

An Intermedia Analysis of Cinematic Montage in Naguib Mahfouz's Novel *Miramar*

Ali Afzali, (corresponding author): Associate Professor in Arabic Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

Email: ali.afzali@ut.ac.ir

Mostafa Zargani, PhD of Arabic language and literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

Introduction

Naguib Mahfouz's novel *Miramar* stands as a landmark text in modern Arabic literature, capturing the socio-political fragmentation of post-revolutionary Egypt through a multi-perspective structure set in an Alexandrian pension. Although written as a literary text, *Miramar* operates at the conceptual border of literature and cinema, requiring an interdisciplinary analysis to fully decode its visual and dramatic storytelling mechanisms. While traditional literary criticism often reduces the novel to its thematic and historical contexts, a significant research gap exists regarding how Mahfouz utilizes cinematographic techniques—specifically film editing—to structure the narrative. To address this gap, an interdisciplinary approach is essential because it bridges the textual nature of the novel with the spatial-temporal dynamics of cinema, allowing us to examine the story as a sequence of composed shots rather than mere verbal sentences. The objective of this study is to explore how Mahfouz employs cinematic editing techniques to achieve narrative reconfiguration, reshape the flow of time, and externalize the psychological conflicts of the characters. By identifying and analyzing specific cinematic devices within the text, this research aims to demonstrate how the integration of film theory and narrative analysis exposes the structural complexity of *Miramar*, showing that the novel is constructed using a visual grammar that mirrors the mechanics of the cinema screen.

Methodology

This study employs an interdisciplinary methodology that integrates structuralist narratology with classical and modernist film editing theories, specifically Sergei Eisenstein's montage theory and French New Wave editing concepts. By applying these dual theoretical frameworks to *Miramar*, the research operates at a synthesis level of interdisciplinary interaction, where cinematic terminologies such as flashback, parallel editing, matching cuts, contrast editing, and rhythmic pacing are translated into literary analysis to examine the text's narrative architecture. This methodology systematically bridges the gap between text and image by treating Mahfouz's paragraphs as individual shots and his chapter transitions as sequence cuts, thereby

providing a structured framework to evaluate how filmic composition organizes the psychological and thematic progressions within the literary space of *Miramar*.

Results and Discussion

The analysis reveals that Naguib Mahfouz constructs a highly sophisticated visual narrative in *Miramar* by utilizing four primary editing modes that generate new aesthetic and psychological meanings. First, the application of reverse-cutting and flashbacks reveals the characters' deep psychological disintegration; for instance, when Kamal sits on his bridal platform and suddenly flashes back to his university speech, the cinematic juxtaposition of these two distant events exposes his internal collapse. This is reinforced by a match cut when Kamal's eye contact with his mother at the wedding triggers a memory of her looking at him across the street on his first school day, merging past and present into a singular emotional image. Second, matching editing removes narrative monotony, as seen when Sarhan's act of drinking coffee at a family gathering triggers a matching transition to a tavern on Al-Alfi Street, blending two different social settings through a shared sensory object. Third, contrastive editing highlights intense psychological and moral conflicts; the stark juxtaposition of Sarhan's tense, alcohol-fueled meeting with Safiyya against his warm, tea-sharing embrace with Zahra highlights the emotional dichotomy between disgust and peace. Finally, parallel editing achieves unity of idea despite shifts in time and space, specifically tracking Sarhan's opportunistic vacillation between his affection for Zahra and his pragmatic ambition to marry the schoolteacher, Aaliyah. Ultimately, the integration of cinematic editing answers the research questions by showing that Mahfouz uses these cuts not as simple ornaments, but to accelerate or decelerate narrative rhythm, thereby directly transmitting the characters' anxiety, stress, and political disillusionment to the reader.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that Naguib Mahfouz's *Miramar* is not merely a literary text but a carefully edited cinematic composition. By applying film montage theory to the novel, this interdisciplinary analysis successfully illustrates how techniques like matching, parallel, and contrastive editing serve as the structural backbone of the narrative, organizing the flow of time and deepening characterization. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to modern Arabic narratology, offering a practical model for interdisciplinary literary analysis that moves beyond traditional thematic criticism. By showing how Mahfouz translates the visual and rhythmic qualities of cinema into the written word, this study enriches our understanding of the modern Arabic novel's formal adaptability.

Ultimately, the research proves that the structural coherence and psychological depth of *Miramar* are directly achieved through these cinematic configurations, establishing Naguib Mahfouz as a pioneer who bridged the aesthetic divide between the page and the screen.

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