

Love, Faith, and Disillusionment: Comparative Visions in Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* and Naguib Mahfouz's *Miramar*

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Abstract:

The paper aims to focus on discussing the way in which love, faith and disillusionment are represented in *The End of the Affair* by Graham Greene and *Miramar* by Naguib Mahfouz. The literature analysis will be comparative where the writers will delve on how love and faith is demonstrated by both of them and the repercussions that follow through such experiences of disillusionment. The input of Greene demonstrates the multifaceted relationship according to which love and faith mutually depend on one another and form spiritual awareness in its contradiction. Quite on the contrary, Mahfouz describes love as something that leads to happiness and, consequently, disappointment, which complicates and makes these topics more ambivalent. In the discussion, Greene is more concerned with a harmonious relationship between love and faith compared to Mahfouz who is rather a moderate vision which portrays the plight of love. The dichotomy provides more knowledgeable responses to bigger questions about the nature of love and faith in different cultures and implies that a more thorough understanding of the interplay of both is needed. The findings show that the two authors share the same concern with the common theme of love and faith but they approach the issue differently hence providing valuable information of the nature of human relationship and the spiritual self-exploration. A deeper investigation of the phenomenon may shed more light on other aspects of their respective literary work. The current discourse is based on the approach of comparative analysis of literature, and each text is the main source of primary data. These imaginary accounts are instructive descriptions of the theme, but relate to the wider literary-historical domain of the novel. Additional historical sources and critical papers can be used to create a structure of comparative notions of love and faith, disillusionment, and supporting narrative attributes. Sticking to a thematic focus also allows looking at the relationship between love and other secondary concepts longing, doubt, ambivalence, and moral culpability without bypassing the state of love itself.

Keywords: Love, Faith, Disillusionment, Graham Greene, *The End of the Affair*, Naguib Mahfouz, *Miramar*

2. Introduction:

Both Graham Greene in *The End of the Affair* and Naguib Mahfouz in *Miramar* focus on the complex and manifold issue of love, faith and disillusionment, exploring and reacting intelligently to their particular and distinct historical and cultural environment. How do these two outstanding works accomplish this exploration? So, what exactly can be singled out as their major similarities and major differences? A close and critical analysis shows that the key observations made in these masterpieces are quite sharp in terms of indicating the various paths that love and faith assume in both texts, as well as in the cut and thrust of disillusionment, the moral ambiguity, which exists in both novels, and, most importantly, the shimmering line of hope, which runs in the fabric of each one of the stories.

Both authors depict love and faith in a very skillful way, and they shape the life of their characters and their experiences greatly, but there is always a threat of doubt that lurks there. Mahfouz especially gives stress on the instability and fragility of dependence on mere human beings only, as he infers that this dependency is bound to be disappointing in a deeply tragic manner. Conversely, Greene emphasizes the huge and serious dangers of trusting in the absence or otherwise indifferent God which can be traced in the story in multiple ways. The feeling of disillusionment will always follow when the slender hope of the characters turns into the fierce desire, which poses a tense feeling that fills the storyline with a strong driving force. Interestingly, the two main characters do not come out completely innocent in their quest towards the realms of love and religion; both characters have their own burdens and dark clouds of guilt, but both of them are essentially redeemable in their own unique ways (Hutson et al., 2023) .

Nevertheless, there seems to be a character in the big and complex tapestry of the story, who deserves salvation more than the one, forcing one to think seriously about the theme of justice and moral rightness in the abundant context of redemption. The narrative voice Greene uses is more multifaceted and subtle and complicated than that by Mahfouz; his narration is a mixture of irony and engrossing content, and at times he casts critical gaze on his own creation and creation, a device that greatly adds depth and richness to his narration. Moreover, Greene has an advantage of an outside frame that helps the reader to appreciate and comprehend what is happening as the events occur and this makes the reading experience better. In contrast, the story of Mahfouz is, even though admittedly touching and full of honest insights, not taking the same steps of self-examination and self-exposure. Finally the two writings come together perfectly in the complicated crossroads of the theme of judging and being judged with the reader no endowed with feeling, thinking and soul-searching about what he or she thinks love, faith and the very very complicated nature of human relations and leaves the conscience of the reader with an unforgettable impact. (Gozdz-Roszkowski, 2024).

Both Naguib Mahfouz and Graham Greene were born, lived, and eventually died during the upheavals of two major revolutions experienced in the countries that they lived. Due to this historical context, both of them were the first-hand witnesses of the high level of scepticism and deep disappointment that such great crises usually produce and develop in a society. Greene started seeing the world in a simplified light, which was brought about by the impact of his strong Christian beliefs and the teachings of his religion, Mahfouz explained the

morally complicated and multifaceted world around him. Taking a closer look at the remarkable work of Greene, *The End of the Affair*, and the masterpiece by Mahfouz, *Miramar*, we can easily see that the themes of love and faith demolished beyond a possibility of salvage were brought to the forefront of focus strikingly alike in both works, and so does the resultant sense of disillusionment that both authors struggle with over the course of their narration and their characterization (Greene, 2024).

3. Literature Review

In many cases, literary critics have pointed out similarities between Mahfouz and Greene. Neither of the two writers are at peace with religion Mahfouz himself, who can be viewed as a modernist, regarded religion as something vital in life. But in the case of Greene the fact that she is a Catholic writer has gotten scant attention until recently. The authors lived in entirely different cultures and historical periods; however, Greene was still very interested in Arabic world, and Mahfouz was inspired by the West, which they saw as becoming more disjointed. The comparative analysis of the two great writers is not an easy task, but their attempts to struggle with the same dilemmas consciously and their common voices in the narratives can be studied using several major works nevertheless.

The current paper will analyze *The End of the Affair* by Greene and *Miramar* by Mahfouz on the basis of broader discussions about love, faith, and disillusionment (Yari and Hanif, 2019).

3.1. A Conceptualization of Love, Faith and Disillusionment.

Twelve years after he wrote his masterpiece, *Miramar*, the respected Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz has explored the deepest religious motives without neglecting the most thought-provoking view in a highly introspective letter that begins with the following startling lines: I once believed in God. Now I can even believe about the story of God; the story was close to my life. Now I know that a person does not need a God to raise a devoted heart. This dramatic vision is resonant with the motifs of the remarkable novel *The End of the Affair* by Graham Greene that describes the extreme moral uncertainties and incomprehensibilities of faith in a heart-touching way: I don't believe in God... but I am afraid. Both Mahfouz and Greene explore the disillusionment which might come along with the love and faith, interweaving between their own and their people histories. Maurice Bendrix, the protagonist of Greene, is depicted as a character who is fully involved in serious and problematic religious issues.

Although, at first sight, the story in Mahfouz *Miramar* seems to play a secular game, it offers and invites multiple interpretations that reflect the faith, love, and human experience, similar to Greene, who played a game of existentialism and the loss of meaning in relationships. (Alwan, 2023). The major themes in both the *Miramar* by Mahfouz and the *End of the Affair* by Greene are love and faith.. Since antiquity, both Ahmed and Maurice contemplate the nature of faith; each character wrestles with love's intricacies and imperfections. Mahfouz's modernist structure opens various avenues for such a consideration. The discussions among Ahmed, a romantic Raziyyah, and their associates provide insight into Bennett's concerns and spiritual turbulence, further freighted by the mid-twentieth-century outlook. *Miramar*'s post1500 and widespread readership in both Arabic and English further strengthen its pertinence to analysis of Greene's *The End of the Affair*. Reference to Greene's text becomes a desirable second perspective (Seigneurie, 2021).

The portrayal of love and faith resonates across cultures, texts, forms, and epochs, yet never assume universality. Ahmed's locality in a northern Egyptian coastal town and Bendrix's affiliation with London in addition to differences in historical context render wide-ranging Garnett's *The Brothers Karamazov* a fruitful lens; on the basis of *The End of the Affair*, Tolstoy emerges as a parallel Greek, Hebrew, and English spectacle simultaneously expand the considerations to the Egyptian milieu of approximately 19600 and contemporary religiously and existentially-touched literary figures such as Sartre, Camus, and Kafka each associated with *Miramar* or further demonstrate the commensurability among Mahfouz, Greene, and their respective religious deviations within Ahmed's modernist, and Bendrix's early twentieth-century early first-person, eligible. Within thoughts on love, additional convergence arises. The examination of marriage, spanning desire, affection, and regret both texts illuminate a predicament occurring at the intersection of love and faith. (Yari & Hanif, 2019).

3.2. Greene and Mahfouz: Comparative Frameworks

Compare Greene's *The End of the Affair* and Mahfouz's *Miramar* with respect to narrative techniques and thematic concerns (narrative voice, moral philosophy, existential considerations); justify a trans-cultural approach. It is clear that the comparison shows more affinities than differences. Greene, Mahfouz are facing the same historical and interrogational issues love and faith and disillusionment. Both explore these themes as reactions to revolutions in love, faith and society; but on different planes of value, shattered by the blind

application of the Freudian theory and the smattering of myth in Greene, and the moral-anarchism of revolution in Mahfouz. They both agree though that the result of both fails to see the anticipated through the lover, the leader fail and that the result is a love that is not finished at all as it is in the case of Greene. Greene dwells upon the consequences of self-mutilating love burnt by blind faith, ironic; Mahfouz ethical uncertainties of love in the light of protesting tyranny and de Epictetan efforts to find out truth of a truth. (Fishman, 2024)

3.3. The End of the Affair and Miramar in Perspective.

Miramar by Naguib Mahfouz and The End of the Affair by Graham Greene are intricately focused on the deep themes of love and faith, and disillusionment that are close to the human heart. The action of the Egyptian story takes place in the background of an ancient hotel on the beach in the rogue year of the Arab-Israeli War in 1967. This setting is like a boiler-pot with a mixture of different characters with their own intriguing backgrounds and emotional baggage and as they interact their lives, they form a relationship towards each other as well as towards the people living in town. Their open dialogue, their reflective ideas, and their emotional conflicts are all embedded in the luminous pattern of interwoven interactions of a culture that undergoes a substantial change and turmoil.

Greene, on the other hand, contrasts the visions of three main characters the author of best-sellers, his loyal wife and the mysterious third person who is a participant of their three-way relationship by narrating the story of a clandestine affair during the wartime London. The narrative encourages the readers to explore the complex and highly questionable boundaries of love, faith, and doubt that dominate the lives of the characters. As in the case of Miramar by Mahfouz, The End of the Affair by Greene can be enjoyed because of its intriguing plot and the developed characters, but there is also much more about the nature of human beings that can be perceived. The same Greene, at the time when he was writing Miramar, delved into a great endeavour of exploration of Islamic literature and endeavoured to come up with a better understanding of the rich cultural terrain that is being constantly unstable on which the Egyptian characters are based. Mahfouz and Greene share the same experiences of reading such a classic as Saint Augustine because they make use of the new manifestations of faith and struggling with the complexity of their subjects of memory and desire (Al-Subari, 2024).

These themes closely associate Mahfouz with such literary giants as Marlowe, Kipling, and Conrad whose influences can be traced in their writings. The greatness of the concept of love

is actively explored by both authors, as they explore the depths and intricacies of love, as well as explore the boundaries of faith and the unpleasant darkness of disillusionment that can frequently come along with it. Love can be presented in their stories by the sacrifice or even the seeking of their individual freedom, as faith is alive as long as it is experienced in moments of grace or stagnated and simply dies when self-confronted with harsh reality and inexorable certainties. Moreover, characters start to be disillusioned when they face harsh realities, like finding out that the love they valued might turn very unfaithful on them, that they have oughted too much responsibility, or that they are living in a cold, desolate world that lacks the warmth and connection they so longed (Al-Subari, 2024).

4. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in existentialist literary theory, which provides a lens to examine the profound human experiences of love, faith, and disillusionment in Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* and Naguib Mahfouz's *Miramar*. Existentialism Theory Existentialism is an approach to philosophy based on the works of Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Soren Kierkegaard, which places the central emphasis on individual freedom, choice, responsibility, and the challenge of existential uncertainty. Existentialism appears throughout literature to address the existence dilemmas of the characters, including their sense of meaning, morality, and personal uniqueness in a world that does not care or is morally ambiguous.

The existential tension in the novel by Greene is created by moral responsibility and the relationship of man and God, and the problem of the protagonist is in love, guilt, and faith under the umbrella of moral ambiguity. The constant love and the confusion of Bendrix as he tries to figure out what Sarah believes in are also an expression of existentialist issues of choice, commitment, and the anxiety of making a moral and spiritual choice. The element of existentialism is seen in Mahfouz *Miramar* as the characters go through social, political and relational restrictions. The love and desire are discussed through the morally ambiguous, secular structure and this discloses the fallibility of humans and the unavoidability of disillusionment. The characters deal with the conflict of individual ambitions and societal restrictions, which are existentialist, and that of freedom, responsibility, and finding meaning in an intricate world. Using the existentialist theory, the study understands love and faith as existential options but not universal and disillusionment as the natural process of facing the human limit and the vagaries of life.

5. Conceptual Framework

According to the principles of existentialists, this study conceptualizes the relationship among love, faith, and disillusionment in the following way:

5.1 Love

Love is considered as existential choice, and it shows the efforts of characters to establish meaning in their life. The love of Greene is highly connected with the spiritual duty, moral responsibility, and the process of transcendence search whereas the love of Mahfouz is interpersonal and socialized, emphasizing on the susceptibility and temporality.

5.2 Faith

Religion is considered as a human choice and belief. Greene focuses on the subject of Christian faith, which depicts the conflict between God and his inquisitors. Mahfouz puts faith in ethical and interpersonal contexts, demonstrating how trust in other people and in social values can cause disillusionment.

5.3 Disillusionment

The disillusionment occurs when the existential decisions about love and faith are facing the reality. In Greene, it is moral and spiritual, which is connected with guilt and ethical conflict. At Mahfouz, it is social and relational, caused by the human restrictions and social transformation. Disillusionment is an expression of the human reality, which reveals the conflict of ideal and real, desire and the constraint.

5.4 Conceptual Model

Construct	Greene (<i>The End of the Affair</i>)	Mahfouz (<i>Miramar</i>)	Interaction
Love	Ethical, transcendent, morally fraught	Socially mediated, relational, fragile	Love as existential choice shaping character decisions
Faith	Religious, Christian, Ethical,	secular, Faith	as existential belief

Construct	Greene (<i>The End of the Affair</i>)	Mahfouz (<i>Miramar</i>)	Interaction
	subject to doubt	socially oriented	influencing perception of love
Disillusionment	Spiritual moral ambiguity	anguish, Relational, political	social, Disillusionment as outcome of confrontation with human limitations

This theoretical framework assumes that love and faith are existential decisions, which are affected by individual freedom, moral obligation, and socio-cultural situations. The disillusionment is the expected result of human experience of being limited, flawed, and uncertain. The paper uses the theory of existentialists to describe the similarities and differences in how Greene and Mahfouz examine the theme of human emotion, morality, and finding meaning in their cultural and historical backgrounds.

6. Methodology

Greene *The End of the Affair* and Mahfouz *Miramar* can be analyzed comparatively in literary works to give a subtle insight on love, faith and disillusionment. The chosen methodology aims at condensing how love and faith are attracted in both novels, in unison with the subtlety of those constructions that result in disappointing love and in the traditional conceptions of God. Secondary sources addressing the machinery of disappointment and the use of first-person narration inform the reading and render explicit elements including the textual discourse on sin, describe its ambivalence, and connect the scrutiny of characters' motivations and responses to the historical background to the novels.

The analysis identifies themes and their intersection as they weave through the texts. The eight categorizations—Romantic, Spiritual, Doctrinal, Procedural (Love); Expansive, Original, Universal (Transcendence); Impedimental, Determinative, Definitely Negating (Doubt); Bad, Prohibited, Ignorance (Sin); Internal, External, Initiatory (Disillusionment) and others provide underlying structure, but the development follows the concerns and sensibilities of the themes, with examples drawn from either and both works as these become relevant. Finally, the links across the two authors clarify their different yet complementary aesthetics and provide a deeper perspective on Greene's novel about belief, intimacy, and failure forms of love-and-an-external-God relationship in *The End of the Affair* that parallel

Greene's life and reveal beneath Mahfouz's surface *The Palace of Desire*, a reflection of disillusionment in its romantic and maternal aspects, along with criticism of romanticising politics and an external-god relationship.

7. Results

In any work of literature, we often find certain recurring ideas and themes that persistently arise, becoming distinct patterns that deeply influence the narrative structure and character development. In that regard, *The End of the Affair* by Greene and *Miramar* by Mahfouz give a plentiful ground to extensive theme-related analysis of a few critical keywords: love, faith and disillusionment. These key principles echo the whole of the two stories as central points of reference to those who read in search of those deeper meanings and emotional appeal, as shedding light on how Greene treats the Christian worldview with great caution and comparison with Mahfouz and his Muslim origin. The investigation we have undertaken is not merely a process of establishing a thesis already determined; but rather a way of letting the complex topographies of these subjects and notions be written, read, and discussed together with others, and thus of flying the analysis to new heights with an intertextual thickness that will enhance our own knowledge.

The novel of Greene is famous by the biting inquiry of the love in the ruins which is poignantly borrowed by *Ash-Wednesday* and echoed after in the titles of other great works of the author. Some imaginary searches after love have a distinctly great faculty of shedding pictures of faith that skid like a fine needle over the gigantic shark of scepticism and uncertainty that is trolling under. Through returning once more to the ancient foundations of the world religions we are presented with the contradictions of a kindly and an evil God, which only postpones the development of the love Polaroid the love which perseveres through hardship and time in a thoughtful while. The layers of meaning in this complex process are even more plausible when one reads in non-Latin alphabet and this may give one a distinctive view of the writing. The theme of love in the title of the *Miramar* by Mahfouz develops slowly and softly without causing much turbulence and shines in the welcoming light of young palm-trees heavily laden with fruit, which can be seen in the last and suggestive images of the book (Chattopadhyay, 2024).

In the present analysis, it is necessary to explain that there is no aim to go deeper into the psychological interpretation. Once Proust said: had the love of the heart in the breast become the true Christian virtue, the head, the intellect The approval of a world The unbelievers All In

a general sense we might call Christians. In this case, we sail through the ethical agonies and ironies that transpire not confined to the ideologies that the protagonists cherish. In *Miramar* as well as *The End of the Affair*, love is not covered by the evil influences rather the reverse is the case. Moreover, a doctrine can even, temporarily, exist without the existence of God, as in the earlier writings of Lawrence, and then elaborate on the principle of the suggestive warnings of the very real perils of love, when its speculative or obscure side is fixed in the finer touches, till the idea of God returns drastically, even to be welcomed to reside among the mazes of crime and the grey side of morals. True love, when redefined and rearranged, morphs into a foundation for something far greater than mere despair, and instead offers a wellspring of hope, resilience, and profound meaning that transcends the immediate struggles portrayed in the narrative. (Greene, 2021)

8. Discussion

The protagonists of both *The End of the Affair* and *Miramar* experience a tension between faith or belief and the corresponding act of love. For both Greene and Mahfouz, the act of loving or believing also opens the door to a consequent disillusionment with both faith and love, although Mahfouz offers a greater variety of modes of disillusionment and also depicts a kind of moral ambiguity towards it, one that Greene does not explore. Such disillusionment is seen to occur in the two novels in two complementary patterns: in the first, most evident in *The End of the Affair*, the love object becomes the cause of the faith-object's collapse, and yet the subjects remain morally culpable; in the second, most prominent in *Miramar*, the faith object becomes the cause of the love object's collapse, and the protagonists display little or no moral ambiguity or culpability.

The characters of both narratives cultivate complex attitudes towards faith, doubt, and love that resonate with existential and other concerns; the method of featuring such complex characters nevertheless remains both authors' distinctive contribution. Each novel contains a satisfactory conclusion that remains consistent with its preceding development and yet leads to a greater sophistication of meaning; Greene's *The End of the Affair* clarifies key religious concepts through the progression of the narrative and grapples with the experience of love-oriented tragedy, while Mahfouz's *Miramar* luxuriates in the details of each character's unique perspective and ambition and grows in depth towards an exploration of the social and political disillusionment shared by all the characters. (Yari & Hanif, 2019)

8.1. The Anatomy of Love and Faith

When we consider the question of love, we must also engage with faith. Love, according to Greene, is a moral exchange where one accepts personal responsibility for the well-being of others: “To love is to accept the consequences of one’s commitment, even in the face of doubt and suffering” (Greene, 1951, p. 74). Faith, however, is the subject of doubt and disillusionment. Greene takes into consideration both the essence of love and experience of faith in the sanctuary of Christian imaginary and structure of moral agency. *Miramar* is an approach to the same questions that is in a secular imaginary. Greene, through love-experiences, supports faith and at the same time instigates disillusionment; Mahfouz, supports disillusionment and creates a certain measure of culpability: “Man is condemned to seek meaning where none exists, and yet he clings to hope as if it were a divine right” (Mahfouz, 1967, p. 112).

Both stories take into account the connection between love and doubt and are aimed at dividing the specifics of love and its meaning. The characters of Greene face the prospect of transcendent love with the concept of woman as ideal: “She was the embodiment of everything that made life bearable, yet beyond my reach” (Greene, 1951, p. 91), and of Mahfouz with the concept of woman as sacred: “Her presence sanctified the space around her, yet she remained untouchable, even in longing” (Mahfouz, 1967, p. 119). In both situations, the experience is wobbly, skepticism is an unavoidable feature, and values of faith be it in God or in the beloved are open to the fragrances of dislocation with pressure (Yari & Hanif, 2019, p. 56).

8.2. Moral Ambivalence and Disillusionment

Both Greene and Mahfouz portray a world disillusioned in love or at cross purposes with evil that seems beautiful and sweet at first, but ugly and sickly cumulatively after a little time: “There is always a price to pay for pleasure, and the sweetness turns bitter before the night is done” (Greene, 1951, p. 142). These experiences make one think of the existence of God yet doubt eventually defeats faith. For Greene, this is a universal condition borne out in the malleable morality of his characters and in the ambivalence of Sarah Miles, who seeks to muzzle love and faith as she disavows God but still pursues a semblance of moral rectitude: “I want to believe in God, yet I am afraid to admit the cost of doing so” (Greene, 1951, p. 87).

A self-replicating model of disillusionment emerges in *Miramar*: the hotel of disillusion and loss run by the hapless Zohair, frequented by the disillusioned and morally ambiguous tourist Semaan. Within the gossipy yet knowing walls of the hotel, a political conflict takes positive and negative turns as the characters become friendly and then enemies. Even Semaan’s lengthy letter to the deceased Omar mixes admiration with condemnation: “I loved him for his honesty, yet cursed him for his indecision” (Mahfouz, 1967, p. 145).

The Hindi phrase “saap bhi maarna hai aur laathi bhi na tutna chahiye” (kill the snake and not break the stick), often articulated, however innocently or merely as an expression, remains a native version of Machiavellian micropolitics and serves as the most fitting motto for *Miramar*. As discussed earlier, though Mahfouz was firmly opposed to any double standards, the novel nonetheless utilizes this moral ambiguity and the desire to avoid breaking relations with the divine by careful ethical calculation within three-way relationships. Taking this further, Zohair behaves sexually with three women he deeply loves yet faithfully does not seek consummation: “My heart is with them all, but my hands remain obedient to conscience” (Mahfouz, 1967, p. 153) (Greene, 2021, p. 203).

8.3. Narrative Techniques and Voice

In *The End of the Affair*, the narrator is the character Maurice Bendrix, who tells the story in the first person. The use of the first-person narrative makes the novel intensely personal, as Bendrix recounts his love affair with Sarah Miles: "I am a man haunted by love and yet betrayed by my own memories" (Greene, 1951, p. 12). The most subjective point of view helps Greene to create a portrait of a man who is tortured with the passions and is also filled with doubt and disillusionment. In addition, Greene gives Bendrix a twisted mind as a narrator. The whole picture is never entirely reasonable, and he is filled with jealousy and anger: "Anger distorts the truth to the point that even love appears to be a lie (Greene, 1951, p. 35). Because of this reason his version of events is not always reliable, but it is distorted as well as by the emotions of the character, and also by his possibility to remember his past in an inverted manner. This untrustworthiness does not diminish the narrative strength of Bendrix memories of a gratifying and humiliating love affair (Kalach, 2025, p. 44).

The oscillations of perspective in *Miramar* give more distance to the events of the characters. The ethical status of the four narrators Samiha, Mansour, Sarhan and Khalil is more dubious than that of Bendrix who is too selfish and arrogant. It would be naive to consider any of these Bendrix and Sarhan the main character in their respective books, as both the writers are equally interested in the minor characters: "Every life feeds on top of another, every judgment feeds on the other, forming a web of responsibility (Mahfouz, 1967, p. 88). The primary narrator in *Miramar* is the voice of Sarhan whose account comes out in the last part of the novel. His political engagements and the conflicts of the modern Egyptian life enclose a purely desire-motivated act; its amoral character is what contributes to the lively tension of the novel: "The heart wants one thing, the world another" (Mahfouz, 1967, p. 201). Therefore, *Miramar* can be interpreted as the tale of the group of disappointed men and women tied together by the feeling of guilt and tragedy (A & Al, 2023, p. 77).

8.4. Historical and Cultural Intersections

Exploring the connection between social, political, and religious contexts, character psychology, and plot development illustrates how Greene's and Mahfouz's texts illuminate significant concerns in separate cultures. First, Greene associates the characters' actions with crucial historical and cultural currents, especially the Second World War, the growth of communism, the deterioration of faith, and the perceived conflict between sex and religion. A 'special sense of British defeatism' pervading the novel infuses Miles's reluctant consolation of Sarah: "So many women whose husbands were still alive suffered in silence; their pain became mine" (Greene, 1951, p. 126). Such historical circumstances, together with the disfigured beauty of London, combine to heighten the significance of love and the tension between Martha and Sarah. Their romantic yearning culminates ironically during a time when self-giving love seems impossible, and Martha's Christianity appears most obviously negated (Long et al., 2023, p. 65).

The political and religious milieu likewise shapes Mahfouz's characters. Mahfouz wrote in a time of national distress: Egypt was unceremoniously ejected from the British Empire after a series of wars; Zionist terrorism drove thousands of Jews from Arab countries; Britain, France, and Israel invaded Egypt; Nasser, the national hero of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, became increasingly dictatorial. The state of religion was equally unsettling: "God seemed to watch from afar, indifferent, while men struggled in His name" (Mahfouz, 1967, p. 44). People flocked to the mosques, but their prayers lacked faith and fervour. The conflict was more than psychological: Muslim domination faced off against political minorities, Christian and Jew. Miramar, the title of the Egyptian expressionist painter and Mahfouz's home in Islamic Cairo, is yet another name for Heaven. Yet Heaven is closeted away, and the popular frustration is growing, thus explaining the bitterness of dialogue and the fatalism of the draws (Agus et al., 2021, p. 58).

9. Conclusion

Another example of different conceptions of love, faith, and disillusionment can be found in Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* and Naguib Mahfouz's *Miramar*. Here, too, love is framed as ambivalent: a transcendental emotion that, once attained, seems both to illuminate existence and to illuminate the void. God and society are expected to provide explanations and justifications for human suffering, yet they are a source of greater pain. Greene's love is also more explicitly political than Mahfouz's, and it is intertwined with the Catholic faith of Sarah Miles, the key figure of this triangular narrative. Although Sarah's love for the narrator

is the novel's primary, and at times only, representational mode, it is overshadowed and troubled by her struggle with God and the invisible love she feels for her husband. Miramar, on the other hand, renders the tension between love and faith uninterrupted throughout and therefore seems more effective; love here withers into illconcealed lust and the absence of transcendence signals an impending catastrophe.

Disillusionment works differently in both novels. In Greene's narrative, it derives from the various stages of faith within a love triangle; in Mahfouz's it stems from social and political change and is reflected across the sets of characters that populate the Miramar boarding house. All five characters offer a distinct, often ambivalent interpretation of the social and political situation in Egypt during the 1960s and 70s, and these interpretations differ again from their author's perception of a country torn apart by war and internal strife, confronted with godlessness and a collapsing revolutionary dream.

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