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## **Experimenting in the narrative genre**

(A study in Echoes of an autobiography by Naguib Mahfouz (in Arabic))

### **Abstract**

Naguib Mahfouz lived in Cairo, where he wrote almost all his works, describing the people of Cairo in the twentieth century.

Naguib Mahfouz was so loyal to the place, the era and to the people among whom he lived. However, he had the tendency to use symbolism. His novels and short stories seemed to have two interpretations: one external and the other internal. Therefore, this study tends to discuss three main essential questions about his famous work Echoes of an Autobiography.

-The first question: Did Naguib Mahfouz write an autobiography proper?

-The second question: Was Echoes of an Autobiography a typical autobiography?

-The last question: What genre of narration does it belong to?

In order to explore the narrative genre in Echoes of an autobiography, the study shows the narrative genres in both traditional and modern Arabic

Moreover, this study discusses the concept of autobiography in the Arabic literature and Western, literature as well as in the body of Naguib Mahfouz's works. This study also explores Naguib Mahfouz's works with regard to the realistic aspects and the element of external description on the one hand, and symbolism and mystical vision on the other. The study also focuses on both the mystical and the gorgeous woman symbolism in Naguib Mahfouz's Echoes of an Autobiography. Lastly, through analyzing texts from Echoes of an Autobiography the study points out the narrative levels in Naguib Mahfouz's works in general and in this work in particular. Moreover, Echoes of an autobiography is to be compared with other texts from the traditional Arabic literature (Ibn Al Muqafaa, Abu Hayyan, Al qushairi) and from the modern Arabic literature (Gibran, Taha Hussein)

**Keywords:** Naguib Mahfouz, Autobiography, Modern Arabic Literature, Echoes of an autobiography.

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