Adam. Eve is responsible for Adam's descent from heaven; therefore, women are evil, weak, and should not be trusted. The Prophet Mohammad says in one of his Hadiths, that "women are created from slanted rib, that they can't remain straight. If you try to straighten her, you break her, and if you live with her, you enjoy her with her slant," (Musnad Ahmad, 2005, Hadith No. 10044).

Awlad Haratina, then, is a reconstruction of the mythical gender relations through several periods of Middle Eastern Time. We understand this through the rhetoric that Mahfouz employed to communicate the myth of gender with its different rules. Mahfouz does not directly interfere in this gender mythical process. He tries to be neutral while portraying the multiple layers of this gender role. The myth of the patriarch is revealed openly over all the chapters in a way similar to the mythical reality that the Middle Eastern people communicate to each other through time lapses. This discourse of power is responsible for maintaining certain myths despite the reality. However, the power of the female could be sensed indirectly, and this is how Mahfouz maintains
the myth of gender to preserve his culture, or the culture of his Arabic readers. In the documentary of Nagib Mahfouz (1999), Mahfouz says that he prefers the model of Ameena, the wife of Sayyed Ahmed Abdul Jawad, the protagonist of *The Cairo Triology* (1957). Ameena for Mahfouz is not a simple being, despite the fact that she is objectified by her husband. He believes that Ameena has power that she exercises behind the scenes in her own house. The house was not able to function without Ameena, and this power is distinctive to the female as Mahfouz demonstrates in all his female characters of *Awlad Haratina* and other novels. George F. Gilder (1973), in his book *Sexual Suicide*, talks about the importance of saving the family and the roles of men to provide for the family. Gilder (1973) believes Mahfouz’s model of love within the marriage and family is the only way to preserve civilization through directing sexual energy toward society goals instead of individual goals. He thinks that female and male sexuality is not an end in itself to be pursued; however, the sacrificing of the old model of the family will lead to the suicide of the human race. Gilder (1973) believes that women’s sexuality outside marriage might prevent their role in refining and directing the male energy, and “that only the family is able to transform men … and the family is the only institution that works on the deep interior formations of human character and commitment. Thus it is the only un-coercive way to transform individuals… into voluntary participants in the nurture of society” (p. 73).

Gilder (1973) believes that only through saving the traditional female’s role can the entire society could be transformed into a civilized society, and without the tie of the family, men “often become enemies of society and of the larger horizons of female sexuality: the cycles of procreation and nurture that necessarily dictate to women a concern for stability, community, and future” (p. 73). Gilder explains how societies through history have recognized how difficult it is to secure these commitments, and that “women have had to use all their ingenuity, all their
powers of sexual attraction and restraint to induce men to become providers. Society has had to invest marriage with all the ceremonial sanctity of religion and law. This did not happen as a way to promote intimacy and companionship. It happened to ensure civilized society” (Gilder, p. 74).

If we agree with Gilder (1973), that there is an important role to be preserved to survive as a collective, then myth is a tool to preserve that role and maintain the function of the traditions. Mahfouz’s goal, then, is to re-activate and revalue the traditional role of the male/female through the revival of the mythical discourse about gender relations. In revaluing the role of women, however, the need of the male to dominate, control, prohibit, and oppress is removed, providing women a place of true respect so that they can more fully reach their human potential.

Mahrouz realizes that the word is the most suitable tool in communicating his ideas or his invented myth to a culture that kept its symbolic heritage alive by the power of the word, and fighting aggressively to preserve itself against a powerful global model.

Mahfouz tells the audience in his introduction to Awlad Haratuna that writing was not a respectful career when he started. That might be related to the colonization period that used Arab writers to serve foreign ambitions to undermine the dignity of the native people in exchange for a trivial sum of money. However, Mahfouz was able to elevate the status of the word by directing his writing to serve and to save his people from ignorance by exposing them to international experiences and provide them with new thoughts to find their way within the international society. This has helped his compatriots and the generations that follow believe in the word and its effect in bringing the desired change.

The mythical approach of Mahfouz is to reveal the magic of knowledge. The Arabic word Arafa (To know) or Qara (To read) is directly connected to knowledge. Knowledge for
Mahfouz is magic, and he was able to portray this picture clearly through his character Arafa, the fifth hero of *Awlad Haratina*, who used his magic/knowledge to solve the problems of the people. Arafa’s book, the book of magic, is not meant replace the holy Islamic book of the Qura’an, which Muslims recite everyday in their prayers. The book of Arafa, “to know” in Arabic language, means the book of Knowledge, which is “*Ma’rifa*.”

It is not a new concept or a mere coincidence that Mahfouz uses the word knowledge and magic interchangeably as I explained earlier. Knowledge was called magic in the olden days in most places in the world. The incidents of burning knowledgeable women in the dark ages and in the eighteenth century and accusing them of witchcraft tells us how magic and knowledge could be interchangeable. Today, one still he hears things about black magic and white magic, and the secrecy that is connected to these types of practices. Is it possible to reveal the secrets of this black or white magic one day and accept it as knowledge?

**Mythical Discourse of Gender**

Mahfouz benefited from both the Egyptian mythical discourse and the Islamic mythical discourse of gender relations and knowledge. The book of wisdom or “The book” or Al-Ketab that has all the information about the future of the universe is mentioned several times in the Holy *Qur’an*, and also in the ancient Egyptian documentations, such is in the *Book of the Names*. Some Qur’anic verses talk about “Aum Al-Kitab,” which means the mother of books and “Al-louh Al-Mahfouz,” which means the restored board, which was thought of by Muslims as a registrar book containing all the information about every single element in the world. Only God has the right to this book. This book is referring to as Umm Al-Ketab "the Mother of all books" in the *Qur’an*. This book has everything that we know or seek to know according to the *Qur’an*:
“No element could escape from being registered by God either in Earth or in Heaven. God knows all” (Qur’an, Chapter two, The Cow). So, the idea of the mystery book of Gebelaawi, or Arafa’s book of magic, was not a new concept or a new myth in Middle Eastern or Islamic heritage; rather it is a very powerful symbol of sacred, but forbidden, knowledge.

Mahfouz’s book Awlad Haratina reached the status of the modern secret book for Egyptians. The action that was taken by the Egyptian government to ban this book solidified its mythical aspect as another mysterious book that is not allowed to be part of Arabic literature. Mahfouz was accused by some of his critics for depicting the Qur’an itself in the way he divides Awlad Haratuna into short sections, and in the numbers of the sections (Abdulla Al-Hanai, 1994). However, Mahfouz’s response was that his book is not intended to imitate the Qur’an; the act of arranging his chapters in that sequence was a convenient style and a mere coincident. To understand the irony of the coincidence, we witness how Mahfouz’s novel corresponds to the mythical book of magic that Arafa died for, and we witness how Mahfouz, in a way, has identified himself with his protagonist Arafa, and predicted his own destiny of persecution like Arafa because of the knowledge that his book contained.

Awlad Haratina introduces us to ourselves mythically in multiple layers as I explained in the Chapter Four: We, Arabs and Muslims, repeat ourselves and our history again and again, and we never recognize that the magic could be our ability to know and understand what we are doing to obtain what we want from life, and to design a collective plan to secure a better future for humanity. Mahfouz, like his protagonist Arafa, refused to direct his rhetoric to serve the powerful elite and thought that it was his minimal duty to express his words and leave everything up to us, his beloved audience, who might not ever be able to understand the message that is repeatedly communicated to us through our holy books, the Torah, the Bible and the Qur’an,
besides many other holy books that are not part of the Middle Eastern culture, messages that teach how to lead a life of needed harmony, peace and balance.

Mahfouz (1959) demonstrated that no matter how strong rhetoric is, people have the choice to decide what should be done with the words: Either we simply recite it in our ceremonies, sing it in our weddings and celebrations or entertain ourselves by listening to it at our coffee houses, or perhaps analyze it to reveal its hidden meanings and explore its full potential. Arafa was killed, and while Mahfouz survived, he is fully aware that even when he physically dies, his words would be left to demonstrate our disability to absorb the message that we recite every day and carve on our walls. Our minds have been institutionalized for many long decades to a level that we don’t have the courage to overcome our fear of change. We only imitate our fathers, reading the stories in the Torah, in the Bible and in the Qur’an, and recite God’s word, “do not be like your parents,” and “Do not be like the donkey who carries holy documents that he would never understand them” (Qur’an, Chapter Two).

However, by writing his novel, or his own version of the book of magic or the book of Ma’rifā or knowledge, Mahfouz proves to us that he still has hope. He demonstrated this hope by not abandoning his message, even after it was officially banned. After several years of not writing, Mahfouz published his own myth of Awlad Haratina using a different rhetorical style, this time under a new title: The Harafish (1977). Again employing black humor or satire, in addition to symbols and metaphors, Mahfouz (1959) demonstrates his serious intention to pursue his enlightenment project. In his desperate attempt to reveal us to ourselves, he managed to meet his readers half way, and educate them through a new novel that they enjoy and approve. Both Al-Harafish and Awlad Haratina are intended to share the experience and the pain of Mahfouz through his struggle with his people's attitude to approach life with Lamentation, which
maintains their poverty and ignorance rather than providing them with the ability to see the
world beyond their *Hara/Neighborhood*.

His characters in *Al-Harafish* are helplessly poor and ignorant, but through eight
generations of Ashoor El-Naji’s family, Mahfouz creatively and skillfully takes his characters
through a long journey, and through his unique, rejuvenating, highly skillful narrative style,
manages to let us see and understand his previous message. When Mahfouz was announced as
the Nobel Prize winner in 1984, he did not bother to go to receive the Nobel Prize. His two
daughters went to Switzerland on his behalf. He humbly mentioned that there are other people
who deserve that Prize more; he was only walking in their footsteps. Such a great and authentic
writer does not write to achieve a certain prize; he or she writes because he or she couldn’t afford
to not express the truth, whether we choose to listen or not. It was his mission to tell us what he
thinks in the best way he could, and it is up to us to listen to his message or to remain ignorant.

Myth, Religion, Language and Discourse of Gender

Mahfouz’s choice of writing in classical Arabic (*Fusha* or *Nahwi*) is a conscious choice.
He did not write in the local Egyptian dialect because he addressed a wider Arabic audience.
Classic Arabic can be understood by any Arab, anywhere in the world. Critics of Mahfouz, such
as Louis Awad (1993), believe that classical Arabic is not capable of meeting the requirements of
realistic literature. Awad believes that Mahfouz is a romantic writer within a classical
framework. El-Anany (1993) mentions that while Awad admits Mahfouz’s extraordinary
creativity in employing the techniques of the realistic school, he still insists that Mahfouz is not a
realistic writer. El-Anany (1993-94) criticizes Awad’s classification of Arabic writing into three
categories: classical Arabic, Elite local Arabic, Common or Street local Arabic. El-Anany
believes that this approach is problematic because it assumes that the reader has to translate from
classical Arabic to Elite local Arabic or to Common local Arabic to fit his social class. This approach, El-Anany (1993) explains, doesn’t consider that language is a living entity that develops over time to meet the political, social, economic and historical needs that resulted from the conflicts of civilizations. The reader accepts classical Arabic language as part of the other imaginary elements in the novel, despite the fact that the dialogue is taking place in reality.

El-Anany (1993) illustrates how Mahfouz presents the world from inside the consciousness of his characters. For example, in *The Thief and the Dogs* he uses implication instead of direct announcement. In the *Respected Sir*, he holds the breath of the reader until the end by telling us a full story with a vocabulary that is different from the common usage of the language, transferring the event from its linguistic level to a higher psychological level through a very unique and skillful approach that non Arabic novelists had adapted before him. For example, Mahfouz's reflection on the human condition and the psychological struggle that a human being experiences in some situations could be seen in part seventy five of *Awlad Haratina*, where Qaasim was struggling about his life in a neighborhood in which people "dreamed of happiness, but time scattered their dreams with the garbage" (p. 309). Mahfouz's portrayal of the human psyche through the struggle of Qassim reflects the situation of Mahfouz himself in facing the bitter reality of his people. Qaasem at Hind's Rock:

At distance he saw a shepherd grazing his flock. His heart filled with sympathy and he wished he could say to him: 'Being a strongman isn't enough to make a man happy; in fact, it doesn't make a man happy at all' But wouldn't be better to say it to the strongmen like Guzzler and Omnibus? How he felt for the people of the Alley; they dreamed of happiness, but time scattered their dreams with the garbage. Why not enjoy the happiness he had been granted and shut his eyes to what surrounded him? Perhaps this question had
baffled Gebel and later Rifaa. It was open to both of them to enjoy lifelong ease and tranquility. What is the secret of this pain that pursues us? Thus he pondered as he gazed at the sky over the Jebel, a pure blue sky apart from a few flecks of cloud like white rose petals. He lowered his head wearily and his glance fell upon something moving. It was a scorpion hurrying towards a stone. He lifted his stick quickly, brought it down on the creature and squashed it. He looked at it for a while in disgust, then stood up and went on his way. (*Children of Gebelaawi*, p. 309)

Again in part 75 of the novel, Qaasem has a dialogue with himself:

What are you going to do? How long are you going to think and wait? And what are you waiting for? As long as your relatives don't believe you, who ever will believe you? What's the use of being sad? What's the point of sitting alone at the foot of Hind's Rock? The stars don't answer, nor the darkness, nor the moon. It seems you hope to meet the servant again; but what do you expect from him that's new? You wander in the dark around the spot where it is said that your Ancestor met Gebel. You stand for hours beneath the great wall in the place where he is said to have spoken to Rifaa. But you have neither seen him nor heard his voice, nor has his servant returned. What are you going to do? That question will pursue you, as the desert sun pursues the shepherd. All the time it will rob you of your peace of mind, of the pleasure of good things. Gebel was alone, like you, and yt he triumphed; and Rifaa knew his path and followed it till he was killed, and then he triumphed. What are you going to do? (p. 323)

This inner monologue demonstrates Mahfouz's ability to reveal the psychological struggle with life.
El-Anany (1995) says that in an interview with Mahfouz in 1970, Mahfouz admits that the selection of the language of the dialogue is problematic as “we describe the daily life through a language that is directed long ago toward intellectual thinking, politics, philosophy and religion…. And it was a continuing conflict that I believe that I walking as carrying heavy weights, but I am getting lighter and lighter everyday (El-Anany, 1995, p. 212). Mahfouz means that language does not have the capacity to capture the richness and the minute details of everyday experiences completely.

However, El-Anany (1995) believes that Mahfouz has succeeded in finding a middle language between the written language and the spoken language, and this could be noticed clearly in the flow and the clarity that distinguishes the dialogues in his novels. Mahfouz's tendency in moving from the third person to the first person could be seen in the employment of emotions or interior monologue. El-Anany (1995) believes that Mahfouz applies the emotional current style that is used by Western writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf with some adaptation. He sees that Mahfouz does not let the reader finds his own way in the psyche of the character, but uses the summary of the indirect monologue or what Charles Bally calls Style Indirecte libre that is used before the emergence of the emotional current style. Mahfouz moves from the storytelling approach and indirectly leads the mind of the reader from reality to symbolism to find meaning in the meaningless. This is a trick that is adapted by Mahfouz consistently. Mahfouz admits that “the monologue is a method, vision and life" (Al-Annany, p. 119).

The colorful style of Mahfouz helps him to create his own myth in Awlad Haratina. Mahfouz uses exaggeration to make the reader see the depth of the character such as describing Gebelaawi:
For a while he fixed them, hawk-like, with his piercing eyes, then stood up, crossed to the great door to the veranda and stood there gazing out at the huge garden, crowded with mulberry and fig and palm trees, up which were trained henna and Jasminae, and in whose branches singing birds thronged. The garden was bursting with life and song, but in the room there was silence. It seemed to the brothers that the Strongman of the Desert had forgotten them. With his great height and breadth he seemed superhuman. (p. 5)

The mentioned description shows the ability of Mahfouz to draw a complete picture of the interior and exterior aspects of his complex characters. He tries to be objective or neutral to leave the choice open for the reader to judge ideas and situations.

Mahfouz presents the human phenomena or condition with its biological, social, and psychological aspects. Mahfouz selects the characters of his novels from different social classes and different natures and ties them together with a strong friendship that sustains the changes of private and public time. This attitude from Mahfouz could symbolize the unity of Egypt as a nation that transcends the separation caused by the interaction between the time and space. In Qashtamar, for example, Mahfouz talks about Al-Abbaseya, an Egyptian neighborhood that combines in its geographical territories the palaces of the aristocrats and the houses of the middle class people without any contradiction, which symbolizes Egypt, as a country that has a space for all and is capable of blending scattered people with little effort. After the Revolution of 1952, however, the same neighborhood witnessed the removal of the palaces to established buildings for the middle class people. We don’t see a space for laborers, small professionals or farmers because they were not a part of the Al-Abbaseya dwellers during that time.

The Remaining from Time is One Hour (1983) shows the deadly grasp of Mahfouz regarding time and memory. He borrows all his characters from his other novels without any
significant change. This shows Mahfouz’s profound attempt to bring the space back over time to make the coffee shop of Qashtamar the only refuge for the four friends from the changes of time that move toward them to the ultimate fate of immortality. This approach, according to Al-Anany (1995), was a change in Mahfouz’s philosophy to counter the cruelty of time: The possible comfort of human affection in their space.

El-Ananay (1993) traces the religious struggle of Mahfouz (1957) through his characters in The Cairo Trilogy and how Kamal in the Palace Street (the first part of the trilogy), became closer to God after he rejected his religious belief more than when he was a believer. Later in Sugar Street (the second part of the trilogy), Mahfouz presents two ideological prototypes as brothers: Ahmed and Abdul-Munem. Again, he favored the communist and shows how Ahmed married a woman, knowing that she has had an affair with another man in the past, while his brother A. Munem abandoned the woman he loves because she accepted his flirting before marriage.

Mahfouz’s Awlad Haratina is another visit to the same topic that occupied him in The Cairo Trilogy. He talks about the social oppression and stresses his belief that the solution is in adapting science and socialism. In Awlad Haratina, Mahfouz’s attitude is clear toward religion and its relationship with the individual and with society. His interest in religion in general, and not only toward Islam, led him to present a panoramic view about the history of human beings and the society and their relationship with religion from the time of creation to the present. He presents characters that symbolize God, Adam, the Devil, Moses, Christ and Mohammad, but he presents them without the mythical dress or the holy aura. In this attempt, Mahfouz is celebrating the achievement of the greatest human heroes in their ancient struggle against oppression because he believes that their struggle against evil transcends them beyond the human category
by time and creates the mythical aura around them which leaves them to be seen as metaphysical beings. The real state that Gebelaawi leaves for his children and their offspring symbolizes the legacy that God left for human beings. Gebelaawi retires from life and stays in a mansion that stands alone upon a hill in the middle of the desert, which neighbors look upon with awe. The mansion is surrounded by strong high walls that no one dares to get close to. The Great House or the mansion and its garden represent the mythical image of heaven and the Garden of Eden.

The house is established at the end of the alley used by Mahfouz (1959) as a symbol that represents earth. The trustee became a tyrant and a thief who employs strongmen that terrorize people. This suppression generates resistance and that has been the essence of the three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam as Mahfouz sees it. The three religions appear through symbolization as a chain of political and societal struggle movements that rise against oppressive systems to establish justice on earth. However, the success of these religious doesn’t last, and the oppression invades the alley again and again. In the fifth and last part of the novel, the audience meets “Arafa,” the magician that symbolizes modern science. Arafa performs the role of salvation which was restricted for prophets before. This novel represents the death of the idea of God in the modern world. This idea was expressed by Nietzsche in his statement “God is dead.” Arafa has caused the death of Gebelaawi.

Arafa is derived from the Arabic word “Marifa,” which means knowledge. Science became the God of the modern age. In the middle of Arafa’s sorrow after the death of Gebellawi, he mentions that a word from our grandfather pushes the kind people, his grandchildren, to work to death. His death is more powerful than his words. The kind son has to do everything to take his place and to become him. Mahfouz portrays science as a legal heir of religion. While Mahfouz gave modern science or Arafa the same legitimacy that was given to God’s prophets, he
warns us in this novel that science could be a power of oppression when in the wrong hands (in
the same way as religion) and we could see how the Trustee used Arafa to advance his own
oppressive politics against Arafa’s will.

El-Anany (1995) believes that The Children of the Alley is the most important source to
understanding Mahfouz’s attitudes toward religion. However, Mahfouz’s interest in politics is
clear through most of his work as well, as previously described. Mahfouz believes that politics is
the center of our thinking. His interest in social justice is noticeable in all he writes. For example,
in Respected Sir (1975) and The Thief and The Dogs (1961), Mahfouz stresses that the individual
that fails to understand the effects of the social/political forces on his life would ultimately fail if
he believes that he could succeed in freeing himself from these forces in isolation.

From reading Mahfouz's novels, one could conclude that Mahfouz sees the myth in life,
and only through true belief in a supreme power or a supreme being could one transcend the
disappointment of life. Mahfouz tells us in many of his novels and short stories that time is the
destroyer of the person, but social efforts could create conditions that solve the tragedy of death.
Mahfouz believes that solving social evils through socialism makes human beings able to face
death, and that is his perspective in Awlad Haratina. Mahfouz distinguishes between the
individual/metaphysical death such as in Khan Al-Khalili (1945) or in the Respected Sir (1975),
and the social death as in the Thief and the Dogs (1961).

However, Mahfouz’s mythical framework does not include death. He depicts life as a
circular process that lives within the hopes and the memories of society or the culture. For
example, the five heroes of Awlad Haratina have managed to live in people’s psyche through
generations. Again, our mythical thinking is stronger than reality and the life span of the
individual. Therefore, Mahfouz relies heavily on the myth making approach to preserve the power of his rhetoric about gender relations, as well as about cultural identity.
CHAPTER SIX:
GENDER RELATIONS AND SEXUALITY

The construction of gender relations in *Awlad Haratina* (1959) rhetorically mediates aspects of Arab culture and creates possibilities for new understandings for the future. Consequently, in this chapter, I will demonstrate how men and women manage their sexuality within an Arabic context, and how gender relations are often used as a strategy to claim power, control, and authority. I will explain the problematic aspect of the gender relations that conceptualizes the woman as either a virgin or a prostitute, then, I will explore how the metaphor of the Virgin/Prostitute has the potential to provide a new understanding about gender discourse globally. Second, I will explain how Lamenting as an Arab rhetorical model communicates defeat and disappointment, and how Mahfouz’s *Awlad Haratina* opens new ways for his readers to resolve gender relations. Third, I will introduce *Muruwa*, defined by both an Arab Islamic approach and the approach of Womanism/Women of Color, as a new framework that creates the possibilities for new understandings in regard to gender relations in the Arab World and globally.

Mahfouz (1970) refuses to talk directly about his religious beliefs, preferring to leave the door open to critical interpretation about religious issues. While Mahfouz’s novels have been widely read and translated into many world languages, the complexity of the religious issues addressed and the fear from the religious extremists who might punish those who dare to violate the traditional templates have resulted in few readers within the intended target audience. The attempt to silence the counter voice ultimately becomes an instrument to prevent life. Mafouz stated in an interview with Sabri Hafez (1970) “Decartes’ theory: I think: therefore, I am, becomes you think, then you don’t deserve to live” (El-Annany, 1993, p. 42). The expression of Mahfouz reflects his disappointment concerning the low ceiling of freedom in the Arab world for
writers in general. It also reflects his bitterness for being unable to initiate change through reflection on human social and sexual experiences and their intersection with politics and power. This disappointment is reflected in several of Mahfouz's novels and short stories such as *Cairo Trilogy* (1956/57), *The Thief and the Dogs* (1961), *Miramar* (1967), *Midaq Alley* (1947), and *Awlad Haratina* (1959). Change, whether it is in the sexual domain or in the political domain, cannot be achieved without a price as Mahfouz's comment reveals. Those who dare violate the norms can not avoid the forces that might complicate their job. Nevertheless, Mahfouz's novels are an attempt to provide us with life-like situations to reflect on sexuality and power within an Arabic context.

Mahfouz reveals the ways that Arab men and women negotiate their sexuality through a sequence of different life cycles across undefined numbers of centuries. For example, Mahfouz's extended metaphysical time in *Awlad Haratina* helps to define the problem of gender and sexuality within an eternal frame of time. The politics of gender relations in *Awlad Haratina* passed through tremendous changes from the first chapter to the final chapter. In Adham's chapter, for example, Mahfouz presents us with Gebelawi, the perfect patriarch, who is violates the norm of the hierarchal pyramid of the top-bottom power according to traditional restrictions as deduced from Idrees's confrontation with his father Gebelawi. These norms deal with gender, color, ethnicity, age, social, and economic class. The stronger physique is preferred to weaker physique. The older in age is preferred to the younger. White is preferred over black.

White has a voice while the black is silent or silenced. The only voice the dark-skinned characters are allowed to have is to communicate the voice of the master: They could be seen, but not heard as we saw in several black males and females in *Awlad Haratina*. This silencing aspect is seen in the characters of Omaima in the beginning of the novel, Adham's mother, Qamer's maid, Sakeena; The personal servant males and females of Gebellawi; and the door
keeper of Gebelaawi.

Social and economic classes are linked with ethnicity: The White is a free person, owner of property, does not have to work, or labor to earn his living; he has a voice. The Black is usually a slave, and does not have the same prestigious class even if he is born to a White man; He/She has to earn living by working; does not own property; and normally his work is within the domain of the White man and under his supervision; his work is inferior to the White man.

The way that men and women negotiate their sexuality could be read in Adham's chapter through the subtle depiction of Adham's mother, who despite the fact that she is a black-skinned maid, was able to change Gebellawi into the perfect patriarch. Idrees states: "Maybe it was that slave woman that made you hate us. You are the lord of the desert, owner of the estate property, and the biggest gangster of all, but a slave was able to manipulate you" (Children of the Alley, p. 12). This testimony that Mahfouz communicates through Idrees reveals the power of the female to negotiate her space through her sexuality or her sexual ties with the male through the marital relationship, despite her color, her ethnicity, her age, her social, economic class. Sexuality was negotiated more obviously by Omaima when she used her sexual and emotional influence on Adham to convince him to steal "the big book" that has the Ten Conditions (Children of the Alley, p. 32).

The third example for women's sexuality in Adham's chapter is Narjis (Nirsis), the woman that Idrees seduced and impregnated, a woman projected as a helpless object that Idrees used to satisfy his sexuality. Idrees's daughter, Hind, is the Fourth example of how women negotiate sexuality. Hind escaped the supervision of her father and practiced her sexuality freely with her cousin, Qadri, then ran away with Qadri without her parents' knowledge. These four examples of women's practices show how women use their sexual relationship with men to
escape the inferior positions and become influential despite the patriarchal hierarchy, rules, censorship, or control.

In Gebel's chapter, Mahfouz goes a step further in addressing gender relationships through three models of women: Lady Huda, who was portrayed as a strong woman that has influence over her husband, the Trustee. In part 38, for example, there is a portrayal of Lady Huda's authority over her husband in the confrontation between Gebel and Effendi (The Trustee, or the Overseer), when the Effendi stood impulsively and turned to his wife, saying, "Do you see the result of my giving in to you and inviting him to our house?" (Children of the Alley, p. 150). This subtle power of the female over the male could only be explained by the ability of women to exercise influence through their sexuality within a system that does not empower both genders equally. The second model was Shafiqa, Balqiti's daughter and Gebel's wife, who asked her father to teach her husband a craft, and then she pushes her husband to leave his lazy life and work to earn his living. Shafiqa is a modest example of the faithful Arabic woman. The scarf that Shafiqa wore over her head was not seen as an obstacle or as a symbol of inferiority. It doesn't restrict Shafiqa's movement, and it only "set off the purity of her face," as the narrator of the novel put it. (Children of the Alley, p. 137). Although women have considerable power within the realm of their sexual relationship with men, the status of men is still considered as superior to that of women, and this could be seen in the meeting of Gebel with Shafiqa and Sayyeda at the well, when Gebel helped the two women to fill their buckets from the public water pump, and then fought the boys who were harassing them. Another scene communicates the same gender inequality, demonstrated by the sarcastic comment of Tamar Henna, who receives Gebel and his pregnant wife at Hamdan Alley, notifying Gebel and Shafiqa that they would have a son, but sarcastically hinting at the misery and the helplessness of the men of Hamdan Alley, "there isn't any difference between our men and women anymore!" (Children of the Alley, p. 143).
In Rifaa's Chapter, Mafhouz addresses the problem of gender relations and sexuality in more depth. He tackles the phenomena of the female prostitute and how she is victimized by her society, pointing to the fact that prostitution is used economically by men to abuse women. In this chapter, there are three types of women: The young women, Aysha and Jasminaa; the mothers: Zakia, Krunfus' wife, and Abda, Rifaa's mother; and the black woman: Umm Bekhatirha, the exorcist and wife of the old blind poet. Aysha and Jasminaa represent two different social classes. Aysha, the daughter of the gangster Krunfus, negotiates her sexuality within the acceptable social norms and communicates her sexual desires silently and subtly: "Aysha standing in her usual pose by her window, just as he had first seen her, gazing intently at him. He imagined that she smiled at him, that her eyes spoke to him" (Children of the Alley, p. 190). Aysha also exercises her power by using her mother’s on Krunfus, Aysha's father. Aysha's visited Abda, Rifaa's mother with the company of her daughter Aysha, which is the traditional way that women influence the families of men to marry. Women's indirect influence on men is revealed through this kind of traditional social practice. On the other hand, Jasmina, a single woman who lives alone, negotiates her sexuality openly away from the supervision of any family.

Jasminaa represents a different type of portrayal sexuality; she is not guarded by males or by older females. Unlike the subtle flirtation of Aysha, Jasmina flirts openly with Riffa in front of his parents who are approaching the Alley. Everyone finds her amusing. In part 48, Shafi, Rifaa's father comments on Jasminaa, when his wife gave him a suspicious look, "A girl like that can figure men out," (Children of the Alley, p. 196).

Economic Aspects of Sexuality

There are three main characters presented by Mahfouz in Part 51 to communicate the way
that men use and invest sexuality as an economic interest. Mahfouz reveals his view on sexuality through an intense triangular scene that focuses on the gender relationship between Jasminaa, the young exotic single woman, Bayoomi, the gangster or the protector of the Alley, and Zaituna, the third person or "the Other" who represents the social authority in this case. Yamina was caught by Zaituna, the donkey cart man, leaving the back door of Bayoomi. When he followed her to question her, he found her drunk. He realized that she must be having a sexual affair with Bayoomi. When she freed herself from him, he complained to Khunfus, the gangster of Gebel Alley. Here, Zaituna, Kunfus, and the other males in the Alley, are cooperating in setting the rules that control sexuality, representing the highest social authority. While the sexual act naturally occurs between two people, only one of the two faces punishment, and in this case, it is the female, linking the female body to the issue of honor including the males' honor. The issue of honor was addressed when the donkey cart driver, Zaituna, saw Jasmina coming out of the back door of Bayoumi's house, drunk and asked her what she was doing at the gangster's house. She broke loose from him and locked the door after her. Zaituna communicated what he saw to Khunfis, the gangster of Gebel Alley. The gangster found himself in difficult situation, as Bayoumi is the protector of the whole alley, and he could aggravate him by allowing the attack on Jasmina. The crowd demanded Jasmina be either exiled out of the Al Gabal Alley or lashed and beaten. Some of them demand killing Jasmina. Rifaa raised a question, “Would it be more fitting for them to vent their rage on Bayoumi, who violated her?” The crowd linked their honor or the honor of their Alley to the fact that Jasmina "is not for others," and that Rifaa "is stupid and has no sense of honor," because he wanted to save Jasmina by marrying her (Children of the Alley, p. 207). The crowd justified punishing Jasmina for the following reasons because they thought she was weak (p. 207).
When Rifaa asked to marry Jasmina to save her life, the answer was, "All we care about is that she gets her punishment," instead of leaving the matter to Rifaa, who was trying desperately to save Jasmina's life. Even when Khunfus agreed to accept Rifaa's offer to marry Jasmina and save him from his embarrassment, Zaituna rolled his eyes with rage saying, "This cowardice destroys our honor!" (p. 208). We now understand the politics of male violence through Mahfouz's expression, "Everyone saw that Khunfis would protect his weak position by terrorizing anyone who stood against him" (p. 208).

In Part 52, the narrator tells us that "Rifaa who had been the focus of all his parents' hopes… (his) marriage to Jasmina would reduce him to nothing" (p. 208). Jasmina's view about the attitude of the people who wanted to punish her could be clearly understood through the following comment, "They loved me and despised me for the same reason" (p. 208). However, the sexual disappointment of Jasmina with Rifaa was clear from the wedding night, when Rifaa told her that he only wanted to save her soul. The inadequate sexual relationship caused Jasmina to turn away from her savior to continue her sexual relationship with Bayoomi. Mahfouz demonstrates that when an Arab woman goes against tradition by pursuing her own sexual needs against the norms of society, the outcome is tragedy.

Mahfouz's treatment of gender relations is addressed again in Qasim's chapter, within an Islamic framework, borrowed from the biography of Prophet Mohammad and contrasting that with a Christian framework. The narrator tells that Qasem's love of Qamar is "nothing like his passionate adventures in the desert, with their blind, raging hunger and brief melancholy satisfaction" (Children of the Alley, p. 263). Qasem’s attitudes to sexuality are different than those of Rifaa, who represents celibacy and platonic love. Qasem had a powerful sexual passion for Qamar and practices multiple marriages after her death.

Gender relations in Qasem's chapter overcome class difference as we noticed in the
marriage of Qassem and Qamar. The female in this chapter has power over her destiny, which might be due to a financial matter. We learn that Qamar has wealth. Her uncle runs her business; however, when her uncle tried to exercise his authority over her, Qamar was able to stop him because of her financial independence. This financial independence might also be the source of empowerment for Qamar to stand against the norms of her community when she marries a shepherd, who is much younger.

Although women do not have freedom in the public sphere and are required to submit to a man’s will, Arab women, just like women everywhere, have their own spheres of power, especially in private spaces, but also in indirect ways that have important outcomes, such as determining marriage partners. Also, women of different status and financial means have various levels of power and authority. When Lady Qamar was considering marriage to Qassem, Lady Ameena sent a message demanding that Qamar "to come to her senses," and reject marriage to "a man who does not deserve her, especially when he constantly visits her house," worrying about Qamar's "honor" and fear of her becoming the “talk of the Alley” (274). Qamar's assertion of her position shows her independence and control over matters regarding her life. She confronts her uncle with definite power, telling him, "'I have told you, because you are my uncle, that I have agreed to marry Qassem. It will be with your consent and in your presence!' Uwais thought this over silently. He had no power to prevent her, and it would not be wise to anger her so much that she might pull her money out of his business" (Children of the Alley, p. 275). The reader learns in the beginning that Qassem was attracted to Qamar's warmth and sympathy, which was "the kind of sympathy he had never experienced, except in what he had sometimes heard of the mother's love he had never known," and the narrator tells us that if Qassem's mother had lived, "today she would be about the same age as this woman in her forties" (p. 275). After the death of Lady Qamar, the narrator talks about the multiple marriages of Qassem which were caused by
missing the kind of love that he experienced with Qamar.

In Qaasem's chapter, then, there is an expansion of gender relations and sexuality as seen in the attitude of Qaasem toward multiple marriages, in contrast with that of Rifaa or the biography of Jesus, who is not known to be sexually active. Mahfouz has used the character of Qaasem, as a metaphor for the Prophet Mohammad, and the highest model of the perfect Arab male. Qaasem:

combined power and gentleness, wisdom and simplicity, dignity and love, mastery and humility, efficiency and honesty. In addition, he was witty, friendly and good-looking, kind and companionable. He had good taste, he loved to sing and he told jokes. Nothing about him changed, thought his marital life expanded, as if he were following the same course of renewal and expansion that the estate took. While he loved Badriya, he married a beauty of the Al Gabal and another of the Al Rifaa. He fell in love with a woman of his own clan, and married her too. People said that in this he was looking for something he had lost when he lost his first wife, Qamar. His uncle Zachary said that he wanted to strengthen his ties with all the different neighborhoods of the alley, but our alley needed no explanation or justification for what he did. The fact is that they admired his vigor even more than they admired his character; in our alley, the love of women is a power in which men lose themselves. They brag about it. It imparts a status that equals that of gangsterdom, in its time, or even surpasses it. (p. 360)

Critics have varying perspectives of Mahfouz’s presentation of gender relations and sexuality. For example, Razan Mahmoud Ibrahim (2003) focuses on Mahfouz's portrayal of women falling into sin and claims that Mahfouz blames it on social and economic problems such as poverty and the corruption of the society. R.M. Ibrahim (2003) notices that in his novel, Modern Cairo (1945), Mahfouz's portrayal of the woman is parallel of what is happening in the
social reality. Ibrahim (2003) also points to Mahjoub Abd al-Alem, one of Mahfouz’s main characters in his popular novel, *Respected Sir* (1975), who is portrayed as having double standards in his relationship with two women, one of them Ihsan, the poor woman whose poverty led her to the fall, and Taheyya, the solid aristocratic woman. Ibrahim (2003) also refers to a comparison of two perspectives of women through two intellectual characters of Mahfouz; the Islamic persona, Redwan, and the socialist persona, Ali Taha. The first sees woman as “the security of life, and an easy way for securing the life after,” while the other sees her as “a companion for man in his life, but this companionship has to be absolute in the rights and the duties” (Ibrahim, 2003, p. 172).

Mahfouz presents women as imprisoned by their search for a husband, which is a fundamental problem that Razan Ibrahim (2003) brings to our attention. I find that this problem could be read in many Arab novels, stories and films, whether they are written by men and women. (Please see the novels of Hanan Al-Sheikh (1994), Muneera Al-Fadhel (1988), Abdulla Khalifa (1988), Ihsan Abdul Qudous (1967). Ibrahim (2003) explains that the helpless situation of the woman is connected to her financial circumstances due to the social conflict which is completely controlled by men. This leads the woman, according to Ibrahim (2003), despite her education, to follow the traditional norms: that man has to be her ultimate social support as it is in Al-Yateem (The Orphan) for Al-Arwi, a novelist from Morocco. Afif Farraj (2003) shares the same view of Razan Ibrahim (2003), and believes that the struggle of a woman ends as soon as she finds a comfortable alternative to keep her away from the conflict. “The man becomes the passport to shore that is populated and the social and traditional acceptance prevails. This view is reflected in the novels of Coleat Khory, Layla Balabek and Qada Al-Samman in its existentionalist stage, according to Farraj and Ibrahim. The mentioned authors assert that the complaints of women are usually centered around men, which becomes a problematic gender
relationship in which the woman does not feel settled with a man or without him as he is the rival and the judge at once. The authors find that this compromise of a woman with a man creates an oppressive reality. This problematic situation could be seen clearly in the relationship of Yasmeen, Rifaa's wife who thought that she would be able to claim her identity and sexuality as a woman with Rifaa, but when she failed to find a resolution, she sought Bayoomi, the strong man of the Gebel Alley, despite the oppression that he represents. In *Cairo Trilogy*, Ameena, the wife of S.A.A. Jawad, was thankful that her husband took her back, despite the fact that he threw her out of her home after more than twenty years of marriage just because she left the house one time without his permission. Ameena never questioned her husband’s behavior and his nightly entertainment with other women. This submission to men is still a common behavior among Arab women in modern society. For example, a popular but controversial Egyptian television drama that aired in 2003 on several Arab television channels is *Haj Mutwally*. Haj Mutwally is the name of the main male character who marries four wives and manages to be the center of their love and attention, despite his age. One of his wives is a beautiful college graduate woman in her twenties, who surrenders who own potential and marries Haj Mutwally for his social position. Despite the fact that there is more than a half of a century between *Cairo Trilogy* and *Haj Mutwally*, the issue of gender relations has not changed much. Haj Mutwally, who is in his fifties, is still the center of women's attention and the source of their social status much like the position of S.A.A. Jawwad.

The women in many Arab novels appear rebellious, calling for freedom in love, and resisting any kind of authority encountered, especially the authority of the father; nevertheless, women still remain prisoners in the search of a husband as the only natural means to claim their accepted sexuality and sexual status (See Al-Saadawi, 1980; Layla Al-Othman, 1988). Ibrahim (2003) finds that many Arab women resist social traditions strongly and sincerely, but this
resistance, while it makes the woman feel distinguished and superior, leaves her with feelings of alienation and loneliness, further pushing her to search for a strong man to melt down these feelings and protect her from loneliness. Ibrahim (2003) asserts that the woman in this case is mostly a courageous, educated, intellectual and gifted person, and possibly a painter or a poet (Ibrahim, 2003, pp. 172-173).

While the traditional woman, according to Al-Arwi (2003), communicates the need of a woman for a man to protect her within the social norms and traditions, the rebellious woman sees that it is her right to live her experience with a man - without consideration to the norms or the traditions. Her voice reflects the opposition to the requirement of the society and its forceful rules against the freedom of the human being.

Iman Al-Qadi, a Syrian writer, cited by Ibrahim (2003) demonstrates the duality of the situation that educated women face, which is one of two: to be rebellious and face the disappointment or to submit to the reality and surrender to love.

Nawal El-Saadawi (1980), who resembles the rebellious model of the Arab female writer, sees the struggle between men and women as two classes that has no end. Fardous, her female hero in the *Woman at Point Zero*, reflects the extreme level of that struggle, where only hatred and fear exists between a man and a woman. Ibrahim (2003) finds that the traditional woman is the most common picture in the Arabic novel: The woman feels that it is her duty to obey her husband, and hardly ever does she complain when he cheats on her or marries another woman, but then she forgives. “Despite her oppression, she stones other women with the same stone that she herself was stoned with” (Ibrahim, 2003, p. 177). The author also finds that while men use their masculine authority for social oppression, women use the social oppression against their own gender, but it is directed toward their particular social class. The author talks about the transitional woman, who rejects the authority of the man and the social traditions that limit her
freedom: The woman has the conscience and the education that make her reject what is imposed on her,
therefore her psychology becomes a space of extreme crisis between what is rooted in the depth of the society, and the alternative values. She takes progressive steps to stress her independence or she chooses peace and returns to her bases, or she supports the new values and becomes an active, free person from inside and outside, a human being that achieves her existence with all its dimensions the personal, the national and the humanistic. She shares with man the struggle for a better future, and transforms the crisis between them to a relationship of understanding and comprehension, as a partner that she seeks cooperation with and not an enemy that she has to be armed against” (Ibrahim, 2003, p. 178).

Rizan Ibrahim (2003) believes that although the patriarchal system reflects the distorted image of the other and the duality of the relationship between the two, the correction does not mean to flip this equation. This equation, according to Ibrahim (2003) will continue to be problematic when people exchange one side for the other. According to Ibrahim, the needed correction requires the deconstruction of the traditional dual system of gender relations and the recreation of new foundations that consider woman as the similar other and not as the counter other. The society will not improve without solving the issues of women in a general framework that embraces both men and woman as equal in value and status. One such framework is what I call, The Musuwa.

The Metaphor of the Virgin versus the Prostitute

In the Arabic society, a woman has two primary paths. One is to remain under the protection of social norms, which requires a family, a certain amount of status, and/or marriage. Or, for those women who lack protection for whatever reason, the path leads to sexual
exploitation by men. In the Arab world, you are either a virgin and worthy of marriage, or, for the most part, a young woman who has fallen outside of the norms is seen as a prostitute. Mahfouz explores the aspects and consequences of women’s sexual relations in most of his works, highlighting the division between the virgin and the prostitute. The metaphor of the Virgin/Prostitute that is addressed in Mahfouz's novels such as in *Cairo Trilogy* (1956/7), *The Thief and The Dogs* (1961), (1947), and *Awlad Haratina/Children of the Alley* (1959) besides others is examined in reality by El-Sadawi (1980) in her novel, *The Woman at Point Zero*, and in Sahar Khalifa's *Woman from Sand and Myrrh*, and Nadine Naber's (2003) examination of gender relations in the Arab-American community in San Francisco. Referring to the virgin female as Bint Arab and to the sexually active as Americanized whore or prostitute is common within an Arabic context either in a Western environment or within an Arab Islamic environment. While the sexuality of the female is pursued by Arab males, when this sexuality is connected to a female relative, then family honor becomes the issue as we witness in the case of Jasminaa. While Arab males brag about their sexual activities, Arab females could be condemned to death if they are discovered as sexually active outside marriage. A Jordanian law regarding justifiable homicide in cases of women and their sexuality was fought for many years by Jordanian feminist activists because men were able to get away with the crime of murder when it was related to killing linked to the female's vagina and family “honor.” The critic Salah Fadle (2002) briefly suggests that it is time for Arab men to have a different definition for the concept of honor other than female sexuality.

Within *Awlad Haratina*, we notice that female sexuality is completely controlled by the will of men, and whenever a female escapes this control or this supervision as in Jasminaa's case, then the outcome is usually tragic for the woman involved, although not for the man. In Arafa's chapter, the focus of the start was on three main characters: Arafa, Hanash and Awatif. Arafa
immediately recognizes Awatif, who is working in the outside space, which was occupied by all kinds of males. Although she seems confident in the men's domain and serves male customers with confidence, her appearance in that domain was constantly challenged. Arafa immediately was attracted to her sexually, but thought of seeking a more acceptable frame for his relationship with her through marriage. Awatif was unable to withstand the pressure of the male zone, however, that was charged with competition among males. Awatif could be easily violated, especially after the death of her father, if she remained single, which reminds of Jehsha. Arafa repeatedly remembered his mother who suffered a lot, and was humiliated and sexually abused despite the fact that she did not harm anybody. Sexual abuse is a silent crime that is almost impossible to withstand, and it becomes a game between gangsters or Strongmen of the Alley. When Arafa returned, he was mocked because his father was unknown. He says: "My mother herself was one of their victims, and they even make insinuations about her, when she's dead" (*Children of the Alley*, p. 379).

When Awatif stands in her father's coffee shop, her acts did not disturb the norms. However, men's attitudes toward Awatif are still directed to her body and to her sexuality. This demonstrates how males direct their physical superiority over females to undermine the right of women to their sexual choice, or even their right to use their social space freely. The sexual politics in Arafa's time are presented in the following scene: The narrator tells us:

Arafa "saw the gangster coming, surrounded by his gang. When he passed the portable coffee stand, he noticed the girl, and asked one of his men, "who is the girl? Awatif, the daughter of Shakrun." The man waggled his eyebrows, satisfied, and headed into his neighborhood. Arafa felt anxious and unhappy. He waved his empty glass at the girl, and she glided over and took it and the coin from his hand. He motioned with his chin in the direction Santuri had gone. "Doesn't that bother you?". She laughed as she turned to go.
"I'll ask you for help if I need it, but will you help?" Her scorn cut him; it was sad, not challenging (p. 377).

When Awatif married Arafa, Santuri felt that his authority was violated, and this is the conversation that went between Santuri and Agag:;

"You went too far," said Santuri bluntly. "No gangster can approve what you did."

"What did I do?"

"You protected a man who was challenging me," raged Santuri, the words coming from his mouth and his eyes like.

"All the man did was marrying a solitary girl after her father died. I witness the marriage of every Rifaa person,"

"He has nothing to do with Rifaa," said Santuri contemptuously. "No one knows who his father is, not even himself. You could be his father, or I could be, or any beggar in the alley."

"But today he lives in my territory,"

“All he did was rent a vacant basement.”

“So what!”

“Do you know that you went too far?” Shouted Santuri.

“Don't shout,” said Agag. “There is no need for us to fight like roosters.”

“Maybe there is a need.” (pp. 390-391).

Violence and sexuality permeate the first chapter of *Awlad Haratina*, but the violence and sexuality of the male goes deeper in Arafa's chapter to draw the line between the female virgin and the female prostitute in contrast with open male sexuality. The circumstances of marriage saved Awatif, the virgin, from prostitution and from sexual abuse by superior males. We notice that there are beautiful women in the House of the Trustee that he uses for entertaining himself
and his guest. Who are those women? We are not given any hint regarding this, but this could be
the destiny of Awatif if she was not saved by Arafa, or later, when she were sheltered by the old
woman, Umm Zenfil. The Overseer/The Trustee in this chapter invites Arafa to share in the
sexual entertainment. Details about sexuality and the subjectivity of women's bodies are explored
in depth in this section in *Awlad Haratina*. In Rifaa's chapter, Jasminaa's body and sexuality
were treated differently because Jasminaa was an active participant in the sexual acts, and she
broke several norms by bluntly exposing herself to men, being in public while intoxicated,
having a sexual affair and so forth. In Arafa's chapter, however, we see how women's bodies are
used economically for entertainment. Naked women dancing entertain the Trustee/Overseer and
his guests. Arafa is lured into this night life by the Overseer.

Social class is not a factor in the attitudes of women toward their sexuality or toward their
agency through marriage. Awatif in this chapter claims her agency, and leaves Arafa for
disrespecting her, despite the poverty and the low social class that she came from, while Lady
Nazeera, the Trustee's wife, lives her nightmarish sick nights, without having Awatif's courage to
claim herself and her rights as a wife or as an equal partner to her husband. Outside of marriage,
women have few rights. Arafa's mother, Jahsha, left the neighborhood, whose protectors
subjected her and abused her sexually, leaving her pregnant, humiliated, and helpless. She
disappeared from the neighborhood, because there is no way to claim her own humanity other
than this. Only then, she was able to claim her agency, and teach her two children how to return
to the neighborhood of their ancestors and claim their right to it. Jahsha is the same woman as
Jasminaa and as Awatif. The three women are a metaphor for three different choices for the
vulnerable woman. In Mahfouz's view, Jasminaa became a prostitute by her own choice, while
Jehsah was able to free herself from such fate and claim her humanity and her agency by moving
her body and herself completely from the abusive conditions of her neighborhood, and raise her
children with dignity. Awatif, on the other hand, left the protection of her marriage, but found her shelter in associating herself with other women, leaving the luxury of the Trustee's house, and leaving the husband who neglected her.

The example of Awatif, the independent woman who was able to stand for herself despite her poverty, and Jehsah, who was not able to defend her sexuality, but found a life away from the neighborhood are two pictures or two choices that are provided by Mahfouz for women who deal with a social environment that doesn't respect them as human beings, and subjects them to different kinds of sexual abuse. The relationship between the old Umm Zinfel and the young woman Awatif might explain the bond between the two women. This kind of bondage could be a social solution, that Mahfouz provides for young women to protect themselves from sexual abuse by sexual predatory males instead of getting caught by male sexual domination.

Nadine (2003) addresses the issue of the virgin Arab woman (Bint Arab) versus the American or the Westernized Arab woman (the prostitute). In her interviews with both Arab American young men and young women from different classes who live in San Francisco, she found that many Arab men go out freely with American women and practice their sexuality freely within the American or Western context, but for marriage, most prefer to go to their Arabic homeland to marry virgin Arab women. Interestingly, while some Arab American men might marry the American women that they date, they won’t marry Arab American women who have adopted the Western life style, and they do not trust these women to be the mothers of their children, and perceive “Americanized” or “Westernized” Arab women as whores or prostitutes, not worthy of respect or of marriage. On the other hand, the Arab American family, even those who received Western Education and do not practice their religion, both Muslim and Christian families, accept the sexuality of their sons as a sign of masculinity, but completely refuse the idea of their daughter’s sexuality before marriage. The Arab American women who date and go
out with boy friends become outcasts, and no one would marry them. Even when the girl wants to marry an American non-Arab man, they strongly oppose her wish, and might disown her if she did not follow their wishes. Arab women’s sexuality before marriage is completely rejected within the Arabic culture inside the Arab countries or in the Western context, despite the age and the circumstances of the woman, which opposite of the situation for men. While the Islamic culture is against sexuality outside marriage both for men and women equally, Most Arab Muslims do not have the same standard for the two genders. They might find it a disagreeable act for the man to have sex outside marriage, but this could be easily forgivable if the man is single. Even when the man is not single, the culture requires the wife to forgive her husband who has cheated on her to preserve her family, hoping that he will repent by time. In contrast, it is a matter of life or death if the wife cheated on her husband with another man. The strong tie between honor and women’s sexuality has persisted in the Arab culture for both Muslim and Christian Arabs. All the males of the family find it disgraceful to their personal honor if their wives, their sisters, their daughters or any close relative female has practiced sexuality outside marriage. Arab feminists have spent years fighting laws that do not punish men for killing female relatives save the family’s “honor” according to an interview with Nadia Shemrook, the President of the United Jordanian Women organization in my visit to Jordan in 2002. Mrs. Shemrook spoke about the efforts of the Jordanian Women organizations to protect women from the assaults of their fathers or their brothers in providing those disowned women with shelters. She spoke about the punishments and the secret imprisonment that some women have faced from their parents or male relatives to save the honor of the family.

Gender Relations and Power

Gender relationships are often used as vehicles to claim power, control and authority. Power is contextualized here within the division of labor, and intersects with the psychological
moments that are generated within the individual when he or she is confronted with something that is not fully understood or comprehended. Mahfuz reflects this in the characters presented in *Awlad Haratina* who are mostly unconscious of the psychological forces that drive their behavior. Division of labor as a strategy that directs gender relations is seen in Mahfouz’s novel. From the first chapter, one finds that the men's domain is separated from the women's domain. If one looks very closely to the reasons behind the separation between men's space and women's space, we realize that this strategy is guided by the necessity of divided labors, where women are nurturers and men are the hunters/protectors. Gebelaawi, for instance, was portrayed as the Strongman of the desert, where he was able to claim his power and authority through physically defeating other males. Women are presented with the need to nurture, which is satisfied through sexuality and mating with men. Gebelaawi was able to claim his authority over the women of his household by applying the rules of this strategy. His women, despite their colors or social class, submit to the power that Gebelaawi gained through his physical strength over his environment. Women's space became limited to their rules as nurturers, as seen from the first encounter between Adham and Omaima, where Adham was enjoying the great garden freely, while Omaima had to steal her joy in the absent supervision. The division of labor controls the division of space, and the violation of this restricted division of space is controlled by the patriarch. This is portrayed through Narjis, who was thrown out of the house for violating this rule. The hierarchy of power is part of the division of labor. Gebelaawi was the one who provided living for all the men and women of his household; therefore, he possessed the power to dictate the rules. When he threw Idrees from his house, Gebelaawi warned anyone who helped him: "Damnation to anyone who lets him back in or helps him!... And Divorce to anyone who dares to try!" Later, we see Narjis, Adham and Omaima are punished cruelly for dealing with Idrees.

In Gebel's chapter, the two daughters of Belqiti had to go out of their residence to bring
water from the public pump because their father was old. However, violating the normal space, "the indoor," space exposed them to the harassment of some boys. Their right to be outdoors requires the accompaniment of a male or older woman.

In Rifaa’s chapter, Jasminaa was exposed to the harsh negotiation for her life when she crossed the rules that divided males and females because she permitted herself to journey unattended to a house of a male that with whom she had no legal relationship and she was found drunk.

In Qaasem’s chapter, we find that both Qamar and Amina are confined their indoor space. Younger women such as Badreya move in the outdoor space cautiously to perform quick errands. In Arafä's chapter, while Awatif’s violation of the normal division of labor was acceptable because of her social and economic class (a daughter of a poor old man), her freedom of movement was easily endangered and violated by Santuri, the Strongmen/gangster of the Alley, who gave himself the right to prevent the marriage of Awatif and Arafa.

One learns from the chapters of Awlad Haratina that older women's rights to be outdoors is perceived and treated differently. While the older women are still subjected to the limitations that most women are subjected to in the public sphere, they have a larger margin of freedom than younger women. This margin of freedom to move outside the private domain might be allowed to them because of they were no longer found appealing sexually to men because of old age. This also supports my claim that sex is used economically. The older age, especially when it is connected to a lower social class, is perceived as less valuable; therefore, it is not subjected to the same gender politics. Tamrhinna, the old lady of Hamdan Ally, Umm Bikhaterha; the exorcist in Rifaa's chapter; Sakeena, Lady Qamar's maid in Qassem's Chapter, and Umm Zinful, the woman that hosted Awatif in Arafa's chapter are working across the normal division of labors because of their age, careers, and social classes. All of them are considered poor and old. Despite
the special and sometime significant and needed services they provide to their community, they are not recognized as prestigious.

Older males and poets are also not respected for the wisdom or the entertainment they provide to their community, such as in Gawad's case; however, older males still pursue their sexuality as we noticed in the scene of Arefa's first customer, the elderly man from the Al Qassem neighborhood, who sought him and asked him for the gift of Agag, the protector of Riffa, "Give us what you have, and don't be surprised. Believe me, I'm still alive!" (p. 371.)

From this observation, one can realize that the primary measurement of the person’s worth then is masculinity and physical strength, which also could be linked to sexuality. When the person has physical strength, his social and economic position moves up and wins respect and prestige. With this respect and prestige, one gets the material advantage s/he needs, is and considered by the community as a "protector," even if this person abuses his power and puts people in misery. Physical power is perceived with fear and apprehension as something beyond the normal ability of human being, and this could be fantasized upon and connected unconsciously to the power of God in the psyche of the people who inhabit such environment as the one in Awlad Haratina. Al Khala could be translated as the wasteland, the empty space or the nothingness that is perceived as eternal, mysterious, powerful, and incomprehensible. Power, then is perceived with the apprehensive and connected to the unknown, and it is feared because of the overwhelming mixture of feelings that it generates within its presence. The physical power is able to end or protect one’s life in an environment that is subjected to the unknown within the endless horizon of the desert. Gebelawi's physical strength and wide structure made him stand out not only among strangers, but also among his own people, and among his own sons as it was communicated from the first few pages of the novel. The narrator begins:

The site of our alley was a wasteland… There was nothing in the void but the mansion
Gabalawi had built almost as if to challenge all the fear and savagery and lawlessness. Its huge, high wall encircled a roomy expanse, the Western part of which was a garden, and the eastern part a three story residence. One day the benefactor summoned his children to his lower reception chamber adjoining the garden. All his sons came… in silk galabiyas, and stood before him, so awestruck that they glanced up at him only furtively. He ordered them to sit down and they sat on the chairs around him. He gazed at them a little while with his eyes, as piercing as a falcon's, then rose and moved toward the chamber door, and stood in front of the great door, gazing out at the vast garden …. The garden rang with life and song, while the chamber was shrouded in silence. The brothers thought that the ruler of the wasteland had forgotten about them his height and bulk made him seem superhuman, like an alien from another planet. They exchanged glances; this was the way he was when he had something weighty on his mind. What worried them was that he was as powerful in the house as he was out in the open land, and they were powerless against him. The man turned to them without leaving his place and spoke in a deep, grating voice which echoed powerfully through the chamber, whose high walls were covered with curtains and carpets, (p. 9).

The reader feels the power of Gebellawi and his surroundings from the lively details that Mahfouz has provided to us whenever he mentions Gebelaawi and his Great House, which he possesses in the desert with an aura of awe and mystery. In the final chapter of Arafa, Arafa admits saying to his brother, "look at us, for example. Everybody uses us, and no one respects us! They don't respect anybody," He set his teeth. "Except the gangsters" (p. 370).

Al-Nabelsi (1992) blames the Arabic man for not enjoying the social freedom that equates him with the woman in his duties and rights. He states that, “No free woman exists with an enslaved man” (p. 37). Al-Nabelis (1992) is aware of the power struggle that manifests itself within gender relations, and he witnesses the influence of the imbalance in gender relations on
the spirit of the society. He finds that in the absence of the social freedom and its joy, the man becomes a cock that controls a society of hens, and becomes the practical owner of the patriarchal authority, who has to reject the possibility of a woman leading over him in any field. He explains further that whenever a male accepts the authority of the woman, this acceptance would mostly be an artificial and insincere. Al-Nabelsi (1992) believes that this inferior judgment of the woman is abusive and unproductive for the whole society, and it ignores the importance of reading the future wisely and comprehending the necessity of involving the humanistic role of the woman in building societies. Al-Nabelsi (1992) also understands that the Arabic man who inherited this patriarchy fourteen centuries ago, and lived it completely, would find it difficult to leave behind, even after one hundred years of struggle against colonization. He acknowledges that social freedom is a different battle and different struggle from national freedom. He says that social freedom "requires a decent standard of education, historical consciousness, and the ability to read the future, as well as it requires a decent civilized dimension, an open mind that is free of racism and taking sides" (Al-Nabelsi, 1992, p. 38).

*Muruwa* and Possibilities for New Understandings in Gender Relations

In *Awlad Haratina*, the victim, whether male or a female, rather than summing the energies to fight oppression and oppressive people, unfortunately, direct their energies to oppress each other in the absence of knowledge, which helps to explain the continual physical and verbal violence from some men toward some women and toward some weaker men. Without knowledge, justice couldn't be achieved, and this is the message of Mahfouz (1959) through his character, Arafa, or “To Know.” To know, then, contains the “magic” needed to solve gender relations, and this is the message of *Awlad Haratina* through a genealogical journey of the problem from a Middle Eastern point of view.

While sexuality is naturally important for both males and females, sexuality signifies a
lively male as one could deduce from some scenes from Arafa's chapter. Arafa's first customer was an elderly male, who sought the “secret gift” Arafa offered to Agag, the protector of Rifaa's Alley. We understand from the gestures and the smiles that were exchanged between the Arafa and the elderly man, that the "secret gift" was something that addresses or enhances sexual pleasure. The elderly man Arafa would provide the answer for his sexual problems. The Overseer, Qadri also sent someone to Arafa for the same reason.

Women's sexuality is not open to discussion unless they are prostitutes such as Jasmina. Jashsha, the mother of Arafa, or Narjis, the girl that Idrees seduced and got pregnant out of wedlock, and who later became the mother of Hind. All three of these were sexually abused. And none of the three women were defended by the people of the neighborhood, except Jasmina, defended by Rifaa through the solution of marriage. The people of the Alley, on the other hand, acted irresponsibly when Narjis and later Jehsha were found pregnant. In the case of Jehsha, they "used to wonder, back then when your mother was pregnant, who the father could be," saying to Arafa when he approached his neighborhood for the first time, (p. 367).

From the beginning of the novel to the end, Mahfouz confronts his reader with the subtle existence of the dynamics of the social and economic class system in the novel’s setting. For example, the reader encounters dark-skinned slaves, both males and females in Gebellawi's house, and the discriminatory response to the person, despite the social position of the person or the gender of this person. Mahfouz’s presentation of the class system might be influenced by postcolonial discourse, and the desire of Mahfouz to reveal the reality of the class system in the Arab World in order to resolve the issue through enlightenment, or a social framework I refer to as Muruwa.

Within the framework of the gender relations presented by Mahfouz in Awlad Haratina, the reader observes the oppressive hierarchal system that classifies people according to gender,
color and ethnicity. For example, in the novel some black females are able to marry white males as the case of Gebelaawi and Adham’s mother, but the opposite might not be possible. We also learn that there are specific jobs or crafts that mostly black males or black females practice. For example, black males are door keepers, personal servants, messengers and singers. The doorkeepers of Gebelaawi's Great House and of the Trustees are usually black males. Old Gawad, the poet, is a black male. Gebelaawi's messenger to Hammum was a black male. We also learned from Adham's chapter that rich or upper class people do not work to earn living; reading and writing is not prestigious; only common people have to learn how to read or write in order to get jobs. Black females mostly are maids or servants except the exorcist Umm Bikhatirha, who taught Rifaa how to rid people of their demons. We understood from Rifaa's father that exorcism is the business of women.

Sexuality of both white females and black females are only acceptable within the framework of marriage. However, in Arafa's chapter, we learn about sexuality outside marriage, and women, whether black or white, may be objectified and abused by upper class people for personal entertainment as the case of Qadri, the Trustee of the Gebelaawi Neighborhood.

Mahfouz ends his final chapter with the last Trustee/Overseer, Qadri, who killed his brother Hummam and disappeared with Hind, the daughter of Idrees. Qadri also murders Arafa. Both Hummam and Arafa represent goodness and both were loved by Gebellawi. This return to Qadri represents a full closure to the cycle of Gebellawi's project that is still waiting to be realized. In Arafa's chapter, we also learn about the death of the black servant of Gebellawi and Gebellawi's messenger to Arafa, the old black female slave. We also learned about the close relationship between Gebellawi and his servants, which demonstrates to us that Gebellawi in Arafa's chapter is not the same Gebellawi as in first chapter. Gebellawi has become kinder and much more sensitive. His sadness for losing his close servant made him so sick, he finally dies.
We also learn that he sent his old female black slave to Arafa to tell him that his grandfather had forgiven him and that he was satisfied with him when he died. Through this event, Mahfouz announces the death of the patriarch, along with the death of both black slaves, which represents the death of a complete patriarchal system with its hierarchy. The slavery system ended with the era of Gebelaawi. These deaths are an announcement of the beginning of a new era and new class system in the neighborhood. However, although slavery based on race ended, it was replaced with another kind of slavery, the sexual slavery as it is materialized in Arafa's chapter through the nightly entertainments of the Overseer. This sexuality transcends the previous social class system, and it sheds some light on the colonization era where knowledge was used to attain further control and power over people, especially over women's bodies.

Knowledge is not sought or admired by most characters throughout the novel, despite the changes in people’s attitudes toward sexuality from time to time. This might be due to the fact that knowledge in Mahfouz's work was connected to women who are often portrayed as teachers and knowledge producers or communicators. For instance, Adham's mother taught her husband Gebelaawi and her son Adham how to read and write. Umm Bikhaterha taught Rifaa exorcism. Qamar supported Qaasem financially and sentimentally encouraged him to pursue his ancestor's dream, and her wisdom was irreplaceable for Qaasem after her death. Jahsha, Arafa's mother also raised her son wisely and taught them to abandon revenge, and to turn away from the lifestyle of the Strongmen who abused her and the weak and the poor. Jehsha sent her son to a famous magician to learn all his magical tricks so he and his brother Hanash could claim their own neighborhood and restore their mother's dignity in their ancestral neighborhood. However, the relationship between the male and the female does not necessarily change society because of the female's knowledge of science. For example, the relationship between Adham's mother and Gebelaawi might have been affected by this knowledge, as seen when Gebelaawi became loving
and respectful of Adham's mother during her death. Rifaa thought that he could free the woman who taught him exorcism from her own demon, which shows his belief of male superiority over the female. Women did not gain respect, necessarily, for their knowledge as seen in the old black poet Gawad who did not respect his wife, Umm Bikhaterha. Knowledge did not raise the status of women even within a black community or within lower hierarchical class, where individuals, either males or females, are already oppressed.

Mahfouz perceived women as teachers and defenders of knowledge, despite their sexual struggles within an unjust system. His argument that only knowledge could bring some enlightenment on the issue of gender relations could be deducted where the female was able to survive through knowledge. This component of the story is aligned with the principals of Muruwa that connects the person's worth to other qualities besides gender or sexuality. Knowledge is needed within Muruwa framework to distinguish the true qualities of the person. The Muruwa framework does not grant the person a stable status, however, just because he or she acted in a manner fitting the Muruwa doctrine. The act of the person could be evaluated as an act of Muruwa, but this act could be performed from a conflicted person. Muruwa is an extended lifetime behavior.

Muruwa implies forgiveness. Gender relations between men and women under this framework are complementary to each other. Each person, either a man or a woman, does whatever they can to best to enrich the life of humanity. Within the family framework, women teach, nurture, protect, love and respect their partners, their children, their parents, their siblings and their communities. Men within this framework, teach, nurture, protect, love and respect their partners, their children, their parents, their siblings and their communities. Love and respect take effort. Love means to communicate the truth with respect and kindness in order to help others to be their best for themselves and for the collective. Sometimes people's face conflicted interests
between their personal interests and the collective interests. Muruwa teaches people to live unselfishly and to choose the collective good over the personal good for the salvation of the whole of humanity. Neighbors under this framework are respected and treated with kindness. There is a common saying that the Prophet Mohammed advised his people to care for the neighbors. According to the story, people asked the Prophet about the qualification of the neighbor (jar), and the Prophet's answer was that the person should care for his neighbors who are near one's house until the seventh row from each direction of your house. The Prophet revealed that the Angel Gabriel was persistent in stressing that he (Prophet Mohammad) take good care of his neighbors, until eventually the Prophet would inherit his neighbor. The neighbor in this sense is a metaphor for "the Other." If every person took good care of his/her neighbor to the seventh row of each direction, then "the Other," whether one is a male or a female, would be an extension of the self. The framework of Muruwa is needed to overcome the fear that one experiences when encountering "the Other." It is a sign of a progressive civilization when human beings start building healthier relationships following criteria other than the person's gender, sexuality, color, ethnicity, age, physical appearance, physical strength or sociopolitical position. Under the Muruwa framework, every body is needed to advance civilization.

Mahfouz’s novel Awlad Haratina reveals the oppression of a society that does not live under Muruwa. He suggests that through dismantling the oppressive hierarchy that does not value women, but oppresses, limits, and prohibits them, only then can life be renewed and hope spring forth. He also reveals that when men oppress, they too are oppressed. They live a defeated life, clinging to hopes of a lost age. However, by breaking down the system that oppresses both genders, then can a society begin to rebuild, rebuild toward a future of hope and a life of harmony between people.
CONCLUSION

Mahfouz’s *Awlad Haratina* is a multilayered narrative filled with religious, cultural, social and psychological mythology, symbolism, satire and other rhetorical devices. It is an allegory of the Arab experience turning the lens of self-examination on the Arab world. Mahfouz employs unique Arabic rhetorical forms to communicate his message through such traditional methods as *Retha* or Lamentation to capture the collective Arab memory, but also as a rhetorical technique to skillfully develop a retrogressive method to build resistance against a useless life style. Although Lamenting is considered obsolete by modern intellectuals, Mahfouz recognized that it continues to color people's attitude toward life. The bard with his Lamenting songs is employed by Mahfouz to demonstrate that the Arab collective memory clings too tightly to the past and therefore, it is difficult for Arabs to function in the present or to participate in shaping a better future. Lamentation is used as a probing process to open social and cultural tensions in order to resolve the Arabic defeated soul. Mahfouz hoped that his rhetorical method would speed the resolution process. This application of a negative rhetorical form to achieve positive outcomes has never been addressed by an Arab critic. This dissertation explores the possibility of using Arab rhetoric, as is represented by Mahfouz, to bring changes to gender relations. My rhetorical criticism of Mahfouz's perspective about gender relations is informed by feminist perspectives and experiences, especially the perspective of women of color and the concept of Womenism. The *Muruwa* framework proposed here is a new framework that transcends and transforms the traditional perspective of gender relations.

The significance of myth to gender relations in Mahfouz's *Awlad Haratina* is explored here as a method to establish a common ground with the audience by revealing the audience to themselves. The mythical approach of Mahfouz was used as a pilgrimage or a spiritual journey that supports the healing process intended by Mahfouz in order to accept change.
The journey to the Arabic first home in the collective memory as it is depicted in *Awlad Haratina* provides the audience with an understanding of the construction of gender relations in the Arab World. *Awlad Haratina* presents the audience with an image of the ideal Arab patriarch, and the changes in gender relations across generations, leading to a new model of life that was communicated in the final chapter through Arafa and his brother, Hanash who represent Western scientific knowledge and wisdom as solutions to the political and social problems as well as the problems of gender relations in the Arab world.

Mahfouz benefited from both the Western rhetorical techniques and the Arab rhetorical techniques and has succeeded in constructing a powerful rhetoric. However, his employment of irony and sarcasm in handling religious symbols limited his ability to create group identification and so consequently, he was unable to reach the majority of Egyptians and many others in the Arab world who shunned his novel. However, as a great work in literature, the novel has been republished, and although limited in acceptance by a majority of Muslims, it is continuing to be read, along with Mahfouz’s other great works, and gradually his vision may have enough of an effect to at least allow Arab people to begin to listen to a different and more modern Arab voice.

*Awlad Haratina* is a metaphor for a pilgrimage or a spiritual journey to the psyche of the Middle Eastern people. Mahfouz takes his audience into this pilgrimage through the story-teller and through the bard. He travels with his audience to the ancient past. From that very beginning, the audience was presented with the five main religious characters that shaped the theological and cultural history of the Middle East. However, these characters were recreated and secularized by Mahfouz.

As described previously, the novel starts with the mysterious character Gebelaawi, the great ancestor of several generations as a multi-layered metaphor of the perfect patriarch. The features of this patriarch are borrowed from the character of God as he is depicted in the *Torah,*
in the Bible, as well as in the Qur’an. Mahfouz simply uses the Qur’anic description that God created Adam in his image. So, it is clear that Gebelaawi is presented as a super being, but his features are also blended with the features of Adam, the first man on Earth, as well as the features of Abraham, the father of the prophets. This metaphor of blending features from religious and influential characters into one is rhetorically powerful. Through the blended metaphor, Mahfouz guides the attention of the audience to the unifying events between the three sacred characters: God, who lives in heaven and who possesses the Secret or the Great Book, and who has the ultimate power on our psyches, is eternal, living forever, and represents a potential that all humans wish to imitate and fulfill to bring order to the world; Iblees as Satan, representing the failed dream because of Iblees’s jealousy of Adham; and Adam who knows all names was chosen to be representative of God, but faced the same destiny when one of his two sons killed his brother out of jealousy. Adham is brown, and Adam is made of clay, which made him inferior to Iblees (Satan) who is made of light or fire according to the Qur’anic story. Adham is like Ishmael (Ismail in the Qur’an) who was born of Abraham from a black Egyptian maid; And Abraham who built the Great House of Mecca (with his son Ismael in the Qur’an), and who has a promise from God to let his children prosper on earth. (The jealousy between two brothers has been presented three times: Adam and Satan; Qabil and Habil, Adam's children; and Isaac and Ishmael, the children of Abraham. The religious texts do not present them as children. Mahfouz's metaphor transcends this connection, borrowing the Christian concept of God as the father of all beings. 

The concept of "the father" is connected to the problem of gender relations in the Arab World. Despite the fact that the common term for the father is Rab Al-Ausra, "the God of the family," and the mother is called Rabbat Al-Ausra, "the Goddess of the family." The concept of Allah as God is much different than the role of the human being as God for Muslims. This could
be one of the problematical legacies of language that grows and changes over time. This complication of the language could affect the meaning, especially in the translation of ancient texts. One of the Egyptian ancient Gods was Ra which in Arabic means "Shepherd." Referring Jesus to Ra, Father, God, and Rab within the translated modern texts might have something to do with the concept of the physical image of God as the father/son.

The concept of God as father or that God could be born on earth as a human being is not accepted by Muslims and is considered heresy. Mahfouz's metaphor, then, is very complex. Mahfouz's audience, which lives in a religious and conservative environment misunderstood the hidden message. The complexity of Mahfouz’s metaphor would have saved him from dangerous fate if his text was produced in an environment with more intellectual awareness about the positive potentials that a modern text would bring to its readers. However, Mahfouz’s portrayal of the death of a powerful mysterious being with an extended life and connected this death with a successful attempt from Arafa to steal the Great/Secret Book of Gebelaawi was perceived as an assault on God, the Supreme being of the universe. This was considered an unforgivable sin against the Islamic religion and against the Arab culture, especially as perceived by the Arab Muslims. Mahfouz further complicated his metaphor by making Arafa also possess a book, and Arafa’s book is the book of magic that was saved by his brother Hanash in the end of the novel. So, the audience might perceive three Holy or Secret Books: God’s Holy Book in the Qur’an, Gebelaawi’s Secret Book, and Araf’s book of magic. There is another secret book that is referred to by the Qur’an as "Al-lawhu Al-Mahfouz," or the Preserved Board, in which God recorded all the details about the universe according to the Qur’an.

“The Great House” in Awlad Haratina is a symbol that has a significant place in the Arab and Muslims’ psyche. It has the potential to represent The Holy Mosque of Mecca, and also represents the big garden of the Great House of heaven as it is in the Qur’an. Abraham and his
son Ismaeil is the builder of The Ka‘aba in the Great House of Mecca, where all Muslims face in their prayers, no matter where they go. The first chapter revolves around Adham and Idrees. This story borrows from the myth of the first human being on earth after being outcast from heaven, along with his female, for their attempt to steal the forbidden fruit or the book of knowledge from the garden. Mahfouz blends the personality of Adam and Iblees with the personality of Shmoel and Ishaq, the two sons of Abraham; however, the old testament did not mention details about Shmoel and Isaq, and we don’t know for sure if this is the invention of Mafhouz or it is borrowed from an older myth. The choice of Mahfouz is highly connected to Arabic history and their connection to their ancestor Abraham.

Mahfouz’s confesses in the end of the novel through his narrator, that “people said that he (Arafa) could never have been Gebelaawi’s killer as they had thought, and others said he was the alley’s greatest man, even if he had killed Gebelaawi,” and that the people “competed for him, until every neighborhood claimed him as its own,” (Mahfouz, 1959, p. 448). This confession aggravated his Arab Muslim audience and alienated them further because the audience read that Western or foreign knowledge or science is capable of killing religion. Mahfouz’s reliance on the ability of knowledge and science to replace the romanticized idea of God has failed to find an ear among common Arab Muslims. The fear that Mahfouz's message might encourage other intellectuals to destroy their faith and erase their Islamic identity led to the banning of the novel, and later led to the physical assault on Mahfouz’s life. Awlad Haratina is still banned in the Arab World.

Mahfouz does not depart from the traditional Islamic lifestyle in his novels, and most of his novels are invitations to contemplate life. His application of Lamentation demonstrates the depth of his message. Lamenting the past blocks people from functioning in the present and prevents them from succeeding in building a better future. The romanticism about God has
worked in the same way for Muslims. They perceive God as the creator, the protector and the caregiver, but they fail to perceive that God does not need people's romanticism as much as he wants them to function in this life positively by doing their best, as the Muruwa framework suggests. "Wa qul E'malu" means work. This verse is repeated in almost every Qur'anic chapter several times. The Prophet Mohammad says Al-Amal Ebada, means, "Work is a worship." Those who love God, have to produce better work, or at least they strive to do their best in their life, and this the original idea of Jihad.

Mahfouz's choice of Lamentation to communicate his message is a way to reveal people to themselves once and forever. He may have perceived himself in the same shoes of those Prophets, who possessed wisdom and courage in order to bring change. Unfortunately, the romanticism about Judaism, Christianity or Islam, prevents people from foreseeing the message that is recorded in their holy books. Because Awlad Haratina was so controversial, Mahfouz found another vehicle to communicate his philosophy. In The Harafish (1959); he does not abandon the idea of God, and he does not suggest that Western knowledge will save his native people. In The Harafish, he developed the character of Aashoor Al-Naji, a homeless, poor person, who was adopted by a religious man and became a porter when he grew up, but he was chosen to be the Fetuwwa of the neighborhood by his people because of his morality. The Fetuwwa concept as it is communicated through the persona of Aashoor El-Naji, means chivalry. Mahfouz demonstrates in Al-Harafish that this concept or the role of the Fetuwwa is altered by the thugs who use their physical strength to intimidate the poor, and this is how Fetuwwa became associated with the thugs or with the strongmen.

Al-Harafish creates the same atmosphere of the Hara that the audience witnesses in Awlad Haratina; however, the solution for human salvation in Al-Harafish comes from within. Aashoor El-Naji has the same physical appearance as Gebelaawi. He too disappeared in the same
mysterious way. He was found as a new born infant in the road beside the Takia, a closed place that was used by Dervish for their spiritual and mystic meetings. El-Naji (means the survival in Arabic) felt an attraction to that place most of his life until he disappeared one day after leading a decent life that won him respect from everyone in his neighborhood, despite his poverty. El-Naji’s life style is very much connected to the Islamic religion. His chivalrous attitude is admired within the Arabic Islamic culture in reality. Both men and women looked up to this example used by Mahfouz. The flexibility of Mahfouz to shape his metaphors and craft them to fit his purpose demonstrates his rhetorical power.

Through his novels and short stories, Mahfouz gives voice to the political and philosophical currents of the time. Mahfouz’s argument challenged the well-established religious argument. In addition to the threat that Mahfouz’s voice presented to the religious elite, the intellectuals and less religious elite were unsure of their rather new ideologies. Gender relations were becoming an important topic in Egypt by the 1950s. Qassem Ameen, an Egyptian intellectual was a feminist leader that fought for women's equal rights. Women participated in demonstrations and in strikes and walked the streets of Egypt without their males for the first time to demand liberation of their country from the British colonizers. However, when some enlightened women wanted to participate actively in democracy and appoint themselves as political candidates for the new elective government, they were ignored by even their closest male friends. The Arab intellectual male was not ready then to accept the female as equal. They expected that women would go back to their private domains and leave the public arena for men, just as before. The frustration of women, and a few enlightened male individuals, in the failure to attain the future they fought for led Mahfouz to express his view about his neighborhood/the alley, with a hope that his message would make a difference.
Awlad Haratina was badly needed to change the complicated relationship between intellectual males and females and awaken the Arab mind to new possibilities. However, despite the possibilities that Mahfouz opens up for his readers by writing this novel, Mahfouz’s authentic, logical, and realistic message was misunderstood.

In Awlad Haratina Mahfouz ignores the necessity to establish God as part of the agenda for building a different future, which is a very important issue for the majority of his audience. Consequently, he failed to secure their full identification to receive his message. His direct and immediate intellectual audience, who are the well educated and wealthy elite, might have been aware of the critical moves of Mahfouz through his fiction, but they obviously chose to remain quiet fearing engagement in a lost battle, at a time that the Islamic identity may be the only unifier of Arabs and of Egyptians, despite their unity about religious issues or Islam.

Mahfouz’s message presented a marginalized world with practical and realistic heroes; however, the information for this marginalized group was a luxury they could not afford either economically or socially because they are occupied with their daily struggle to survive in a dysfunctional modern economy that has marginalized them. Most of those marginalized people were farmers who were forced to leave their lands and lost their accumulative knowledge about farming because of the modern political economy that forced them to ignore their personal and inherited farming experiences and turn their lands to cotton plantations to satisfy the needs of the global market. Traditionally, the extended Egyptian fertile lands and the Nile provided Egyptians with a rich life style. The farmer diversified his activities and his agricultural products according to the changes of the seasons. He/she is the master of his/her own life and the expert on what should be planted in each season to maintain the fertility of the soil and the control over the irrigation system. The knowledge of one’s own environment was a source of pride. The environment provided Egypt with a complete system that organized their relationships with each
other, including their gender relations. Women were as functional and valued in their environment as men. Women went to the farm, attaching their children to their bodies, farming their lands and eating their meals beside the many creeks of the Nile river with their children and husbands. Boys and girls played together freely. Older people were respected by their children, and never left alone in their old age. Neighbors were like extensions of one's family, and participated in happy and sad family occasions. Men and women danced freely with joy in their social ceremonies. Gender segregation existed mostly in the big modern cities, but in small towns and villages, people continued to flow with life. Life confronted people with challenges, but they also developed systems to solve their problems, including gender relations.

This large population of farmers and craftsmen who were considered the spine of Egypt found themselves gradually displaced and marginalized in the modernized economy. The Egyptian global economy was not advanced enough to furnish this marginalized majority with education or with a new means of living. The speedy rhythm of development and modernization has displaced people, and people young or old are pushed to become modernized. Many of these people turned to their faith in God, the Supreme being, seen as the sustainer of the life of the poor. God who possesses the power to fix every thing, and who has the perfect wisdom behind any circumstances, only this belief in him, is the food for the soul of those marginalized people. God is the only power that could unify the country and solidify it to stand against foreign forces, and the reunification through God’s love is the core of the identity of those people. Within this framework, Mahfouz was perceived as a cheater, a traitor and as a murderer of the worship of God. Because of this reliance, all other social issues, including economic or gender related, have no significant value to the collective cultural fantasy about God. Mahfouz or any other intellectual will be perceived as an outsider if this fact is violated.
However mystical and significant Mahfouz’s portrayal of life in *Awlad Haratina*, he neglects the collective memory of the Egyptians in many ways. In his portrayals of the sacred theological symbols, Mahfouz's ignores the pain, the psychological suppression, the physical oppression, and the intellectual defeat that his people endured for centuries since their political defeat in the Islamic Spain. The modernization that they imported to Egypt in the nineteenth and twentieth century did not add any social pride. The old Egypt has provided the world with dignified examples for the advancement of knowledge and architecture, but contemporary history has turned Egyptians into consumers of other people’s inventions and production. This, of course, has left local Egyptians too little as a source of pride. One of the main hopes remaining for Arabs and the Egyptians is centered around the only shared victorious symbols that their collective memory identifies: religious symbols. Modern Arabs, either in Egypt or in other Arab countries, have never forgotten the victorious days of Islam, which survived for centuries, when the rest of the world, especially Europe, was living in the dark ages.

The immediate reaction of Mahfouz’s audience was to rebel against this person who wanted to take away the memories of their dignified self. He tried to change their rhetorical vision. Mahfouz humiliates, in their perspective, the most prestigious religious and cultural symbols of their past. Mahfouz was seen by his audience as a villain or as an evil who wants to steal their hidden agenda or their silent dream as a victorious culture. It is true that Mahfouz’s goal was to shock his Arab audience through his novel, showing them that their hidden agenda is not possible by holding onto supernatural symbols as practical examples to be followed: The only hope for them is to give up those symbols in order to replace them with realistic ones. According to this critical perspective, Mahfouz’s rhetoric is an example of the argumentative perspective of rhetoric. Mahfouz dares to confront his people with his argument to provide them with an alternative reality. However, the alternative that he provides to his audience was
misunderstood, and his rhetorical vision was never realized during his lifetime, at least not through his most radical work, *Awlad Haratina*.

Like most artists driven by the need to express truth as they see it, Mahfouz risked his own life to communicate his vision. However, Mahfouz’s secularization of the cultural legacy and the rhetorical vision of his people were modified when he rewrote the same message in his novel: *The Harafish* (1971). The examples that he provided his audience this time were almost the same that he selected for *Awlad Haratina*, except he removed the theological connections from them. Aashoor Al-Naji becomes the first *Futuwa* of his neighborhood because of his goodness and morality. Al-Naji does not accept money to protect the poor from the gangs and from the abuse of the rich people in the neighborhood. *Futuwa* stands for youth and strength. Aashoor Al-Naji’s positive reputation has made him an example for eight generations. His story is told from generation to generation in the same manner as Gebelaawi’s story. Aashoor Al-Naji’s disappearance is connected to a supernatural, religious sacred place representing his position in the neighborhood. The religious place this time is not the Great House, but the *Taqya*, which is a place of worship for Sufi masters, who gather secretly for prayers and chanting.

Mahfouz’s (1959) *Awald Haratina* demonstrates wisdom and awareness. The dedication of Mahfouz to continue to present a new vision led him to write *Al-Harafish*. This time he also bluntly addresses the same problem, but his characters represent “them,” the poor and the outcast, not us. His audience did not reject it this time, because his message is delivered indirectly and teaches them something useful about human beings in general.

In my view, *Awlad Haratina* is more powerful and necessary than *Al-Harafish* because only a text such as *Awlad Haratina* can reveal Arab people to themselves and direct them toward new solutions for social problems, including those of gender relations, which became even more complicated within the modern system. Arab intellectuals need to re-read *Awlad Haratina* in a
new light, and face the bitterness of their reality, opening their minds to the many layers of
meaning to begin to dismantle the bitter effects that closed minds have on the Arab psyche.

Secondly, *Awlad Haratina* introduced one of the forgotten Arab rhetorical themes that
was prominent in the Arabic literary heritage of the *Jahelleyya*—Lamenting. In the past,
Lamenting was a sad theme that came with the difficult and harsh type of life of the Arabic
individual. Modern Arab history is a legacy of loss and displacement, and the survival of people
without their dignified cultural heritage which was recorded by their ancestors, but lost in time
and wars. The Lamenting was renewed from those defeats, with sad tunes of the painful scars in
the Arabic memory and the Arabic psyche, multiplied later by the period of colonization which
fragmented Arab lands, each ruled by different colonizers until the second half of the nineteenth
century, when the people of the world started to rebel. However, the establishment of new forms
of governments was often corrupted by conflicted interests and selfishness, fed by foreign
ambitious powers which never gave up hope in controlling the Arab resources and strategic
locations and the modern ambitions to turn this part of the world into a market for Western trades
and products. Many generations have passed in the Middle East, and Arabs have not been able to
materialize their dreams and contribute fully in dignity in the political and culture international
discourse. What other than Lamenting is left for those ambitious intellectuals who found
themselves victimized by their own governments whenever they sought salvation for their
people? Many intellectuals emigrated to the West to pursue individual freedom because they
gave up their dream in achieving social or cultural freedom in their own Arab lands. Lamenting
the death of hope is what most Arab poets and Arab writers have left to express, and Mahfouz is
one among others who has experienced this defeat, but found in *Awlad Haratina*, a way to
express this defeat through a renewed Arabic voice and mode of expression.
Mahfouz’s message about gender relations in the Arab World is very powerful and painfully clear in *Awlad Haratina*. His critical rhetoric is informed by the feminist critique, as well as by the perspective of womanism that I introduced here as *Muruwa*. Mahfouz simply tells his audience that the problem of gender relations is linked to the Arabic myth of origin which provides their identity as Arabs. Said’s (1978) concept of the beginning and its importance to establish a certain theory or a certain perspective could help the reader recognize Mahfouz’s referral of the problematic beginning of the Arab people. *Awlad Haratina* is needed to reintroduce the story or the myth to provide the reader with an opportunity to reflect on the fallacy of its logic, especially as it regards gender relations.

Arab Lamenting is explored in this dissertation as a method that Arab individuals, both common people and intellectuals, apply as a coping mechanism Mahfouz produced an extreme version of Lamenting, which not only shocked his audience, but completely turned them against him. There is a common Arabic wisdom says, "Treat the disease with the disease." This approach is true in the case of using vaccine in the modern medical field today where he patient is given a vaccine to encourage his/her immune system to fight the disease. The vaccine is made of a dose of weak germs, but they are enough to awaken the immune system to defend itself against invasion. Unfortunately, *Awlad Haratina* proved to be an overdose, so instead of strengthening the Arab immune system, energizing it to fight defeat, it missed its target, and the body continued to be unhealthy. The Arab World is still far from recovering from its psychological defeat and it needs new voices and critics to bring healing.

Mahfouz clearly described the disease to his Arab audience, but this process of revealing us to ourselves was so bitter and so painful that we were unable to accept it. The next step is to encourage other writers, critics and intellectuals to explore this Lamenting self and reveal it to people without destroying their dreams or their universal belief systems, but perhaps help to
transform those dreams and systems into new visions that combine both ancient values and modern values as a way to provide new answers for today's problems. Muruwa is such an answer, and is based on true Islamic values which teach that all human beings are sacred, and all human beings are equally valuable in the eyes of God. Mahfouz took the first step. He hoped to dismantle the suppressive attitudes, behaviors and beliefs that oppress both men and women in a stagnated, patriarchal system. The dismantling of the harmful norms is necessary for Muruwa to take effect, a system that values all people for their inherent goodness and ability to achieve goodness rather than on sex, status, power or skin color.
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