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## Lesson Five

### FOCUS: Figurative Language

Writers use figurative language such as imagery, similes, and metaphors to help the reader visualize and experience events and emotions in a story. Imagery—a word or phrase that refers to sensory experience (sight, sound, smell, touch, or taste)—helps create a physical experience for the reader and adds immediacy to literary language.

Some figurative language asks us to stretch our imaginations, finding the likeness in seemingly unrelated things. Simile is a comparison of two things that initially seem quite different but are shown to have significant resemblance. Similes employ connective words, usually “like,” “as,” “than,” or a verb such as “resembles.” A metaphor is a statement that one thing is something else that, in a literal sense, it is not. By asserting that a thing is something else, a metaphor creates a close association that underscores an important similarity between these two things.

### Discussion Activities

Mahfouz often uses imagery combined with metaphor and simile to evoke a certain mood or to foreshadow the novel’s events. Examine the first paragraph of Chapter Ten:

What a lot of graves there are, laid out as far as the eye can see. Their headstones are like hands raised in surrender, though they are beyond being threatened by anything. A city of silence and truth, where success and failure, murderer and victim, come together, where thieves and policemen lie side by side in peace for the first and last time. (p. 89)

Ask your students to consider how the simile “headstones are like hands” and the metaphor of a cemetery being “a city of silence and truth” aids our understanding of the novel and its setting. What specific mood does the paragraph create? How might this foreshadow the novel’s subsequent events?

### Writing Exercise

Ask students to find another example where Mahfouz uses simile or metaphor to describe setting or evoke a mood. Have them cite the example and write a short analysis of it in their journals.

### Homework

Read Chapters Thirteen, Fourteen, and Fifteen (pp. 117–135). Have students pay close attention to the paragraph in Chapter Fifteen that begins, “Whoever kills me will be killing the millions” (p. 133).