Chapter- 1

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Arabic Novel and Najib Mahfouz

Definition of Novel:-There are many definitions of Novel which are as follows:-

According to compiler of glossaries of literary terms M.J. Abrams, (has written in his book 'A Glossary of literary Terms') 'The term novel is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of prose fiction ... A novel is a prose work of a certain length having something wrong with it.

According to Edward Said, "to be novel is to be an original, that is, a figure not repeating what most men perforce repeat"[1]

According to another renowned novelist E.M. Foster, "The novel is a formidable mass, and it is so amorphous..... most distinctly one of the moister areas of literature – irrigated by a thousand rills and occasionally degenerating into a swamp."[2]

From the view point of generic purpose is concern the novel may be viewed as the literary genre whose primary topic is the process of change, whether as reflection or advocate or both. So, by definition it is found from the novel that the primary topic is change.[3] The critics who have occasion been tempted to proclaim the death of the novel may have been viewing it purely in retrospect perhaps failing to see changing and changed nature of the genre with which they have been familiar. Mikhail Bakhtin captures this aspect well when he uses the term "uncanonical" to refer to the novel, continuing: "It is plasticity itself. It is eternally searching, eternally researching itself and revising all its

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[1] Edward Said, "On Repetition," in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), 117.
[2] E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Penguin, 1966), 13.
[3] Roger Allen, *The Arabic Novel. An Historical and Critical Introduction*, 2nd edi., (New York: Syracuse University Press,1995), 2.

former forms. It can only be thus for a genre which is constructed in the zone of immediate contact with generating reality."[1] Thus the novel's essence is identified with deliberate and continuing undefinability, a clearer picture of the nature and role of the novel can be obtained when it is viewed in a diachronic perspective.[2]

According to Encyclopedic Dictionary of Literary Criticism, the novel is an extended prose fiction narrative of 50,000 words or more; broadly realistic concerning the everyday events of ordinary people and concerned with character, "people in significant action" is also added one way of describing it.

Moreover, it is also mentioned that the novel is "an extended, fictional prose narrative about realistic characters and events." It is a representation of life, experience, and learning. Action, discovery and description are important elements, but the most important tends to be one or more character – how they grow, learn, find – or don't grow, learn or find.[3]

Having identified part of the novel's essence, it is easier to discuss the novel in its stages of development.

1.1. Early Development of Arabic Novel: -

Before turning to discuss the novel in the Arab world it is necessary to identify the Arabic fiction. It is an ambiguous technical term used for the various genres and reflects the analogous situation in Western languages. The term for the novel in most European languages is "roman", which is derived from the medieval term, the romance. The English name for the form, on the other hand, is derived from the Italian "novella"[4]

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[1] P. N. Medvedav and Mikhail Bakhtin, *The formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A cultural Introduction to sociological poetics* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1978), xxi.
[2] Roman Jakobson, "Problems in the study of Language and Literature," in *Language and Literature*, ed. Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press Of Harvard Univ., 1987), 48.
[3] Lawrence Shaffer, *Encyclopedic dictionary of Literary Criticism*, 324.
[4] A prose fiction longer than a short story but shorter than a novel.

As regards to the situation in Arabic, it is a well-known fact that Arabic has, of course, produced technical terms for the identification and description of specific literary genres of fiction. The nomenclature used the general followed pattern of English, choosing the term Qissa Qasirah for the short story and, for the most part, Riwayah for novel. "For the most part" is intended to reflect the fact that for a minority of writers in the Arab world, the preferred term for the novel is Qissa, the basic term for "story" or "narrative"[1]

Keeping in mind the generic characteristics of the novel noted above, it is considerably better to discuss how the Arabic novel first came into being. Literary critics have differed in this regard. Some maintains that Arab has written novelistic narrative literature since very early times. Another group of scholars are of the opinion that the modern novel is a new literary form imported from the west in the second half of the 19th century. The truth of the matter is that the novel as we know today it was associated a large body of narrative in it which not only left its indelible mark on the formation and development of the modern European fiction literature, particularly short story and novel, but also facilitate its adoption among the Arab literary scholars and readers with relish and enthusiasm.[2] Among the most popular tales, myths and epic romances are–

1) *The Thousand and One Nights*
2) *Maqama*
3) *Hadith Isa ibn Hisham* etc.

1.1.1. *The Thousand and One Nights*:-

The most famous unique collection of Arabic popular narrative, the *Thousand and One Nights* or the modern title 'Arabian Nights' includes tales of adventure, of war, of trickery, and of love, it also set in particular historical

[1] Roger Allen, *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction*, 2nd edi., (New York: Syracuse University Press,1995), 6.
[2]Hamdi Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel and its Main Trends 1913-52*, (Cairo: American Univ. in Cairo Press, 1971), 13-14.

period, notable in this category are those devoted to incidents involving the Caliph Harun al- Rashid, his famous minister, Ja'far al-Barmaki, and his boon companion, the poet Abu Nuwas.[1]

The Mamluke period gave final shape to the Arabian Nights; a work which is far more popular in Europe than the Qur'an or any other masterpiece of Arabic literature.[2] It is interesting to note that the book which remained neglected in its homeland, found recognition in Europe paid special attention to it, and thoroughly studied and translated it into their languages. The main reason was that the Arabian Nights got an important place among the most important pieces of international literature. The European writers started feeling their way towards a new style, and the Arabian Nights Provided them with the model and clue, for which they were searching, for it possessed the two basic qualities, the spirit of adventure and the element of realism, that are indispensable in a popular literature.[3] The western people were so much attracted by this book due to its great demand in everywhere and were published in English and French more than thirty times in eighteenth century. In context of the popularity of *Arabian Nights* one of the famous European historians of literature concede that had there not been *The Arabian Nights*, there would have been no *Robinson Crusoe*, and no *Gulliver's Travels*.[4]

It is clear from the above discussion that though the European fiction is regarded as mother of the modern Arabic novel, was indebted to Arabic literary works that the impact and contribution of the latter cannot be neglected at the time of discussing the origins of this modern literary genre in Arabic language.

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[1] Roger Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature*, (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 173.
[2] Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), 456.
[3] The Legacy of Islam, op. cit., 197-201.
[4] Ibid., 201.

1.1.2. *Maqama*:-

Maqama (plural, Maqamat) means a place of standing. It is an assembly where people stand listening to the speaker, and in particular, an assembly for literary discussion. This is the classical Arabic literary genre, developed in the tenth century out of a cluster of Arab prose genres which basically comprised all of the education and learning of court circles.[1] Al- Hamdhani (d. 1008), the title was conferred to him as Badi al- Zaman, i.e. the wonder of the age'. His *Maqama* may be called a romance of literary bohemianism, where he imagined as his Hero a witty, unscrupulous vagabond journeying from place to place and supporting himself by the present which his improvised displays of rhetoric, poetry and learning seldom failed to draw from an admiring audience.[2]

The pioneering works of al- Hamdani were acknowledged by many successors like, Abu Muhammad al- Qasim al- Hariri (d. 1122). He expressed in the introduction to his set of *Maqamat* that the basic scenario of al- Hamdani Maqama with al- Hariri remains the same.[3] Many prominent writers were influenced by al- Hariri's *Maqama* during the 19th century in Egypt, Iraq and Syria. Muhammad al- Muwailihi (1858 – 1930) wrote *Hadith Isa ibn Hisham* (1907) (The observation of Isa ibn Hisham) on the model of the *Maqamat*, narrated by a rawi in rhymed prose, each *Maqama* being page or two.[4] This trend was prevalent in Arabic literature of the 19th century.

From the above brief discussion it is clear that the important role played by these two Arabic works was remarkable in the early stages of Arabic novel, but these works lacked in novelistic setting and characters. With the passage of time modern education entered in Egypt under the guidance of Muhammad Ali Pasha (1805 – 1848), resulted an important change in the writing of genre in

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[1] Meisami, Julie Scott and Paul Starkey (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, 2 vols., (London: Routledge, 1998), 507.
[2] Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1994), 328.
[3] Roger Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature*, (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 163-64.
[4] Yahya Haqqi, *Fajr al-Qissa al-Misriyyah*, (Cairo: Al- Hay'ah al- Misriyyah al- ammah li- al- Kitab, 1975), 19.

Arabic literature. For example, many prominent writers started to follow new trend in the writing of Arabic novel being influenced by the Translation movement i.e. from European works.

It is a well-known fact that in the 19th century a number of factors combined to bring about changes in the creation of Arabic narratives on modern lines. First after the Napoleonic occupation of Egypt (1798 – 1801) and the subsequent establishment of a western inspired ruling dynasty under Muhammad Ali Pasha (d. 1849), Egypt became the centre of the modern Arabic literary renaissance. The freer environment of Egypt attracted several Syrian and Lebanese writers, mostly Christians, who had been in contact with Europe since sixteenth century. Later the impact of the renaissance spread to other Arab countries, particularly Syria, Lebanon and Iraq in the wake of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and the coming of independence after the Second World War.

It was in this socio-political environment that initial attempts at fiction in Arabic were made in the form of translation from French and English, followed by original writings. For example, Butras al- Bustani (1819-1883), the founder of first national school in the Levant, and a school for girls, compiled a two volume dictionary arranged in the modern order called *Muhit al- Muhit.*[1] Among his outstanding works the contribution of Arabic encyclopedia *Daira al-Ma'arif,* was remarkable one, but its later volumes were completed by his family. However, al- Bustani translated *Robinson Crusoe* into Arabic in early nineteenth century. Sulaiman al- Bustani (1856 – 1925) translated Homer's *Iliad* with a preface noted for its literary value and was the first introduction of epic verse into Arabic and the translation is a masterpiece.[2]

[1] Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, 1900-1967, (Hyderabad, 1987), 14.
[2] Ibid., 14-15.

1.2. The Educational Novel:-

The educational or didactic novel flourished in the Arab world more vigorously after the modern education entered in Egypt and subsequently resulted with the emergence of a new reading. As a result of it, the new readers turned back from the official literature which was expressed in the formalistic, lick luster poetry as well as from the traditional folk literature. It should be noted that with the interest of Muhammad Ali, Arabic translation movement got momentum in the mid of 19th century and the early decades of 20th century. He concentrated almost all the fields especially on scientific works and text books for Schools.[1] This trend continued to a greater extent even under Ismail. During this period Egyptian translators made their greater efforts to literary works. For example - Rifa'a al- Tahtawi (1801 - 1873) translated Fienelon's novel *Telemaque* giving it a title set in say (rhyming prose) in keeping with the prevailing tastes of the time.[2] During this period Syrians and Lebanese cultured émigrés followed the same technique and translated many novels like - *Mawaqi al- Aflak fi Waqai Tilmak,* Beirut, 1867. Muhammad Uthman Jalal (1829 - 1898), Rifa's Pupil, translated *Paul et Virginie of Bernardin de saint - Pierre* under the title, also in rhyming prose. Bishara Shadid translated the *Count of Monte Cristo* of Alexander Dumas Pere (1871), and so on it went. In this way by the early decades of 20th century more than a hundred novels and tales had been translated, usually from the French but occasionally also from the English.

The way the above writers translated their novels, there existed many short comings as the majority of novels were of love stories, historical and oriental tales, science fiction, and detective stories. In translation, the stories were often rearranged and even distorted. Sometimes several writers published their own works under the names of Western writers in the hope of attracting

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[1] Hamdi Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel and its Main Trends 1913-52,* (Cairo: American Univ. in Cairo Press, 1971), 14.
[2] Ibid., 15.

more readers. Moreover, they used the language in the translation was either in saj or in colloquial Arabic.

But with the passage of time the spread of nongovernmental press, from 1870 onwards, the language of translation developed into a clear and simple prose medium. In Lebanon the parallel developments took place where Nasif al-Yaziji concentrated with the writing of *Maqama*, and completed *Majma al-Bahrain* in 1885. Likewise, his contemporaries Butrus al- Bustani and Faris al-Shidyaq attempted a prose style free of rhetorical devices. Al- Shidayaq wrote his travelogue, *al- Saq 'ala al- Saq,* in rhymed prose but later simplified his writing in *Kashf al- Mukhaba 'al- Funun Uruba* and *al- Wasita fi Ma'rifa Malita.*[1]

It was Mustafa Lutfi al- Manfaluti (1876 - 1914), inspired by the reforming ideas of Muhammad Abduh, al- Manfaluti wrote on the need for social uplift, on the rich and the poor, on charity and righteousness and the evils of drinking. Manfaluti and his contemporaries, moral and social purposes, their intention was to avoid the stigma of those superficial; writings which were meant principally for entertainment. Among the eminent writers of this group was Ali Mubarak (1823 - 1893), who published his *'Alam al- Din* in 1882, the illustrations poet 'Ahmad Shawqi (1870 - 1932), who authored a number of his historical novels.

From this brief survey of the circumstances surrounding the renaissance in the different parts of the Arab world has shown that the early development of the novelistic tradition in Arabic were from Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. It is also clear that the way the contributors of the Arab world contributed in the development of Arabic novel was traditional and of minor value. On the other hand some writers emphasized to improve the behaviour of the common people.

[1] John A. Haywood, *Modern Arabic Literature, 1800-1970,* (London: Lund Humphries, 1971), 58.

Among these groups al -Tahtawi was the most popular person who sowed the seeds of this trend that developed later into the didactic novel.[1] This very novel did not get prospered itself till the first years of the 20th century and then gave way to the novel of entertainment.[2]

1.3. The Historical Educational Novel:-

This novels was promoted by the hand of Jurji Zaydan[3] and his contemporaries which have been discussed below-

Jurji Zaydan (1861-1914), a Lebanese immigrant to Egypt was one of the most prolific novelists at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the 20th century. Most of his novels, more than twenty in number deal with significant events from the history of the Arabs and Islam on the pattern of *Dumas'* series of French historical, novels.[4] Among his famous novels are-- *Sharl wa 'Abd al - Rahman*, about the battle tours and the defeat of the Arabs at the hands of Charles Martel, and al-Abbasa, about the daughter of Harun al-Rashid and her secret marriage to his Prime Minister Ja'far al-Barmaki. Zaydan also selected a number of incidents from Islamic history as plotlines for his novels. For example - *Armanusah al - Misriyyah* (1896) is concerned with the conquest of Egypt in 640; al- Hajjaj ibn Yusuf (1902) is about the famous governor of Iraq during the period of the Umayyad Caliphs; *Shajarat al-Durr* (1914) explores the reign of the famous queen of Egypt. *Istibdad al-Mamalik* (1893) may serve as an illustration of the narrative Principles used set in the

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[1] Abd al-Muhsin Taha Badar, *Tatawwur al-Riwaya al-Arabiyyah al-Hadithah, fi Misr*, (Cairo: Dar al- Thaqafa li al- Tibaah wa- al- nashr, 1978), 52

[2] Ismat Mahdi, *Modern Arabic Literature*, 1900-1967, (Hyderabad: 1987), 35.

[3] He was born on December 14, 1861 in Beirut. At first he learnt from one of the primary school. After then he studied the secondary education and admitted to medical department of American College School. A few months later, he left for Egypt to complete his studies. But he soon gave up lack of funds. He then decided to become a journalist and worked for some time with the newspaper al- Zaman. Soon after wards he departed for the Sudan as an interpreter. After that he visited England in 1886 and returned to Egypt where he resumed his journalistic activities. He found employment with the magazine al-Muqtataf. In 1888 he left this magazine and for a short while worked as a teacher. In 1892 he established his own magazine al-Tilal which is still being published in Cairo. On august 21, 1914, he died in Cairo, at the age of fifty two.

[4] John A. Haywood, *Modern Arabic Literature, 1800-1970*, (London: Lund Humphries, 1971), 135.

Arabic, as it contains a faithful and critical account of different aspects of socio-cultural and intellectual life of contemporary Egyptians in a simple and straight forwards style which contrasts sharply with that of both medieval and post-medieval practitioners of art for art's sake. For example-

(عيسى بن حشام) و أين يا سيدي بيتكم فانى لا أعرفه ؟ (الدفين) مشمئزا- قل لي بالله من أي الأقطار أنت ؟ فانه يظهر لي إنك لست من أهل مصر- اذ ليس في القطر كله من أحد يجهل بيت أحمد باشا المتيكلي ناظر الجحهادية المصرية- (عيسى بن هشام): اعلم أيها الباشا إنني رجل من صميم أهل مصر، ولم أجهل بيتك إلا لأن البيوت في مصر أصبحت لا تعرف بأسماء أصحابها، بل بأسماء شوارعها ازقتها وارقتها، فإذا تفضلت وأوضحت لي شارع بيتكم وزقاقه ورقمه إنتلقت البه وأتيتك بما تطلبه.[1]

There is no doubt that though this book occupies a crucial position in the ensuing development of modern Arabic fiction as far as setting and style is concerned but was not saved from the hands of critics. One of the most eminent critics, Roger Allen criticized in this way – "if the work is to be considered a novel, then by any yardstick, it is a very bad one".[2]

1.5. Muhammad Husayn Haykal and His Novel *Zaynab* :-

Haykal's[3] novel *Zaynab* is regarded as the first full-fledged genuine novel in Arabic in respect of both content and form.[4] There are many opinions of different scholars regarding the first true novel, Egyptian or Arabic. Majority of

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[1] Al- Muwailihi, *Hadith Isa ibn Hisham.*

[2] Roger Allen, *The Arabic Novel, An Historical and Critical Introduction*, 2nd edi., (New York: Syracuse University Press,1995), 31.

[3] He was born on August 20, 1888, in the village of Kaf – Ghanam, as the son of a wealthy landowner. He had attended the Qur'an School (Kuttab) in his native Village and continued his education in Cairo. In 1905 he registered at the low School and obtained his licentiate in 1909. After then he was sent to Paris for further studies. In 1912 he received his doctorate with a dissertation on La dette publique egyptienne. Then he returned to Egypt, where he first worked for a while as a lawyer in the provincial town of al – Mansurah. He frequently used to go Cairo and met many leading Persons of his time. Haykal did not give up his office in al – Mansurah until 1922, when he became the editor of the newspaper al – Siyasah, which was then established as the mouthpiece of the recently formed liberal party. Haykal played an important part in the liberal constitutional party) al – Ahrar al-Dusturiyyun). He was selected as an editor of the liberal party paper al – Siyasah, which became one of the most influential newspapers of Egypt. In 1926 he established the weekly al- Siyasah al – Usbuiyah which played a leading role in the Egyptian cultural life. In 1938 he was appointed as a minister in the minority cabinet by Muhammad Mahmud Pasha. Afterwards he became minister of Education. On January 18, 1945 he became Chairman of the Senate, a post which he held until 1950. After that Haykal diminished his writing because of his old age and died in Cairo in 1956.

[4] M. M. Badawi, op. cit., 133.

scholars has opined that the real beginning of Arabic novel starts by the publication of Muhammad Husayn Haykal's novel *Zaynab* in 1913. It is also said that Haykal's novel *Zaynab* represents the first and authentic beginning to the artistic novel in the history of modern Arabic literature.[1]

In the words of H. A. R. Gibb, "broke away decisively in language, style, subject and treatment from anything that had gone before." Its faults, he goes on to say, are of "little importance compared with the fact that the effort was made, and that a new, and in setting. Original kind of literary production was added to Arabic literature.

The most celebrated novel *Zaynab* began to serialize in the journal *al-Jarida* and published in the book form in the year 1914. This very novel was initially published under a pseudonym as the novelists were not respected by the people. Haykal also thought that if he places his name on front cover of the novel then it might be affected for his law profession. Therefore the novel was initially appeared with the title *Zaynab : Manazir wa Akhlaq Rifiyya* by Misri Fallah (Zaynab : Country Scenes and Manners by an Egyptian Fallah). He intentionally used the term Misri with Fallah (peasant) because the fallah were despised by the upper class. He intended the readers to realize that the fallah is just as much a respected Egyptian citizen as is a member of the upper class.[2] Through this novel the author Haykal describes the nostalgic of the Egyptian countryside by criticizing Egyptian society and its attitudes to marriages through portrayal of the agonies of love among Egyptian peasants.[3] The brief description of the novel as below –

[1] Ahmad Haykal, *Tatawwur al- Adab al- Hadith fi Misr*, 198.
[2] Matti Moosa, *The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction*, (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1983), 262.
[3] Roger Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature*, (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 179.

1.5.1. Zaynab:-

The plot of the novel begins on the basis of two focal points: Zaynab, a beautiful peasant girl who works in the fields owned by the father and the second focal point, Hamid, a student in Cairo who returns to visit his family in the countryside during the vacation and sees the pretty village girl Zaynab with whom he becomes infatuated and their stories are essentially separate. His feelings for her, are like the vague flirtations of an adolescent of a relatively more serious nature is his attachment to his cousin 'Aziza, who went to school till the age of 12, when she was veiled and kept at home in a town in the Delta. Occasionally she accompanies her family on a visit to the village where she sees Hamid, but never without an escort.

The youth, therefore, is driven to use the device of sending her secret passionate letters to which he receives rather coy but encouraging replies from her. One day, however, after her return to her town, he is shocked to; receive a farewell note from her informing him that unwillingly she has had to consent to the wishes of her parents to marry her to a young man who has asked for her hand. Bitterly disappointed, Hamid tries in vain to find company of peasant girls, resists with difficulty an over whelming desire to possess the unwilling Zaynab, by now a married woman, and is driven by feelings of guilt to confess to a passing Sufi sheikh, held in great respect in the village. He soon discover that the Sufi is a deceiver, and disgusted at his own weakness and feeling utterly depressed and incapable of continuing to live with his parents, he decides to run away from the village and his parents, mysteriously disappears in Cairo, leaving behind a long letter telling them the whole course of his unsuccessful pursuit of love in the village and of his intention never to return until he finds his ideal woman. Roger Allen has translated a small part of the letter in his book. "The Arabic Novel: An Historical and critical introduction" as below-

"since the day I began thinking about love and happened to meet my cousin, I have wanted to marry her when I saw her and began to realize how impossible it was to find any opportunity to talk her alone, I got very annoyed and became even more intolerant of society and its customs than those who have to put up with the painful tortures which it imposes on people. The subject of marriage because for me the object of the bitterest criticism ..... In my opinion, marriage which is not based on love and which does not endure on the basis of love is despicable."[1]

As regards to another focal point, Zaynab is not left unfinished like Hamid's story. She never took Hamid's flirtations seriously, being fully aware that the unbridgeable social gap between them would render the idea of their marriage unthinkable, fall in the love with an intelligent, but poor peasant, Ibrahim, who works as a foreman supervising the work of the farm labourers of whom Zaynab was one, and her love is reciprocated. Her parents however have chosen for Hassan, the son of a farmer who owns a small-holding. Unable to face her mother's misery and her father's shame if she goes against their wishes she has to sacrifice her own happiness. Although she remains faithful to her husband she cannot forget her desperate love for Ibrahim, who is drafted into the army and goes to serve in Sudan. Despite the solicitous care lavished upon her Zaynab becomes exceedingly unhappy. She begins to pine for her true beloved and dies of tuberculosis, asking with her dying that Ibrahim's handkerchief be buried with her.

Thus Zaynab and Hamid both emerge as victims of societal custom. They neither can marry the person whom he or she really loves. Furthermore, Hamid's cousin, 'Azizah, seems, if anything to have less freedom of movement than Zaynab herself; at least the letter can walk around the village and fields unveiled and even respond to Hamid's advances. 'Azizah may have the advantage education, but the narrative implies that it will be of little value to her under

[1] Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Zaynab*. (Cairo: Maktabat nahdat misr, 1963), 268-69.

such societal norms.[1] In this way, through the two principal characters in the novel *Zaynab* namely Zaynab herself and Hamid, Muhammad Husayn Haykal criticizes the customs of Egyptian society. 'Azizah and Zaynab, Hamid and Ibrahim, serve as symbols the status of marriage in Egyptian particularly of woman's role in it. He, however, deals with numerous general problems-- social, political, religion and moral like that of veil, to which he attributes many social and moral evils such as prostitution. He attacks the lack of integrity in government official who were notorious for their bribery and corruption, and the tyranny of the Turkish and the British, the gross injustice in the system of military service, which allowed the rich to buy their way out of conscription, the pernicious influence of the lazy, greedy and ignorant Sufi sheikhs, who never practiced the asceticism they preached. Besides these general problems common to the whole country, the novel deals with questions peculiar to villages and village life: the object poverty of the peasant, his hard life, his constant toil, his enslavement to the soil, his eternal lack of means, his anxieties and lack of medical knowledge, the many debts that a small former incurs which leave him an easy prey to foreign money-lenders, who charge him excessive interest and end by seizing all his possessions. All these matters, together with the gayer aspects of village life, the peasants' festivities, dancing, singing, and merrymaking are vividly portrayed, with the result that the novel is rich in social details.[2]

From the view point of overall artistic merit, it can be said that *Zaynab* not only marked a significant landmark in the development of the novel as an Arabic literary form but is also of considerable interest in its own right.[3] The influence of *Zaynab* upon subsequent novel writing was great, which had been seen in the works of many notable authors who contributed in this trend to a

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[1] Charles Smith, "Love, Passion and Class in the Fiction of Muhammad Husayn Haykal," / *AQS* 99, no. 2 (1979): 251.
[2] M. M Badawi, *A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 108.
[3] Paul Starkey, *Modern Arabic Literature*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 103.

greater extent. Moreover, this very novel also provided a model that was widely followed by succeeding writers including Taha Husayn, Tawfiq al- Hakim Ibrahim Abd al- Qadir al- Mazini, etc. who not only discussed the contemporary societal issues in their novels, but also wrote them in expressive, attractive, straight forward as well as easily under stood prose. Now I proceed to highlight the works of the above distinguished writers only.

1.6. Al- Mazini's *Ibrahim the Writer*: -

Ibrahim 'Abd al- Qadir al- Mazini (1890 – 1949) was a distinguished poet, critic, and essayist before he became known as a novelist and short story writer. He published five novels: The first, *Ibrahim the writer*, appeared in 1931 while the other four – *Ibrahim al- Thani* (Ibrahim the second), *Thalathat Rijal wa Imra'a* (Three men and a woman), *Midu wa Shurakah* (translated as Midu and his Accomplices) and "*Awd ala Bad'* (translated as Return to a Beginning) all came out in 1943, though they have been written at different times before the date. His career as a novelist embarked with the publication of *Ibrahim the writer*. This very novel achieved its wide spread enthusiasm from critics and the readers as well, and probably this is the novel whose fame became well recognized due to its artistic value.[1]

In the preface to *Ibrahim the Writer*, al- Mazini mentions a number of points: the peculiar order, in which he wrote it, and his fictitious motive, revealing a playful and whimsical imagination, and a strange comparison he draws between himself and his protagonist in which he denies. In the question of dialogue he explains that he explains that he allowed himself to use of the colloquial word only whenever he felt that the literary equivalent would sound discordant and out of place, his reason being that the colloquial was unstable and incapable of expressing many things while the literary language was gaining in

[1] Hamdi Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel and its main Trends, 1913-52*, (Cairo: American Univ. in Cairo Press, 1971), 20.

flexibility, scope and polish all the time. In the preface as Mazini also tackles one of the major topics of discussion at the time, namely the position and future of the Arabic novel. Unlike some of his contemporaries he did not believe that the nature of Egyptian life, in which the sexes are socially separated, was not favourable to the development of the novel, particularly as it was not necessary for all novels to follow the pattern of the western novel or for love to be the only emotion around which a novel revolved. It was not imperative for all the events in a novel to arise in public places, where the Egyptian woman, who was to some extent still veiled, was unable to go, not was the veil permanent or universal since it was found more in certain classes than in others and in towns rather than the country.

In the novel *Ibrahim the Writer* love occupies a central position : the novel, in fact, deals with the protagonist's relationships with three different women, relationships which help to define his character and pinpoint the crisis of the Egyptian intellectual, Ibrahim, a recent widower, goes into hospital for an operation, falls in love with his nurse Mary, a Syrian widow, with whom he has an affairs which becomes a problem since he does not wish to marry her, while she understandably cannot continue as his mistress. In an attempt to end this relationship he leaves Cairo for a while and goes to stay with his cousins in the country, where he develops a passion for his young relative Shushu who reciprocates his feelings. He asks for her hand in marriage but his proposal is turned down because her older sister is still unmarried and custom and tradition make it unacceptable for a younger sister to marry before the older. Hoping to forget Shushu, Ibrahim, peeved and with his pride hurt, flees to Luxor where he meets at his hotel emancipated and more mature Layla, with whom he has an affair. By chance Layla finds out about his earlier relationship with Shushu, for whom she soon tells great pity, and she decides to give him up for the sake of the younger woman, despite the fact that she is carrying his child about whom

she tells him nothing. To make it impossible for him to pursue seriously his intention to marry her Layla lies about her past, gives, him to understand that she has had several lovers, disappears from his life, has an abortion, and eventually marries her doctor. Ibrahim, shocked and disgusted, returns to Cairo, resumes his relationship with Mary and learns of Shushu's marriage to a family friend. However, his second affair with Mary does not last very long and the novel ends with a poetic passage in which Ibrahim, lost and baffled, takes refuge in the desert and meditates on the incomprehensible mixture of joy and sorrow in human life.

From the above discussion it is found that the novelist al- Mazini through this novel describes about love. It also includes meditations and psychological observations, philosophical remarks as well as social and moral issues. In this respect al- Mazini's novel takes significant step in the development of Arabic novel in Egypt.

1.7. Tawfiq al- Hakim's *Return of the Spirit*:-

Tawfiq al- Hakim's (1898 – 1987), *Return of the Spirit* and al- Mazini's *Ibrahim the Writer* (these two works) had occupied a crucial position in the field of Modern Arabic novel. But there is a controversy since it is told that both novels were written a little earlier. *Ibrahim the Writer* appeared between 1925 and 1926 and *Awdat al- Ruh* in 1927. In the book "The Dawn of Egyptian Fiction" Yaha Haqqi opens his concluding chapter, which deals with al- Hakim, with these words: 'With the appearance of Tawfiq al- Hakim the down of the Egyptian fiction comes to an end', meaning that the Egyptian novel attains its maturity.

Al- Hakim was a prolific author who wrote plays, novels, short stories, essays, memoirs, letters autobiography and literary criticism as well as social and political commentary and philosophical speculations. His most celebrated

novel *Awdat al- Ruh*[1] appeared in 1933 and received a good enthusiastic acclaim. Through this novel al- Hakim deals with social realism, marked by caustic humour, revealing the loves, joys and sorrows of a middle class Egyptian family. The novel is set mostly in Cairo, where young Muhsin lives with his two uncles, Hanafi and Abduh, their half-brother Salim, and an illiterate, boorish single aunt, Zannuba; some of the action occurs in Damanhor, where Muhsin's parents live. Muhsin is the central figure, and it should be made clear here that he represents al- Hakim. When asked by the Egyptian critic Ghali Shukri whether he is Mushin of *Awdat al- Ruh* and *Usfur min al- Sharq* (Eastern Sparrow, 1938), al- Hakim answered, "yes, I am Muhsin'.[2]

In *Awdat al- Ruh* it is Muhsin, an adolescent schoolboy, passing through the agonies of the first experience of love. Because his parents live in the country, he is staying for the convenience of his education with his relatively poor relations in Cairo. His two uncles occupy a flat in the traditional quarter of Sayyida Zaynab, which they share with a male cousin and their spinster sister, who keeps house for them, helped by a man servant who has been in the family service for a long time. The characters are an amusing array of different types: the head of the household, who is an unmarried, amiable school teacher of a rather weak personality, his brother, an earnest, highly strung engineering student; and a cousin, a vain and compares police officer, who has been temporarily suspended from his post in port Said, on account of his (unsuccessful) attempt to use his office and uniform to seduce an attractive Syrian woman. The Sister is a woman in her forties, utterly lacking in beauty, who has been brought up in the country and whose mind is stuffed with superstitions belief in the power of magic and witchcrafts, which she pathetically resorts to in a futile endeavour to obtain a husband, squandering

[1] Translated as "*Return of the Sprit*" by William M. Hutchins.
[2] Ghali Shukri, *Mudhakkirat Thaqafa Tahtadir*, 243.

most of the housekeeping money on the impossible and hilariously funny demands made by fortune tellers and magicians.

Most of the actions of this very novel are discussed in this way: it consists of a series of exquisitely comic situations, through which the characters are revealed. They centre first on the men's dissatisfaction with the manner of their sister's housekeeping, then on the antics of the three men as one by one they fall in love, each in his own fashion, with the pretty daughter of their neighbour, whom the spinster sister, unaware of her limitations, has been desperately trying to capture. When the girl's engagement is announced, Muhsin's hearts breaks, the other men are united by their common disappointment, and the spinster is enraged, using all kinds of crudely comic devices to spoil the lovers' happiness. The novel ends with the preparations for their wedding and the unsuccessful suitors, how purged of their egoistic feelings, taking an active part in the 1919 revolution, which activities result in their arrest and temporary imprisonment.

In this way the dramatic role of dialogue in contributing to character portrayal has been convincingly demonstrated that pave the way for the emergence of the Arabic novel in its full maturity.

1.8. Najib Mahfouz: -

The most prolific writer Najib Mahfouz (1911 – 2006) was born into a middle class family who occupied the same eminent place in the development of the Arabic novel like that Mahmud Taymur in Short stories and Tawfiq al-Hakim in drama.

The son of a middle class merchant, Najib Mahfouz lived first in al-Jamaliyya, the thickly populated heart of Cairo which forms the setting of his major stories. In 1981, the family moved to al- Abbasiyya, an area where posh villas and modest dwellings stand side by side in glaring contrast. This

movement marked Najib Mahfouz transition to modernity, and leaving the Kuttab he had earlier attended, he started going to a modern school.

As the other children in the family, much older than him, got married and Najib Mahfouz was brought up virtually as an only child. He got his own way in regards of most things, including the choice of his subject – philosophy – which he studied later at Cairo University.

Najib Mahfouz grew up in the midst of stirring national events. "There is no escape from politics, it is like air," says one character in his stories.[1] The 1919 revolution in Egypt had a strong affect on Mahfouz, although he was at the time only seven years old. From the window he often saw English soldiers firing at the demonstrators, men and women. "You could say, "He later noted," that the one thing which most shook the security of my childhood was the 1919 revolution". About his life detail will be discussed in the next chapter. In this chapter an attempt has been made to discuss the role of Najib Mahfouz in the development of Arabic novel, and at the same time it is also to be observed whether Arabic novel got its maturity by the effort of Najib Mahfouz or not?

1.9. Najib Mahfouz's role in the development of Arabic novel:-

Mahfouz began his literary career when he was reading in high school, writing essays on various topics in philosophy and literature along with an occasional short story. He wrote more than 40 novels along with many collections of short stories, dramas, and philosophical literary essays. And most of these were translated into English, French, German and many other languages of the world. However, he started his artistic life with the translation of European works and brought out many books from English, for example--- the *Pharaonic Egypt.* After that he wrote many stories and novels having historical,

[1] In the story 'al- Hubb taht al- Matar,' as quoted by Ahmad Muhammad Atiya, "Najib Mahfouz Bayn al- Fan wal- Siyasa," al- Aqlam, (Baghdad, No. 4, jan., 1975), 94.

social, and philosophical. Even, as regards to symbolic of the social incidental emancipation is concerned he passed by many literary stages which are as below

1.10. Historical Stage: -

In this stage he brought out three novels namely *Abath al- Aqdar* (The Game of Fate, 1939); *Radubis,* 1943, and *Kifah Tiba* (The struggle of Thebes, 1944). These works, the imaginative reconstruction of the ancient Egyptian past is less important than Mahfouz's use of the distant Pharaonic setting as a vehicle for commentary on the political and social situation of contemporary Egypt.[1]

1.11. Social Incidental Criticism:-

In this stage he published four novels are – *al- Qahira al- Jadida* (New Cairo, 1945), *Khan al- Khalili,* 1946, *Zuqaq al- Midaq* (The Midaq alley, 1947) *Bidaya wa Nihaya* (The Beginning and the End, 1949)

1.12. Social Incidental documentation: -

This stage includes *The Trilogy* of Najib Mahfouz which are--- *Bain al- Qasrain* (Palace Walk), *Qasr al- Shawq* (Palace of Desire), and *al- Sukkariyya* (Sugar Street) in 1956 – 1957).

1.13. Social Incidental Philosophy; -

These are *Awladu Haratina,* 1959 (Children of Gebalawi); *al- Liss wa al- Kilab,* 1961, (The Thief and the Dog), *al- Suman wa al- Kharif,* 1962; *al- Tariq,* 1964, *al- Shahaz,* 1965; *Tharthar al- Fawq al- Nil,* 1966; *Miramar,* 1967 etc.

Through the above mentioned entire novels Najib Mahfouz provides an inner view of how individuals rejoice, how they panic, what their rage is like, how they grieve. He also records the change in the status of women for example – the changing relation between fathers and sons, the changes in tastes and

[1] M. M. Badawi, *A Short History of Modern Arabic literature,* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 136.

styles. "Plumpness plus"[1] etc. From this perspective it is clear that Mahfouz has fulfilled a creative destiny no less than the great writers of the world. Moreover his novels having stream of consciousness constitute an abridged history of the world novel. In short it could be said that with the contribution of Mahfouz in the field of Arabic novel has achieved genuine maturity.

Hence forth, the genre of novel in Arabic became a powerful literary to explore topics of current concern so much that the above mentioned Egyptian novelist Najib Mahfouz was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988.

[1] Hamdi Sakkut, *The Egyptian Novel and its Main Trends, 1913-52*, (Cairo: American Univ. in Cairo Press, 1971), 27-28.

Chapter- 2