CHAPTER-II

LIFE AND WORKS OF MUSTAFA LUTFI AL-MANFALUTI

Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti was one of the early short story writers in Egypt. He was famous for his literary articles too. He started to publish his highly and sentimental pieces in the newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad* from 1907 onwards. Al-Manfaluti's stories are distinguished by a deep pessimism and melancholy and deal with social evils and the reaction against western habits in Arab society. The collection of al-Manfaluti significantly called *al-Abarat* (The Tears) contains stories of which *al-Hawiyah* (the Abyss) and *al-Dahiyya* (the Victims) are the most famous.

Al-Manfaluti was the only writer who enchanted the Arabic populace with his new literary *bayan* (eloquent and clear rhetoric). He started out with poetry and then started to write short stories, becoming the liberator of literature from difficult *saj'* (rhymed prose) and *badi'* (metaphoric style). His most memorable feat can be summarized as being "a teacher of manners, a caller to virtue and a leader of social welfare".[149] Likewise, the writing style had progressed, the distance becoming enormous between the modern style of the time and the one that preceded it. The style had become more compliant to express the feelings and sensitivities of the self and the expression diversified according to the subject. Social subjects needed correct and precise expression and the avoidance of embellishment, flowery rhetoric and exaggeration.

[149] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.7.

Political topics, on the other hand, had to be characteristically clear and simple and had to tend towards effectiveness and persuasion. As for literature on ethics and morals, it needed to be reviewed and had to embrace words and expressions that originated from a pure test and subtle feelings, intelligence and an able imagination.[150]

As was previously mentioned, the use of *saj'* and its components like embellishments still remained until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century and there was a bitter battle between those who were impressed by it and practiced it, and those who frowned upon its use. It was at this time that the ensuing progress in the writing of the *maqalah* (essay) at the hands of Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti was distinguished and had far-reaching effects in taking prose to a new stage, a stage that in some respects resembled the revival of poetry at the hands of Mahmud Sami al-Barudi (1838-1904) who severed his connections from all signs of weakness and paleness of style. Al-Manfaluti's contribution could also be compared to the role of Ahmad Shawqi (1869-1932) in radiant rhetoric, touching music, clarity and eloquent speech. In the progress of prose, al-Manfaluti became the leader of a flowing and leisurely style in prose writing and the most distinguished of contemporary writers. After him, the writing styles would develop extensively at the hands of the generations to come.[151]

The reason for writing about Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti is to look at the various factors that influenced him and the circumstances that surrounded him, whether specific ones like his family and friends or general ones that relate to the time he lived in. May be in this way one

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[150] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.16.

[151] Ibid., pp.16-17.

can explain his literary method and understand why he chose the short story and essay and not another form of prose, and why his social stories and essays were so popular. It is also said that style is personality, that is, the author's style is very closely related to his personality. It is, therefore, essential to look at all aspects of a writer's life, from birth to death, to understand his writings, and to understand what made him different from other writers.

Before going into specifics of al-Manfaluti, a brief overview of him and his contribution may be appropriate here. More details will be given in its appropriate place. As a story teller, his works can be divided into the short story and the narrative. His short stories again can be sub divided into those that he composed himself (original) and those that he translated. Some of these stories were published as a collection *al-Nazarat* while others saw the light as *al-Abarat.* The narratives again, can be distinguished by translations which he freely adapted and those that he changed the type, e.g. he made narratives out of the plays *al-Sa'ir* and *Fi Sabil al-Taj*. His leaning was towards Romanticism, which was a result of the political and social circumstances under which he lived during the early nineteenth century. It was the time when the failure of the Urabi revolution and the English occupation caused feelings of gloom, pessimism, oppression and pain in the minds, souls and hearts of every Egyptian, especially the youth. This atmosphere is partly why al-Manfaluti wrote in this tearful, sad, romantic way, and why he could identify with and write about the youth's pains, hopes, misery and despondency and why the people, in turn, could empathize with his free translations of French works of Bernadin de Saint Pierre, Alphonse Karr and Francois Coppee. His translations greatly influenced the personalities like Hafiz Ibrahim who translated Victor Hugo, Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat

who translated Ghote and Lambertine, Ali Adham who translated Chatuparyan and Felix Faris who translated the works of Alfred de Touset.

Al-Manfaluti's stories were characterized by the relation of incidents and the giving of information without actual detailed analysis of the plot or characters. In addition, there were no climaxes or twists. He was also guilty of pretentiousness and hyporbole, especially when it came to love, national sensibilities, the weak, poor and wretched and particularly when it concerned women and children. However his stories were very influential and effective and this was in no small measure due to one thing: his writing style.[152]

2.1: Early Life and Education of al-Manfaluti

Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti was born on the tenth of *Dhu al-Hijja* 1293 A.H. (corresponding to 30 December, 1876 A.D.) in the town called Manfalut, situated on the west bank of the river Nile in the province of Asyut in Upper Egypt. His father Lutfi Muhammad Hasan was a learned man of law and leader of a Sufi group. His father's family in Manfalut was well-known for their nobility, strong belief in God, knowledge and moral excellence. His father Sayyid Muhammad Lutfi was a judge and was one of the most prominent person in Manfalut.[153]His father was of Arab descend and mother Turkish. The family considered itself distinguished and even claimed that its family tree went back to Hussain, one of the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.). That is why

[152]Wadi, Dr. Taha, (1994). *Dirasat Fi Naqd al-Riwayah*. 3rd ed. Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, p.91.
[153] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.22.

he has been customarily called 'Sayyid', denoting the lineage can be directly traced to the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) ('Sayyid' literally means 'master' or 'chief'). His surname 'al-Manfaluti' denotes to his town of birth, Manfalut.

As a child his first education was in the office of Shaikh Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti and Shaikh Muhammad Ridwan, a faqih (a specialist in Islamic law) who had taught many students who became writers and scientists in the town of Asyut. A friend of his father, Abd Allah Hashim, used to visit their house regularly. He was well versed in literature, especially poetry. It was he who endeavoured Arabic literature to the young boy. Mustafa therefore loved to recite qasidas and books of literature aloud. It was Abd Allah who encouraged al-Manfaluti to memorise the Holly Qur'an too. It is said that he memorised the whole Qur'an in his first attempt and without repeating it twice or thrice as was the traditions with other students of Qur'an. He was then only eleven years old. At that same age in 1888 he was sent to the *al-Azhar* University to follow in his father's footsteps. He remained there for ten years, studying the religious sciences and Arabic language.[154] Al-Manfaluti gives an account of about this period of his life in *al-Nazarat*:

> No one around me asked them (the Azhar lecturers) for help in literature so much as I did … and I was not even thirteen at the time……amongst the old type of *al-Azhar Shaikhs*……..they saw fit to increase my knowledge with the deeds of heroism, mocking and temptation from the devil……..they would many times attack me what I did not like…….I therefore felt afflicted and worthless to them to an extent that no one else would be able to bear.[155]

[154] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.19-20.
[155] Quoted in Al-Anwar, p.20.

Al-Manfaluti did not want to specialize in religion because his first love was literature.[156] According to Butrus al-Bustani his favourite books were *al-Iqd al-Farid* (The unique Necklace or the Unique string of Pearls) by Ibn Abd al-Rabbihi (d.940), *Kitab al-Aghani* (the book of songs) by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani (d.967) and *Zahr al-Adab*. *Kitab al-Aghani*, of course, uses a collection of Arabian poems set to music "as a basis for an electic discussion of the incidents which occasioned their composition, the lives of the poets and their patrons and the conditions of life of Pre-Islamic Arabia."[157] The anthologies of poems that he preferred were by al-Mutanabbi, al-Buhtari, Abu Tammam and Sharif al-Rida. His best loved authors were Abdul Hamid, Ibn al-Muqaffa author of *Kalila wa Dimna*, Ibn Khaldun author of *al-Muqaddama* and Ibn al-Athir. The critics he read were al-Amidi, al-Baqillani, Iyah and other writers who were good at words and who extolled the immutability of the Qur'an and its beautiful methodologies.[158] The introduction to *al-Nazarat* and many of his essays are filled with names of writers whom he had read and admired.

In reading literature freely and in seclusion, al-Manfaluti discovered himself because the environment can either kill hidden desires, prevent their subjugation, or suppress them inside a human being. One must either 'release' these desires, or achieve what one wants, or resist them. Both the ingenuity of desires and the resistance to them are due equally to the creator of man and the demons.[159] Ahmad Hafiz Awad opines that:

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[156] Daif, op. cit., p.228.
[157] Bateson, op. cit., p.332.
[158] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.20.
[159] Ibid., p.21.

> one of the reasons why al-Manfaluti could break away from the prevailing conservative teachings of al-Azhar, and why he was not influenced by the styles of *saj'* and *badi'* which were in mode, and why he could herald in a writing style was precisely because he pursued his own policy in education, one which was different from those followed by the other al-Azhar students. He did not read the prescribed books of al-Azhar… except those which he thought were beneficial…this led to him having a sound taste and pure mind…he would spend most of his time reading books on nature, morals, literature and wise sayings until these overpowered him, especially literature[160].

He then started to attend the study circles of Imam Muhammad Abduh. He felt discouraged by the teaching methods in al-Azhar, and became despondent with the institution's lecturers and sciences. Soon he discovered what he wanted with Imam Muhammad Abduh. The Imam encouraged him and described to him the ideal way to achieve the aims of literature and life. Ahmad Hafiz writes in his introduction to *al-Nazarat* (1916 publication):

> He (al-Manfaluti) bonded with him (the Imam) like a son bonds with his father, he increased his attendance of his lessons, coming and going for a full ten years. In this manner he completed any short-comings in his religious and literary knowledge…… The teacher (may Allah have mercy on him) was highly impressed with him, and used to praise his intelligence and quick-wit in a beautiful way, and felt justified that he would be of the ones who will benefit the most from his knowledge and who would spread his principles and teachings the most.[161]

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[160] Quoted in al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, p.48.
[161] Quoted in Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.21.

Al-Manfaluti was one of the prominent students of Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, and so Abduh preferred him and made him one of his closest students, even one of his most trusted friends. When some teachers of al-Azhar opposed the religious teaching methods of Abduh and his interpretation of the Qur'an, al-Manfaluti challenged them, defending his teacher with his pen and tongue.[162] Besides the Qur'an, Imam Abduh taught al-Manfaluti the two books on rhetoric by Abd al-Qahir, namely *Dala'il al-Ijaz* (The evidence of Inimitability) and *Asrar al-Balagha* (The Secrets of Rhetoric).[163]

Al-Manfaluti then became a social reformer and a keen Muslim without fanaticism and rigidity. In these two attributes he undoubtedly resembled and followed in the footsteps of his teacher Muhammad Abduh as his literary works bore witness. Al-Manfaluti benefited from his closeness to Muhammad Abduh by getting acquainted with Sa'ad Zaghlul, a close friend of Muhammad Abduh. Through these two, again, he got to know Ali Yusuf, owner and editor of the newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad*. It was this paper in which al-Manfaluti built for himself a distinguished place with his social essays.[164]Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat comments in this regard:

> After al-Manfaluti's natural abilities and the guidance of his father, the three most influential factors in making him a literary writer were the religious leader Muhammad Abduh, the politician Sa'ad Pasha Zaghlul and the journalistic writer Ali Yusuf. These three man of genius were some of the most powerful and influential personalities of the time.[165]

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[162] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Majmu al-Kamila*. 2nd edition, Lebanon: Mu'assasa al-Ma'arif, p.5.
[163] Daif, op. cit., p.227.
[164] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.21
[165] Ibid., pp.21-22.

Sayyid Rashid Rida together with Abduh and Zaghlul, had a tremendous effect on al-Manfaluti's personality and writing.[166] Al-Manfaluti used to indulge in the writings of Imam Muhammad Abduh, as well as in those of his contemporaries. In this way he prepared himself to become a skillful journalist, not a traditional news correspondent, but an essayist, stylist and article writer.[167]

While a student at *al-Azhar*, al-Manfaluti lived a good, noble life and did not, as some of his critics claimed, experience misery as far as wordly comforts are concerned thanks to the prosperity of his family.

He spent his early years at al-Azhar composing poetry that attracted much attention. He composed a famous poetry *Qasida Qudum* (Brave) together with Muhammad al-Bakri in which he satirized the king al-Khidawi Abbas Hilmi II and which resulted in him being thrown into jail.[168] Al-Manfaluti had to serve his term of imprisonment, but al-Bakri was not sentenced because of his high office.[169] That was in the year 1897. He spent six months in prison. This period in his life was unhappy and the bitter experience of life in jail, besides his other tribulations, filled his heart with suffering, despair and pain.[170]

2.2: Al-Manfaluti's Career

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[166] Qasim, Dr. Riyad, ed.(2001). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Fi Sabil al-Taj*. Beirut: Mu'assasa Basasun, p.17.
[167] Daif, op. cit., p.228.
[168] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.22.
[169] Brugman, J., (1984). *An introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, p.83.
[170]Daif, op. cit., p.228.

Al-Manfaluti worked as a government diplomat, but lost this job as a result of the satire of al-Khidawi Abbas Hilmi-II in his poem *Qasida Qudum*. Imam Muhammad Abduh pleaded with the king, on behalf al-Manfaluti, to pardon him and to return to him his personal rights. When Sa'ad Zaghlul became the Minister of education in 1906, he took an interest in al-Manfaluti, especially after the latter's literary works became well-known. Zaghlul was very impressed with al-Manfaluti's work for he himself was a man of Arabic belles letters. In 1909 he offered al-Manfaluti the post of the Arabic editor in the government which suited his talents and natural disposition. His duties were to improve the writing style of the resolutions and correspondence in the government offices of the Education Ministry, especially that of major issues wherein the long-winded memoranda and accompanying, lengthy resolutions had been passed.[171]

Al-Manfaluti stayed in this position until Roosevelt, the president of America at the time, arrived in Egypt. Prior to his arrival, Roosevelt gave a speech in Khartoum in which he encouraged the Sudanese nation to accept and adhere to the rule of the colonizers. The Egyptians rejected this idea and warned him in the paper *al-Mu'ayyad* not to repeat his speech in Cairo, but when he set his feet on Egyptian soil, he declared that the Egyptians were unable to rule themselves. This of course, caused a furore, and the Egyptian nation fiercely opposed president's statements. At this point al-Manfaluti's inborn nationalistic trait came to the fore. He picked up his pen and wrote a refutation to Roosevelt, calling him to a discussion in an article entitled *Muhakama Roosevelt Amam Muhakama al-'Adl* (The Prosecution of Roosevelt in the Court of Justice). This article caused a reaction in an Englishman called Dunlop, an advisor in

[171] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.24.

the Ministry of Education at the time. He wanted to take revenge on al-Manfaluti by having him fired. Sa'ad Pasha, however, challenged Dunlop, saying: "The government is in need of a person like Mr. Mustafa, and he is not in need of it (the government). Jobs are like graves for writers and it is better for the government that a person like him be inside it".[172] Whichever post he held, al-Manfaluti was a perfect example of trust, truthfulness, boldness and sincerity in his work.[173]

When Sa'ad Pasha became a minister in the Ministry of Justice which was run by Muhammad Sa'ad Pasha in 1910, al-Manfaluti was transferred to this Ministry. He was appointed in a similar post as the one he had held before. There he stayed until Sayyid was appointed secretary-general of the Legislative Assembly (1913) and al-Manfaluti became its secretary. While there he wrote his wonderful essay on 'Egyptian Issues' (1921), defending Sa'ad Pasha in it. When Sa'ad started his revolt, al-Manfaluti was sacked, and started to publish his *al-Nazarat* which comprised all of these essays.[174]

It was related that al-Manfaluti was having dinner with some guests when the notification letter of his sacking arrived. He just took one look at the letter, put it under his hand, and continued enjoying his meal. Someone asked, "What is that?" He said, "A letter of dismissal." They were amazed, saying, "How can you accept it with such calmness and disdain?" He replied, "Because that is not my sustenance. The important thing is the pen." However the post was re-offered to al-Manfaluti after six months, and this time he worked in the Royal Secretariat. The common belief was that his fame as a writer and the influence he wielded

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[172] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.24-25.
[173] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Majmu al-Kamila*. 2nd edition, Lebanon: Mu'assasa al-Ma'arif, p.5.
[174] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.25.

over the populace with his pen were the two reasons why the authorities re-offered him a job, and in that post specially.[175]

Al-Manfaluti's daughter Zainab Mustafa related that she heard from her mother that Nash'at Pasha, the director of the Royal Diwan, came to al-Manfaluti and requested that he burn the essay *fi al-Qadiyya al-Misriyya* (About the Egyptian Issue). Nash'at did not wait until al-Manfaluti obliged, but took the essay and burned it himself because he knew that al-Manfaluti would never do it. Soon afterward, the police arrived at their residence, and disrupted and destroyed many things during their search of the house. The house remained surrounded for several days. Zainab recalled that she could still picture that siege. Although she was still a toddler and therefore unconcerned about happenings around her, she could still remember telling her mother, *al-Ingiliz barra* (The English are outside).

Zainab remembered that her father never went to the Royal Diwan to take up his new post. Her mother told her that her father refused to take the job because his friend Sa'ad Pasha was engaged in a struggle with the authorities and if he would work for the King, he would have to keep quiet and be unable to support his comrade.[176] The above is but one illustration of al-Manfaluti's exemplary bravery, sincerity, truthfulness, trust and great moral values.

Al-Manfaluti defended Sa'ad Pasha with all his might and capabilities. As fate would have it, he returned to his former post in the Legislative Assembly that was closed down, but he still earned a monthly salary of twenty eight pounds while remaining at home. All activities of

[175] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.25.
[176] Ibid., p.26.

the Assembly had come to a stand still, and the colonizers were naturally happy about it, and only to glad to disburse the staff.

After Sa'ad's revolt against the English (1919), he became the Prime Minister and established a parliament. In 1923, a constitution was drawn up. Al-Manfaluti was chosen as the head of the Secretariat of the Council of Senators, earning fifty pounds a month. He remained in this post until his death at the age of forty eight. He died the same day on which Sa'ad was brutally assaulted. The concidence appeared as if he had even sacrificed his life for Sayyid out of loyalty to him. That was on 21 July 1924.[177]Zaghlul managed to escape with his life, but was critically injured. The incident caused a lot of commotion in the country. The people's attention was taken up by this event and thus did not give al-Manfaluti's demise the attention it deserved.[178]

2.3: Al-Manfaluti's personal Life and Family

As was mentioned above, al-Manfaluti was born of an Arab father and Turkish mother in a house of knowledge and law, and his lineage went back to Imam Hussain, the son of Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Things did not go all that smoothly in that marriage and his parents got divorced. She married another man from Manfalut. This affected the boy tremendously for he had a sensitive, delicate personality, and would cry even for imaginary things. It made him even more sensitive to the miseries and sufferings of life at an early age, and he developed a keen empathy with

[177] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.26-27.
[178] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Majmu al-Kamila*. 2nd edition, Lebanon: Mu'assasa al-Ma'arif, p.5.

the unfortunate and wretched. He was helped in this by his natural inclination towards those in need. He generally acquired sensitive feelings and melancholy temperament, and consequently secluded himself with the reading of books as a child and *al-Azhar* as a student, trying to reconcile his expectations of life and reality that seemed to clash all the time. Al-Manfaluti preferred to live in his own world, away from deception, cheating, cunningness hypocrisy that were on the increase due to the oppressive life at the time. He spoke about the meaning of this in his *qasida Paul et Viriginie*.[179]

Al-Manfaluti had five children by his first wife, twin boys who did not live very long, three daughters Zakiyya, Anisa and Najya. The girls all married during his lifetime and Anisa died before him. He then married a woman from Cairo, Ratiba Husni, who bore his children Fadil, Hasan, Hasanat, Zainab, Qadariyya, Ahmad and Mahasin.[180] He lost two children in one week and it affected him greatly. His wife would pass away soon afterwards.[181]He wrote a *ritha* (elegy) for Fadil, called *al-Dafin al-Saghir* (The Young Corpse). He speaks of the burial of his young child who died in infancy, striking an intensely personal note.

Al-Manfaluti loved his children very much. He expressed his deep sorrow in *qasida*s for those whom he had lost. He was greatly concerned about the future of his remaining off spiring. The father hired a private tutor, Shaikh al-Dardir, for his daughters in Manfalut and paid him a monthly salary equal to that of a government employee (two pounds). In Cairo, he entered Najya in a private school, The American College, and

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[179] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.28.
[180] Alom, Dr. Mohammad Raiz al-Din (2011). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti fi daw al-Nazarat wa al-Abarat*. 1st edition, Nowgaon, Assam: Socio-Economical &Cultural Development Organization, p.6.
[181] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed.(2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, p. 51.

Hasan and Hasanat were entered into French schools. Hasan achieved a degree in English literature; Zainab obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and afterwards a degree in law. Ahmad qualified with a diploma in Physical Education. The other daughters married good husbands and either left university before qualifying or did not attend university because they preferred being housewives to working.

Al-Manfaluti treated his wives and daughters very well, and why not, when he defended the woman in even her worst of states.[182]One of his wives was stricken by a disease that weakened her eyesight. He would give her the same household duties as a normally sighted person so that she must know that he did not despise her for her disability. He wrote about how to treat a wife and how to treat and deal with the fair sex in the essay *al-Wafa* (Faithfulness).[183]

2.4: Al-Manfaluti's Appearance, Manners and Habits

It is very important in research of a literary nature of the writer's personal characteristics. Therefore it is essential to consider and study some information about, and events in a writer's life which appear plain and insignificant, but actually are powerful indications about him and his temperament. Likewise the writer's works are normally a reflection of his inner self, especially in the case of al-Manfaluti who wrote from his heart and who was a product of his physical environment and the people around him.

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[182] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.30.
[183] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols., 1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, p.7.

Abu al-Anwar quotes Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat on the latter's relationship with al-Manfaluti:

> Al-Manfaluti was of medium height, stout, had a thick moustache, was goodly of manner, did not have the appearance of an artist or thinker on his face, and when he speaks to you in his soft manner he did not reveal eloquence in speech. He had an uneasy temperament, a lively character and a detached presence. I studied him according to what I know about myself, and will not exceed the truth in describing and appraising him.[184]

He continues:

> Al-Manfaluti was a piece of music, internally and externally, gentle in manner, appropriate in taste, contemplative, harmonious in style, elegant in dress, revealed no sign of genius in his words or deeds. He understood correctly but slowly, was sound in thought when tackling issues, quietly sensitive in feeling, comfortable with memorization. Because of this character traits he was wary with company, avoided arguments, and despised giving lectures. This could be traced to the modesty and decency of the traditional education in his family, the education at *al-Azhar* that did not encourage speaking and discussion, and the very sensitive feelings of dignity and self-honour; but if you sat with him face to face, he was clear and explicit in his conversation, competitive in speech, bold in clear criticism, and mature in his opinions. Then you did not doubt that this was the al-Manfaluti whom you had read. In addition he was delicate, pure and sound of heart, followed the correct religious beliefs, generous, diverse in thought, favoured in loved by his family and countrymen.[185]

Abu al-Anwar also relates how another friend of al-Manfaluti described him:

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[184] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.31.
[185] Ibid, p.32.

> Al-Manfaluti was very humble, delicate in courtesy, calm of nature, not as some claim pessimistic and fanatical of nature. When you talk to him, you feel calm and satisfied and (then) you get different picture of the al-Manfaluti who is sad and seclusive.[186]

The newspaper *al-Sa'iqah* (The Thunderbolt) which presented a series of articles on literature by prominent writers during 1905, said about him:

> You see him pure in deeds and words, not begging with literature for his needs, not spoiling his company or friendship, not being artificial in word or deed. He still spoke like his own town folk, pronouncing (the letters) *qaf* as *jim* and *jim* as *shin* and nasalizing some letters. (He was) not satisfied with his shameful handwriting. If it is true that intelligence eats age like fire eats dry firewood, how is it possible for this intelligent (man) to live and where does he get the life from?[187]

Ahmad Hafiz Awad said that al-Manfaluti's political mentor and friend, Sa'ad Zaghlul, often told al-Manfaluti, "I see you in your writings a person whom I wish I can see in the pens of many writers".[188]

This was how his colleagues and contemporaries described him. If we look at his literary compositions in an effort to obtain a better understanding of him, we find that as far as his personality traits are concerned there are two distinct traits. The first one is his delicacy of feelings and perceptiveness. He profoundly felt the difficult, cruel effects life had on all the people around him and could therefore gather and describe the painful pictures of suffering which had befallen his society, and was able to treat it in various insightful ways. Consequently, he

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[186] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.32-33.
[187] Ibid., p.33.
[188] Quoted in Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, P.52 and Jabbur, Dr. Jibrail Sulaiman, ed. (1983). *Mu'allafat Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Al-Sha'ir*. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, p.xviii.

became known for his empathy with the wretched, the deprived, the sad and depressed, and those who suffered pain. He was almost totally inclined towards humanity. In his essays for example, *al-Jami'a al-Insaniyya* (The university of mankind), he reiterated his general inclination towards man as a human being when he despaired about the hardships of the people during the war, calling for peace and respect for the common bond between all peoples. This delicate sensitivity and sensibility that he had was his biggest supporting pillar in his literary works. He was also very generous to his friends, dividing whatever he had amongst them.

Al-Manfaluti's second distinguishing feature was his exemplary moral leanings that were reflected in his unceasing desire to enlighten his society with truth, goodness and virtue. All the emotional topics and challenging issues that he tackled in his essays and fiction, make the reader realize that the most progressive morals and ethics in man, namely the love of truth, goodness and beauty, are gathered in his personality.[189]

It is believed that it was al-Manfaluti's good character and personal, exemplary conduct that caused King al-Khidawi to pardon him for the satire of the king. The king became aware of al-Manfaluti's good intentions, his sound heart, and empathy for the poor and downtrodden.[190]

Al-Manfaluti's seclusion was in fact a personal choice, for he did not escape from society and did not avoid people. It is the nature of man to socialize and al-Manfaluti was no exception. He had many friends whom he associated with and by whom he was visited. He said about himself in the introduction to *al-Nazarat*, "The nature of my situation was

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[189] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.33-34.
[190] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, p. 51.

such that I could not completely avoid people and I could not choose from the best of them and the manliest amongst them whom I wanted for my companionship, so I faced them with shortcomings and all".[191]

The many visitors he received were all sincere and bosom friends and from the choicest strata of society, but these meanings and socializations did not fill the emptiness in his self. Abu al-Anwar says that this can be seen when he addressed the moon in *al-Nazarat*:

> O shining moon, between us is a common spirit and bond, you are alone in your sky and I am alone in my earth, both of us make our rounds quietly, calmly, shattered and sad, the one not caring about the other both of us expose each other on a dark night and are intimate whispering: someone sees me and thinks I am happy, because the smile on my mouth and the light in my face deceive him, but if my soul is laid bare to him and he sees what anxiety and sadness are on it, then he will mournfully cry for me.[192]

The author of *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Imam al-Bayan al-Arabi* had a hunch which explained why al-Manfaluti was a sad person: the man was in love once upon a time and then suffered the pains of having to depart from his love. He quotes from al-Manfaluti's writings to substantiate his hunch. In a poem al-Manfaluti related the story of an unrequited love. In a piece of prose in *al-Nazarat* he addressed the moon, saying,

> O shining moon, I once had a lover who filled my soul with light, and my heart with delight and happiness. Many times did I call on him and he called on me between your ears and eyes. Time has torn us apart. Will you then inform me of his whereabouts? For maybe he is

[191] Quoted in Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.34.
[192] Ibid., pp.34-35.

> looking at you like I am, and calling on you as I do, and pleading to you like I am.[193]

It is also related that he was not satisfied with his first wife. He only married her to satisfy the wishes of his father and due to the customs of the time. Al-Manfaluti avoided all topics about romantic love. These hunches and information, of course, may not be fully true, but one looks at these possibilities in order to achieve an understanding of the nature of a writer and his works.

One can also try to interpret and explain his stories about lovers to whom he always gives tragic ending, his grief for them, his description of the struggle against their suffering, his success in exciting the readers' feelings concerning the victims, his empathy with the female sex and his respect for and defence of her, and his inclination towards romanticism when writing about her. Maybe it was an expression of his repressed feelings struggling in the depths of insensitivity. This is a very plausible explanation as far as the evidence suggests.[194]

He followed the 'philosophy of satisfaction' because when his cherished hopes were not realized, he would say that the will of God is always behind all hopes of man. This philosophy of life could also be ascribed to the fact that he had high expectations that were never fulfilled. When despair in this regard took hold of him, he would resign himself to being satisfied with what God had ordained for him. Furthermore, he believed that the cause of people's misery was their little appreciation of their happiness for that day. Abu al-Anwar quotes him:

> The reason for man's misery is that he hardly appreciates his day's happiness, and kills time concerning the happiness of tomorrow.

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[193] Quoted in Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.36.
[194] Ibid., pp.36-37.

> If it (happiness) comes to him, he thinks that yesterday was better than today. So he remains miserable in present and in his past.[195]

Al-Manfaluti made all his visitors feel very welcome, but hated exaggeration in friendliness and overdoing welcome, loved educated criticism even when it was bitter and as long as the speaker was sincere in his speech and method of criticism. This was one of the reasons why he preferred privacy and tended not to socialize. It was as if he desired of people what they did not desire from one another. The man intensely hated lying and nothing was dearer to him than sincerity in both words and deeds. He said in one of his essays in *al-Nazarat*: "I have not hated anything in my life as much as lying and hypocrisy".[196]

His house was always open to, and filled with, visitors, ranging from men from the secretariat of the Royal Court of Shaukat Pasha, the prince of poets Ahmad Shawqi and Hafiz Ibrahim. The latter two were, of course, regarded as "the twin geniuses who were for long considered the spokesmen of Egypt, and to a lesser extent of the whole Arab world".[197] This showed that he was an honoured and respected person and that he knew how to treat people of all levels.

He was very self-confident and could not easily be persuaded otherwise once he had held a certain opinion. He would however tolerate criticism and did not look down on his critics.

Al-Manfaluti had strong religious beliefs, with a profound understanding of Islam, free from the superstition and blemishes that were rife during that period. Concerning his firm beliefs, Abu al-Anwar quotes him as saying:

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[195] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.37.
[196] Quoted in Al-Anwar, pp.37-38.
[197] Haywood, op. cit., p.86.

> Had I only known that worldly gains and aims could only be achieved by forsaking religious rites or by mocking its compulsory duties, I would have left them and avoided them (the wordly things and aims) and exhausted my hands of them. Had I only known that nationalism – which is the best thing man can have in his heart – is an obstacle in the way to my life after death or spreads a veil between me and my lord, I would have cast it off as I cast off my garment.[198]

He was very cultured in speech and would, for example, criticize those who had done wrong without using indecent language and without being banal, and when critics attacked him in a derogatory manner he would not answer them in the same way. When his critics accused him of not showing delight when people praise him, al-Manfaluti did not get upset, but replied:

> Many showers praises on me and I do not rebuke them, but there are many others who criticize me and I also do nothing. So leave the lies to fight one another, for maybe the sparks that will fly from that battle will lighten for the people a place where the jewels of truth can be found and they will gather them.[199]

In his private life al-Manfaluti loved anything to do with the arts. He adored music and used to sing and take a great interest in it. While at Manfalut he was sent for various musical compositions to Cairo. He gathered groups of musicians, singers and actors in his house. He was one of the first to watch the *masrahiyya al-Ashara al-Tayyiba* (The Good Ten) when it was first produced. The following day his friends would celebrate the success of the play at his home.

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[198] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.38-39.
[199] Quoted in Al-Anwar, p.39.

His home, according to his friends and visitors, was elegant and fashionable, and the guest room was of the highest quality and according to the tradition at that time.[200]

The above aspects of al-Manfaluti's biography, personality and character together with his culture and social relationship played a profound role in his literary style and views.

2.5: Social Relationships of al-Manfaluti

Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti, as previously stated, met Imam Muhammad Abduh while studying at *al-Azhar* University. Through the Muhammad Abduh, he forged friendships of significant consequences with Sa'ad Zaghlul and then Shaikh Ali Yusuf. By way of these three very influential men al-Manfaluti's personality would find its way in life, sometimes to his benefit and sometimes to his detriment, but the former outweighing the latter by far[201].

He deeply acknowledges his indebtedness to those two gentlemen: Muhammad Abduh and Sa'ad Pasha. When he published his *al-Nazarat* in 1910, he shows his gratitude to them by dedicating the book to them and his father. He writes:

> If the virtuous is impressed by any virtue in this book, or if the intelligent is satisfied with any opinion in it, or if a writer praises the style, then no person but those three men must take credit: my life guardian and father, Muhammad Lutfi, the guardian of my mind and teacher, Shaikh Muhammad Abduh, and the guardian of my affairs,

[200] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.40.
[201] Ibid., p.41.

Mr. Sa'ad Pasha Zaghlul[202].

Al-Manfaluti was thus indissolubly linked to these three strong personalities. Together with the social and political conditions of the time and his upbringing, his association with them moulded his habits, thought, speech and – which is important for our topic – all aspects of his writings.

2.5.1: Al-Manfaluti and Imam Muhammad Abduh

It is clear from his dedication to Imam Muhammad Abduh how grateful al-Manfaluti was for his love for him and his influence on him. This man played such a big role in the literary and religious life of al-Manfaluti, and was generally such an influential figure, that a quick glimpse at his background may help in understanding why. It will also illustrate some aspects of the history of the development of literature and writing style as previously described in chapters one to three, and more specifically how he influenced al- Manfaluti's style and choice of topics.

The Imam was born in 1849, in other words about twenty seven years before al- Manfaluti. He memorized the Qur'an and attended *al-Azhar* University, but was very disillusioned with its teachers and their teaching methods. He deeply felt like he had a mission in life: to guide the people to the straight path in religion. Amongst others, he met and studied under Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who would later also indirectly influence al-Manfaluti. It can be remembered that al-Afghani was a religious scholar, philosopher and revolutionary of the highest degree. His lectures were aimed at the revival of true Islam and urging the

[202] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat*, 3 vols.,1st edition, Beirut:Dar Ibn Hazm, vol.-I, p.23.

Muslims to resist occupation and to struggle against the European colonizers. He influenced the Imam to write with zeal on the reformation of society, politically, religiously and socially, in the newspapers. In turn, the Imam would in future influence al-Manfaluti (and also Sa'ad Zaghlul) in the same way. The common thread that ran through them was their conviction that "Islam was relevant to their own, and to every, generation; and that the Islamic nations should be free and command the respect of the West", and that "Islam was dynamic: its essentials were immutable eternal truth, but unessential externals could evolve to suit the changing environment" – the ethical code, for example, could bring about internal reform which, in turn, should lead to public virtue[203]. They all participated in the *Urabi* revolt, mentioned in various places previously, and were banished for a time. After the Imam's ban was lifted, he rose to many high positions in society, for example, *mufti* (a Muslim scholar who gives religious opinions and edicts) of Egypt, senior advisor to the courts of justice, and *mudir* (director) of *al-Azhar*. He would answer those Westerners who criticized Islam and its teachings, and corrected the wrong opinions his people had of their religion with eloquent articles in the newspapers. His Koranic commentary and his *Risala al-Tauhid* (are) still considered classics on the Islamic conception of God[204]. This commentary, no doubt, not only had an influence in Egypt, but in the whole Islamic world, being translated into French and Urdu, and being used by the Aligarh Muslim University in India and in Pakistani institutes as a textbook[205].

He initiated a new style of writing which al-Manfaluti would develop further in time to come. It was the Imam who took journalism

[203] Haywood, op. cit., pp.119&123.
[204] Ibid., p.123.
[205] Akawi, op. cit., p.150.

out of the circle of the ancient style of *saj'* and *badi'* to a sound and free style, a style which the populace could understand and relate to. He thus helped in the development of Arabic prose as far as form and topics were concerned. His style and topics suited, and were applicable to, the time and the environment in which he lived. Al-Manfaluti took over his ideas on charity and public spirit and another pupil, none other than Qasim Amin, would present women's emancipation as a burning issue for Muslim revival. The foremost two traits that the Imam implanted into al-Manfaluti and his other students were wisdom and courage[206].

Muhammad Abduh is recognized as the greatest religious reformer Egypt has known in modern times. He was insightful in the teachings and lofty aims of Islam, and boldly called for the emancipation from imitative thought and to the understanding of the religion in the way the former Muslims, like the companions of the prophet Muhammad and those who immediately came after them, did. He invited to the seeking of modern knowledge, for the religion does not contradict established and firm knowledge and facts. His call to study and research the secrets of the universe and its laws was revolutionary from a religious point of view and as far as its teachers, who remained chained and shackled to the ancient past, are concerned with his powerful personality and writings, he inspired men in religion, politics, sociology and philosophy[207]. He is, without exaggeration, regarded as the great reformer, especially in religion, who could reconcile himself, his people and their past with modern intellectual development[208].

Al-Manfaluti sat at the feet of his teacher for a period of ten

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[206] Akawi, op. cit., p.18.
[207] Ibid., p.12.
[208] Daif, op. cit., pp.218-27.

years, and was greatly impressed with him, for his knowledge, his morals and his concern for social and religious reform. In describing his lectures at *al-Zahra* he writes:

> The late Shaikh Muhammad Abduh used to read in the mosque of *al-Zahra* a lesson called *al-Tafsir* (an exegesis of the Qur'an) which really was a lesson about everything concerning man's present life and his life after death. In that lesson the man was an expositor of the Qur'an, a narrator of *Hadith* (words, deeds and approvals of the prophet Muhammad), a teacher and a preacher, in fact he was everything that a man could be[209].

Elsewhere in *al-Mukhtarat* al-Manfaluti describes him, saying:

> Muhammad Abduh – may God have mercy on him – was the most powerful writer and the most knowledgeable writer of our time, in fact I do not know any jurist since the time of the flourishing period of Islam who is more able in literature than him[210].

In his essay *al-Rishwa* (Bribery) he praises the Imam Muhammad Abduh's behaviour, moral excellence, and ability to rise above disgraceful behaviour. The Imam Muhammad Abduh loved, respected and admired his student too. In this regard, Abu al-Anwar quotes Professor Ahmad Hafiz:

> The Imam – may God have mercy on him – was very impressed with him (al-Manfaluti) and praised his intelligence and beautiful quick-wittedness and felt justified that he would be of those who benefit the most from his knowledge and of those who would most propagate his principles and teachings[211].

This prophesy of the Imam Muhammad Abduh would, as we have pointed out above and will discuss further, be realised in the ensuing years. It is said that al-Manfaluti was very sad when his mentor

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[209] Quoted in Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.41-42.
[210] Quoted in Al-Anwar, p.42.
[211] Ibid., p.42.

passed away. Immediately after his funeral he left Cairo for his hometown, al-Manfaluti, where he stayed for two years, without obtaining an international certificate and without considering attaining one in the future[212]. Qasim believes that his Shaikh contributed to a large extent to al-Manfaluti's sound and clear mind, his language usage, strong Islamic and Arabic culture, and inspired him to address social issues in literature, language and religion, his sound and firm Islamic belief, and his purity in sayings and deeds[213].

2.5.2: Al-Manfaluti and Sa'ad Pasha Zaghlul

Al-Manfaluti met Sa'ad Pasha through the Imam Muhammad Abduh, and there were two main reasons why their friendship would strengthen and be consolidated:

1. Sa'ad Pasha was, firstly, a good friend and had a warm relationship with the Imam. His political beliefs corresponded with al-Manfaluti, they were both conservative in their approach to social reformation, and used to clash with the radical national movement of Mustafa Kamil. They preferred, like many other shaikhs and educated people, the more moderate political approach of 'The Party of the Nation'.
2. Al-Manfaluti in his third essay since the publication of *al-Mu'ayyad*, defended Sa'ad Pasha against the National Party. He wrote an essay under the title *al-Liwa wa al-Uzama* (The Flag Bearer and the Powerful) in his weekly column, reiterating that those who criticize and insult Zaghlul exposed themselves. They were actually helping and supporting the enemy, namely the colonizing English, and were

[212] Qasim, Dr. Riyad, (2001). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Fi Sabil al-Taj.* Beirut: Mu'assasa Basasun, p.17.
[213] Ibid., P.17.

enemies of the great Egyptian personalities, belittling them instead of the odious and loathsome colonisers.

From that moment onwards, the friendship between the two would strengthen. Sa'ad was impressed with al-Manfaluti and would defend him on many occasions. As pointed out, too, al-Manfaluti illustrated his gratefulness to Sa'ad when he called him his *Wali amri* (Guardian of my affairs) in his dedication to *al-Nazarat* in 1910. Sa'ad was actually behind all of al-Manfaluti's sustenance by providing him with jobs with a good income, amongst others and, to a large extent, also behind all the criticism and enmity al-Manfaluti had suffered due to his open support of Zaghlul's political leanings.

The most important illustration of al-Manfaluti's love for Zaghlul were the essays he wrote on Egyptian issues. The readers of these articles feel as if al- Manfaluti wrote them with his blood for the sake of his leader and guardian. He called Zaghlul in it *Ya maulaya* (O my guardian). Previously, another deed of al-Manfaluti strengthened the bond between the two. He dedicated his story *Fi Sabil al-Taj* (For the Sake of the Crown) – published in June 1920 – to Zaghlul, when he wrote *Ila al-batl al-Misri al-azim Sa'ad Zaghlul Basha* (To the great Egyptian hero, Sa'ad Zaghlul Pasha)[214].

It is important to note that al-Manfaluti's love for Zaghlul was an expression of his nationalism and not the worshipping of a person. Although there were personal issues which bound the two, if one follows al-Manfaluti's writings one notices that Zaghlul represented for him the true symbol of real nationalism and struggle for truth. In various places in his *maqalat al-Qadiyya al- Misriyya* he pointed out that he did not love Zaghlul himself but loved him for his upright and

[214] Qasim, Dr. Riyad, (2001). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Fi Sabil al-Taj.* Beirut: Mu'assasa Basasun, p.33.

sincere principles[215].

As fate would have it, al-Manfaluti's death occurred the same day on which Zaghlul was attacked and assaulted. As such, the people did not feel, and did not react to, his death so much. Ahmad Shawqi referred to this coincidence when he wrote in an elegy for al- Manfaluti that it was as if he sacrificed his actual life for Zaghlul, that he had nothing more to give but his life. Hafiz Ibrahim pointed out in one of his poems that Sa'ad grieved at the passing away of a dear and sincere friend. Various other writers and poets elegized al-Manfaluti's death and the Arabic Scientific Society in Damascus held a commemoration party in his honour. The speeches and poetry said there, and some of al-Manfaluti's sayings were collected in a booklet that was published by Ahmad Abid in 1924[216]. Concerning his demise, Qasim reiterated that al-Manfaluti died in 1924 without seeing his country free and sovereign, and without its aspired hopes being realised. But his mental vision when he said in an essay in *al-Nazarat* addressed to Sa'ad "If its hopes are not realised today, then tomorrow" became true[217].

2.5.3: Al-Manfaluti and Shaikh Ali Yusuf

Shaikh Ali Yusuf, who was the most prominent journalist and the symbol of all Egyptian press in his time, opened the newspaper *al-Mu'ayyad* (The Corroborator) for al- Manfaluti. In doing so, he gave him the opportunity to practice his literary talent and to present a new style of writing to the public. During those difficult times, that was one

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[215] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.44.
[216] Qasim, Dr. Ryadh: ed. (2001). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Fi Sabil al-Taj*. Beirut: Mu'assasa Basasun, p.18.
[217] Quoted in Qasim, Dr. Riyad, ed. (2001). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Fi Sabil al-Taj*. Beirut: Mu'assasa Basasun, p.9.

of the greatest favours al-Manfaluti could receive. There were two reasons why he was pushed to write for that newspaper specifically and why he would choose to work for the *Shaikh*:

1. His teacher, Imam Muhammad Abduh, was intimately connected to *al-Mu'ayyad*. Shaikh Ali Yusuf, owner of the paper, was a very close friend of the Imam. He saw the Imam as the only person whom he could depend on to reform *al- Azhar*, except that the enmity between the king, al-Khidawi Abbas, and the Imam Muhammad Abduh was at its severest. Shaikh Ali, however, took the middle road between the two, remaining loyal to the Imam and not antagonizing the king. He used to inform Sa'ad Zaghlul and the Imam, as members of the 'Party of the Nation', about all the king's secrets and what the king despised of the Imam's deeds and opinions. The Shaikh, being a journalist, also knew about al- Manfaluti's relationship with the Imam, and it was said that the Shaikh was one of the people who pleaded with al-Khidawi to release al-Manfaluti from prison.

In addition, Sa'ad Zaghlul was closely related to the paper and its owner. Zaghlul was a supporter of the Imam and, consequently, the four men would become intimate friends. Sa'ad actually reserved this newspaper for the Shaikh and the latter would be greatly thankful to the former and would publish his gratitude in the pages of *al-Mu'ayyad*[218].

2. The owner and editor of the newspaper *al-Sa'iqa*, Ahmad Fu'ad, used to fiercely attack *al-Mu'ayyad* and Shaikh Ali Yusuf. So when al-Manfaluti started to write in *al-Mu'ayyad* (1907 onwards), the Shaikh lost no opportunity to answer Fu'ad through the talented pen and skill of al-Manfaluti. The way he defended the Shaikh and his newspaper endeared him to al-Manfaluti who would become its most prominent

[218] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.46-47.

columnist.

Al-Manfaluti's readership increased quickly and he would soon write the editorial column in the paper. The paper introduced him as *Li hadarat al-katib al-majid al-sayyid Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti* (By his Eminence, the Honourable Writer, Mr. Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti). He himself introduced his series of articles *Li 'alim kabir wa katib qadir* (By the Great Scholar and Respected Writer). Al-Manfaluti's essays caused the circulation of *al-Mu'ayyad* to increase manifold. Lovers of literature would await his essays eagerly every week. Al-Aqqad said that the most powerful writers at that time were Shaikh Ali Yusuf and Shaikh Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti.

It was thus no surprise that the relationship between the two men became very strong and it was no surprise, too, that al-Manfaluti defended *al-Mu'ayyad* and its Shaikh in many political battles and on historical occasions. Al-Manfaluti expressed the extent of his gratitude and respect towards the *Shaikh* when al-Manfaluti dedicated his book *al-Mukhtarat*, issued on 15 March 1912, to him, saying *Ila su'ada' al-ustadh al-sayyid Ali Yusuf* (To the distinguished Mr. Ali Yusuf)[219].

In another essay, actually an elegy for Shaikh Ali Yusuf, al-Manfaluti revealed the profound influence the Shaikh had had on him.

2.5.4: Al-Manfaluti's Culture and Education

First of all, al-Manfaluti's culture was Arabic and Islamic. This was the culture from which he derived his subtle and delicate senses, his fertile mind with which he would in time produce literature which satisfied delicate tastes, and his subject matter which he could present

[219] Quoted in Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.48-49.

to his readers in a new style, a style which was simple, but clear and effective.

Al-Manfaluti spoke about himself in his introduction to *al-Nazarat* and explained that he started to read literature as from the age of thirteen. What motivated him was his desire for and inclination towards literature, and that he depended on himself in his readings. Abu al-Anwar quotes from *al-Nazarat*:

> There was no one around me during that time who asked them (*al-Azhar* lecturers) for help in somebody's literature so much as I did because it was my first experience (with literature) and I did not yet reach the age of thirteen amongst those elderly type of *al-Azhar shaikhs*[220].

He mentioned that he depended on his special feelings ("the beating of his heart") when he weighed and compared the different literary works and styles. He chose what he found beautiful and discarded that which did not impress him: "My position was that of someone who listened to the beating of a drum – he chooses the melodious and rejects all other (tunes)". It was clear that he derived and based his literary works on his Arabic heritage, whether poetry or prose, because he wrote about (and quoted) many ancient works from various periods which he, for example, gathered in his *al-Mukhtarat*. He considered his formative years which he spent reading as the happiest time of his life, saying that after so many years he could still remember that period, and when he thought of it, he could feel sensations in his blood.

His literary works showed that he read most of the major literary sources in Arabic literature. He read the works of various periods, for example that of al-Jahiz, al-Jurjani, Abu Hilal al-Askari, Abu al-Faraj

[220] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.51.

al-Asbahani, Abu Ali al-Qali and Ibn Abd Rabbih, as well as the books of al-Mutanabbi, Abu Nawas, Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri, and so forth. He once said that he had read whatever he wanted of Arabic poetry and prose, present and past, in a thorough and insightful way.

In addition, he was the student of Imam Muhammad Abduh who was greatly involved with the science of Arabic rhetoric, and it was said that al-Manfaluti actually qualified at the hands of the Imam because he studied the two books *Asrar al-Balagha* (The Secrets of Rhetorical Literature) and *Dala'il al-Ijaz'*(The Evidence of Inimitability [of the Qur'an]) under the Imam. Furthermore, al-Manfaluti established a literature club at his house where various books from the earlier periods were read and discussed. He wrote an essay in 1906 in which he recorded the history of ancient and modern Arabic writing styles. This essay revealed his critical abilities and his extensive reading of Arabic literature throughout its various developmental stages.

His strong connection to the Arabic heritage enabled him to write in a novel style, a style free of *saj'* and *badi'*. Even in his early youth he used to read *Alf Laila wa Laila*, the biography of Saif bin Dhu Yazan, the wars of *Antara*, the events of *Abu Zaid* and the fables of *al-Jinn wa al-Shayatin*. He also read the Arabic literature of his contemporaries, and expressed his opinions about it in two famous essays *Tabaqat al-Shuara'* (The Categories of Poets) and *Tabaqat al-Kuttab* (The Categories of Writers).

Besides his Arabic culture, al-Manfaluti had his Islamic culture. This aspect of his life he did not neglect; on the contrary, he had a profound understanding of it and a great love for it. He was of the opinion that the knowledge of literature was the best means to understand the book of God (*al*-Qur'an) and *al-Sunna* (words, deeds and approvals of the prophet Muhammad). The essays he wrote on

Islam did not only reveal correct understanding of the *din* and a profound culture, but also an ability to debate and to defend Islam. This showed that he possessed a complete and perfect understanding of Islam. What helped him tremendously in his two cultures, the Arabic language and its literature and Islam, were his lively senses, fertile mind and keen observation.

Furthermore, he displayed an ardent interest in all kinds of modern culture and education. He spoke about the universe, astronomy, geology, ancient history, archaeology, and spoke like someone who knew what he was speaking about, often using modern technical terms.

Besides all of this, al-Manfaluti read many translations that included romantic short stories, classical plays, non-narrative literary texts, science books, and essays with technical definitions. He was able to write about what he heard or read in translations that showed that he had a good memory and that he was highly impressed with Western writers, especially from France. It is believed that had the man known a foreign language well, he would have played an even greater role in Arabic literary history[221].

2.6: Al-Manfaluti's Literary Life

As will be seen in the discussion of al-Manfaluti's literary life in this section, Al-Manfaluti was concerned with his land of birth, experienced the sufferings of his fellow citizens, and tried in words and deeds to guide his nation to the correct way of life. He was clear in his thoughts and expressions, whether in narratives or articles, identifying a

[221] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.51-55.

social problem, uncovering its reasons and consequences, and then writing about it in a way that reconciled the conservative and reformist tendencies. He was always positive in his assessments, believing that the religion of Islam was the only basis for sound and solid social thought and welfare. In his stories he inclined towards romanticism, describing in his sensitive and lugubrious style the condition of the less fortunate, miserable and oppressed in his society. To this end he used translations of French works that were filled with the qualities of moral virtue and which abounded with human suffering, sorrow and misery. Al-Manfaluti did with his prose what the poets did with their poetry. He carried in himself and in his prose style, the same feelings and emotions as those of a poet.[222] His style indicated sensitivity to the musical qualities and emotive power of words and his rhythmical, evocative, emotional, and sometimes repetitive prose (was) best appreciated aloud.[223]

As for his literary works, Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti produced the following:

1. *Al-Nazarat* (3 vols.)
2. *Mukhtarat al-Manfaluti*
3. *Majdulin*
4. *Al-Abarat*
5. *Fi Sabil al-Taj*
6. *Al-Shair*
7. *Al-Fadilah*

A brief analisis is made on each of these works, the main aim being to see what his topics were, why he wrote them, how his personality comes through in his writings, to show why his essays were good and

[222] Akawi, op. cit., p.28.
[223] Le Gassick, op. cit., pp.47-48.

popular, why his style was effective, the type of short stories he Arabicised and his views on social issues and how he used the stories to spread these views. The above mentioned works are discussed here in the chronological order of their publication.

2.6.1: *Al-Nazarat*

It is a selection of *rasa'il* (essays and articles) which the author wrote in the newspaper *Al-Mu'ayyad* and in other newspapers under the title *al-Nazarat* or other titles, and also the essays that he wrote, but did not publish. It also contains short pieces of poetry which he wrote in various newspapers and magazines.[224] Some of the stories are translations or adaptations from french and not works written by himself.[225]

In fact, the collection treats various aspects of life: social, literary, religious and political. It also includes the literary forms of *maqala* (essay) and *qissa* (story). He uses various literary styles to get his message over to the reader: the direct method, indirect method, the short story, the essay, report style and dialogue. He treats issues in an advisory and very truthful way, trying to move his society and its individuals to the highest levels of progress, superiority and usefulness.[226]

Al-Manfaluti's personality, both mental and emotional, and his manner of expression come across very clearly in the book. In describing the book, Harith al-Rawi says: "Although the book *al-Nazarat* is not noted for its depth and profound analysis, it does contain meditative and

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[224] Quoted in Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.59.
[225] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, p.10.
[226] Ibid., p.14.

contemplative reflections which at times penetrate deeply into man's inner self, and his opinions about reforming society do contain correct analyses and successful explanations and justifications".[227] This was a good description because al-Manfaluti himself said that the book was of the general story, fantasy and ideational type of books.[228]

Al-Manfaluti started to write *al-Nazarat* in the year 1907 and the first edition was published in 1910. It consisted of eight hundred and thirty one essays and twelve *qasida*s. He did not write "volume 1" or "part 1" on it, but it was regarded as such. Part 2 of *al-Nazarat* appeared on 15 May 1912 and part 3 in 1921.Part 1 was reprinted on 15 October 1913.[229] In his introduction to the book, al-Manfaluti wrote concerning the publication of the second edition:

> After that I did not look at the book once until I knew that I shall reprint it. I looked at it like a stranger (who has not read or seen the book previously). I was able to see its good (points) and its bad (points), so I omitted the unbeneficial from it, and added to it what I knew whose authenticity is better than (that which was) unconfirmed. I revised and refined many of its expressions and omitted of its mistakes, lapses and that which was unsuitable. So, the second edition was better than the first, more accurate and more beneficial.[230]

Towards the end of the introduction, he lists four things that helped him write, expressing the hope that lovers of literature would find benefit from it:

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[227] Quoted in Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.59.

[228] Quoted in Al-Anwar, p.59.

[229] Ibid., pp.59-60.

[230] Quoted in Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, pp.25-26.

1. He did not use unnecessary words, but used only words that had the required and desired meaning. He also did not imply other meanings with the words that he used, only their natural, normal meaning.

2. He did not have to exert himself very much when writing – he noticed, observed, thought, and then wrote and finally published. His writing would, unintentionally, gladden some people sometimes and anger other people at other times.

3. When he wrote on non-fictional or fictional issues, he used to mix the truth and reality with some imagination because he knew that truth without imagination did not have a significant effect on the listener or reader, and did not influence the heart.

4. He did not write to impress the readers, but rather to benefit them and to affect them.[231]

His essays were excellent from two angles: his style and the topic of the essay. As for style, it contained no *saj'* (rhymed prose) and *badi'* (rhetorical style) and colloquial Arabic. Although he read the works of many ancient writers, as was mentioned, he did not imitate them, but succeeded in becoming an innovative stylist. It is a style that touches the reader's heart and arouses his feelings. The topics of his essays deal with the social life in Egypt. Like his mentor, Imam Abduh, he strove for social reformation: he spoke about the wrongs in society like dancing, gambling, wine and the moral decline of the youth, poverty, wealth and the wealthy, the bad influence of certain western habits and customs, calling to moral excellence, mercy and compassion, and so forth. He took great care to do this with musical words, as if the people did not read with

[231] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, pp.180-182.

their eyes, but they heard the words with their ears before they reached their eyes.[232]

His style is also effective because he at times addresses the readers like *Imams* addresses their congregations in sermons from the pulpit: *Ayyuha al-Insan!* (O man!) and repeated imparativess, for example, *irham! Irham!* (show mercy! show mercy!). It is also clear that he was influenced by contemporary orators like Mustafa Kamil and Shaikh Muhammad Abduh. He wrote a lot about Islam and the Muslims, crying for the sad position they were in. He rebuked them for neglecting their religious duties and for disobeying the orders and prohibitions of the religion. In this context, he also blamed Western civilization for corrupting the morals of the young boys and girls.[233]

Many of al-Manfaluti's essays were not published in book form, but remained in newspapers, especially *al-Mu'ayyad*.[234] It is interesting to note that *al-Nazarat* was also published posthumously according to its topics, for example: *Ijtima'iyyat* (social), *Wajdaniyyat* (emotional/sentimental), *Ritha* (elegy), *Diniyyat* (religious), *Adabiyyat* (literary), *Siyasiyyat* (political), *Rasa'il* (epistles) and *Qisasiyya* (short stories). By far most of the essays were *Ijtimayiyyat* 46, followed by *wajdaniyyat* 13, *Diniyya* 7 and then *Ritha* 6. There are about 4 essays on *Adabiyyat,* 2 on *Siyasiyyat* and 1 *Risala.* The number of short stories amounted to about 25. Al-Jabi mentions seven articles that were omitted in the subsequent prints of volume 1.[235]

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[232] Daif, op. cit., pp.230-31.
[233] Ibid., pp.232-33.
[234] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.60.
[235] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, p.20.

2.6.2: *Mukhtarat al-Manfaluti*

This book was compiled to provide the growing children with a means to cultivate their literary skills. It consisted of literary selections from various literary periods. It covered the works of al-Manfaluti's favourite authors, and the great poets like Abu Tammam, Ibn Rumi and Abu al-'Ala. It is a collection of poems which al-Manfaluti chose for the school students. In addition there is prose for the benefit of the primary, secondary and the university students, so that they can know (Arabic) poetry, language, rhetoric and general literature. Al-Manfaluti gathered the best of poetry and prose, ancient and modern, and from every aspect of Arabic art and its aims, to benefit the students in refining their rhetoric and eloquence of their tongues, polishing of their mind, and to inform them about the advantages, favours, worth and importance of their language.[236]

The book did not actually represent a literary work of al-Manfaluti, but rather expressed his artistic sensibilities and taste in selection. It was published on 15 March 1912, two months before part 2 of *al-Nazarat* was published. Only one volume was printed and circulated. Some erudite scholars used this compilation as a reference work in their literary productions. This indicated that they had great confidence in its accuracy and reliability.[237]

The collection consists of 23 essays in which al-Manfaluti gives his opinions about the Egyptian society in particular and the Arab society in

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[236] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, pp.10-11.
[237] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.60.

general. It also contains some of his complaints about political and social issues.

Looking at some of the essays, we find that the opening one is about his extreme stand against drinking and gambling and his belief that they are the basis for all crime that threatens the security and peace of a society. The essays and stories about these two vices in society portray the consequences and fate of anyone who follows this road. The alcoholic hero would lose his mind and enter an institution for the mentally sick. Most of the stories on social issues contained his firm belief and message to the society.

He further expresses his opinion in the essay *al-Hijab* saying that the wearing of the *hijab* must be adhered to, because discarding it would drag the society into serious problems. Consequently, no comparison must be made between the Egyptian and European women for the circumstances in Eastern and Western societies are totally different.[238]

Al-Hijab is a social essay written in the form of a story that the author wrote in the context of the debates that raged between the conservatives and the reformers. It treats the issue of the wearing of *hijab* of which the writer was a staunch and enthusiastic supporter. In the story the hero, who was an ardent supporter and propagator of discarding the veil, leaves his wife free to mix with his friends and to socialize with men as she wished, until it finally ended with the author's intended message, namely, that the wife cheated the husband with his closest friend. The author even goes further by ending the story in his customary dramatic way, making the husband commit suicide on discovering his wife's

[238] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Mukhtarat*. Beirut: Maktaba al-Ma'arif, pp.996-1003.

deception. Al-Manfaluti in this essay depicts the ill-effects of abolition of *hijab*.

In the essay *al-Ba'th* (The Resurrection), al-Manfaluti imagines that the famous, incisive philosopher and humanist Abu al-A'la al-Ma'arri (973-1057), author of *Saqt al-Zand* and *Risalat*, returns to life for three days after living for eighty years. He acted as al-Manfaluti's guest, and he made use of the opportunity to discuss with Abu al-A'la his opinions about food, clothes, drink, and human being's relationship with people and other creations.

Al-Manfaluti ends his essays on wealth and the wealthy, with the firm opinion that encouraging one another to seek wealth is the greatest disease and the reason for all declines, and yet the Egyptians still make wealth their dream. Then he emphasizes that the quest after money is a concern in every human society, even to the extent where individuals in societies go to war and fight one another to death. No one has mercy on the other, and the blood of honour, virtue and righteousness flows under the feet of the adversaries. Under such circumstances, the attainment of happiness is impossible, because happiness is inner calmness, peace of mind and a noble heart. A person must see with his own eyes the fruits of his efforts, like a farmer feels proud, happy and pleased at the sight of the greenness and growth of a plant which he himself had planted and watered with the sweat of his forehead.[239]

2.6.3: *Majdulin*

[239] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Majmu al-Kamila*. 2nd edition, Lebanon: Mu'assasa al-Ma'arif, p.934.

This story arabized by al-Manfaluti, appeared in two stages. Some of it was published as an addendum to *al-Nazarat* on 15 May 1912. Al-Manfaluti wrote in the forward that it was taken from the French story by Alfons Karr (1808-1890) called *Sous le Tilleul* (Under the Zizyphus Tree). The author relied on the epistolary style of narration to relate the unfolding of events in the story, leaving the imagination to play a vital role in the dynamics of the characters in the natural environment that the author loved and that he had made the fundamental milieu of his story.

After praising the author and his story, al-Manfaluti explained how he arabized it. Al-Manfaluti listened to his friend, the learned Muhammad Fu'ad Bek Kamal, who translated to him the aims and meaning of the story. He then proceeded to write what he had heard without abiding to the original, adding and omitting, and changing the order of events wherever he found necessary. His wish was fulfilled when the whole story was published as an independent book.[240] It is related that al-Manfaluti told the translator what he needed because the romantic leanings that he had, like Alfons Karr, were present in the stories. The concepts of virtue, justice, help for the poor, and criticism of the wealthy, were also found in the translations. He however, wrote it anew in an easy and flowing style, taking complete freedom with the run of events, and with moral messages, advice and instructions.

Al-Manfaluti was attracted to Alfons Karr's story due to the clear call and invitation to hold onto the values of truth, goodness and beauty that are personified in a simple, countryside environment. The events of the story unfold in the countryside that is distinguished by its simplicity, spontaneity, truthfulness, sincerity and determination; in other words, the same type of environment from which al-Manfaluti

[240] Al-Anwar, op. cit., pp.61-62.

originated. This life is contrasted with life in the city, a life based on deception, lies, cheating and hypocrisy, where mankind gathers wealth without due concern for the most basic principles of moral values. The story tries to emphasize that the sharp difference between the rural and urban environment leads to an even sharper difference in the understanding of happiness: the one believes that happiness is the result of mankind's reconciliation, adaptability and conformity with their real, natural environment that they find themselves in; the other one believes that money is the key to happiness, irrespective of the methods used to earn it.[241]

Al-Manfaluti dispersed his advice and guidance, which agreed with the understanding of morals in his environment, throughout the story, because most of his readers were young girls and boys from Egypt and other Arab countries.

This is a story about human emotions in the field of love. Simultaneously it uncovered the role which separation between two lovers plays in life. Each one saw the quest for happiness in a different way. Poverty prevented the young, sincere man in love from winning the love of the girl who was fascinated with the glitter of life. She met another man, a deceiving friend of the youth who loved her, but she would soon discover her love for the first man. She realized that love is something much loftier than the cheap, worldly things that she had lost within a day and night. It dawned on her that she was running after a deceptive mirage and that she was unable to achieve happiness through worldly chattels. Due to her wrong understanding of love and happiness, she had lost everything: wealth, marriage, love and, ultimately, life. The man who loved her was eaten up by sadness and

[241] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Majmu al-Kamila*, 2nd edition, Lebanon: Mu'assasa al-Ma'arif, p.460.

suffering until he sacrificed his own life out of love and faith next to his beloved's grave.

More particularly, the story is basically about a boy named Estafan who stemmed from a middle class family and who loved reading and music. By nature he was an introvert and found happiness by avoiding people. He left his home to live in a humble room when his mother died and his father remarried. There he fell in love with the daughter of the house owner Majdulin. She reciprocated the affection and changed his view of life and filled his heart with hope and happiness. They met frequently in different places, like on the riverbank, under the zizyphus tree in the middle of the house's garden, or at the lake near the house. They dreamed of the future life that they would lead together and about the house with a garden filled with zizyphus trees that they would own.

Their happiness was shattered by the girl's father who maintained that the boy was not suitable for her. He ordered Estafan to leave the house. The two lovers met for the last time, exchanging vows of loyalty and strands of hair that would be rings on their fingers until they would meet again.

The separation between Majdulin and Estafan was physical only. Their spiritual relationship remained strong through the love letters that they exchanged. Estafan returned to his father's house where the latter wanted him to marry a wealthy girl. He refused, being still in love with Majdulin and out of anger his father threw him out of his house, with the instruction not to return. The young man went to search for work, hoping to gather enough money to realize his and Majdulin's shared dreams.

Estafan met a man, Edward, who was about to inherit a great amount of money, and the two became friends. In the meantime,

Majdulin met a girl, Suzanne, who taught her the ways of the wealthy. Majdulin got used to wearing jewellery and expensive clothes and to mix with Suzanne's rich acquaintances. She confided in Suzanne about her love for Estafan. Suzanne wanted her to marry Edward who could make her happy with his huge inheritance.

The days passed and Estafan inherited a huge sum of money from one of his uncles. He hurriedly bought a house, with a garden containing zizyphus trees, and went to Majdulin to surprise her. He discovered that his love was engaged to Edward and on her finger was her fiancée's diamond ring instead of his lock of hair that she had promised would remain there until her death.

Estafan lost his mind, neglected himself, and was put into a mental asylum where he thought of committing suicide. Majdulin and Edward visited him and confirmed that the two of them would get married. Estafan buried himself in music and became very skilful at it. As for Edward, his relationship with his wife Majdulin soured, and his financial position deteriorated. He lost all his money in gambling and drinking and was declared insolvent. He had to sell his castle, and eventually committed suicide far from his wife's side. Majdulin, who was expecting a baby, had to sell her father's house in order to settle her husband's debts.

As the days passed, Majdulin did not lead a good life. She returned to Estafan who, she discovered, still loved her. He helped her look after her daughter, but his pride prevented him from marrying her. He would not forgive her for what she had accused him of nor for what she did to him. Majdulin eventually committed suicide in the river where they used to meet. Estafan too took his own life soon afterwards. They were buried in the same grave, thereby uniting in death even as

they were separated in life.[242]

Majdulin was received with much excitement after its issue because the majority of readers were highly impressed with it. Many letters were written to the press by prominent people expressing the impact which the story had made on them. They dubbed it 'The Egyptian Majdulin'.[243]

2.6.4: *Al-Abarat* (The Tears)

This book appeared in 1915 and is a collection of short stories, some of them were al-Manfaluti's own compositions and some were based on translated material. Al-Manfaluti arabized a group of short stories of some French writers, added some of his own compositions, and published them under the name *al-Abarat*. All the stories of this collection, as the name suggests are sad and melancholic. Al-Manfaluti's aim was to use the *qissa* as a means to treat certain topics, to involve the reader's feelings and sensibilities, and to spread his ideas and opinions. Therefore, the stories did not strictly follow the artistic principles of the fiction.[244]

Al-Manfaluti undoubtedly spoiled the French stories with his arabization because he changed the original as if he thought the *qissa* was a group of essays without a structure. The stories lacked some imagination, precision in observation of life events, experience in characterization, and twists in the plots. However, what distinguishes these short stories is his purity of style, a style that made his essays popular amongst the youth of his time.

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[242] Al-Manfaluti, Mustafa Lutfi (n.d.). *Al-Majmu'a al-Kamila li Mu'allafat Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti*. Beirut: Dar al-Jail, pp.667-889.
[243] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.62.
[244] Ibid., p.62.

As was his custom, al-Manfaluti dedicated these stories to all the wretched in the world. He says:

> The wretched in the world are many, and it is not in the power of a miserable person like me to remove even a little of their suffering and misery. The least I can do is to present them with this *al-Abarat* in the hope that they will find in my tears for them consolation, solace and comfort.[245]

The stories which he himself wrote are *al-Yatim* (The Orphan), *al-Hijab* (The Veil), *al-Hawiya* (The Abyss) and *al-Iqab* (Obstacles). The stories he got translated through his friend and adapted to Arabic are *al-Shuhada* (The Martyrs), *al-Dhikra* (The Memoirs), *al-Jaza* (The Reward) and *al- Dahiyya* (Catastrophe). *Al-Iqab* is based on a translated American story called 'The Cry of the Grave'.[246] As in most of his stories, these stories also portray, as the name *al-Abarat* indicates, the sadness, grief, disappointment and wretchedness of the heroes and heroines. Al-Manfaluti's magical style and skill at describing the feelings and sensibilities of the characters in poignant, distressing and heart- rending situations again comes to the fore. He excelled in winning the readers over and making them participate in liberally shedding tears for the victims of circumstances. The news paper *al-Muqtataf* praised these efforts of al-Manfaluti, saying:

> He is of our best writers, and we thank him for writing literary narratives that give the reader great enjoyment, and his beneficial advice on morals and (for giving them) a glimpse of the (beauty of the Arabic) language.[247]

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[245] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Abarat*. 2nd edition, Beirut: Maktaba al-Ma'arif, p.825.
[246] Qasim, Dr. Riyad, ed. (2001). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Abarat*. Beirut: Mu'assasa Basasun, p.29.
[247] Quoted in Jabbur, Dr. Jibrail Sulaiman, ed. (1983). *Mu'allafat Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Al-Abarat*. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, p.X.

2.6.5: *Fi Sabil al-Taj* (For the Sake of the Crown)

This story appeared on the first of June 1920. It is based on, or rather adapted from the play *Pour la Couronne* which was written by the French writer Francois Coppee. As with *Majdulin*, his friend Muhammad Fu'ad Bek Kamal translated the French version for him.

The story also has an introduction in which al-Manfaluti provides some background to the events that would unfold in the story. The introduction is followed by a dedication to his political mentor Sa'ad Zaghlul. He calls him 'The Egyptian Hero'. In it he compares the bravery, steadfastness, determination, sincerity, zeal and sacrifices of Zaghlul to that of the hero of the story, Constantine.

The story described the struggle of a people against the usurping aggressors, the struggle of the self when it is confronted with sacrifice, either for its country or for its family, and the struggle of the self when it must choose between the reputation, dignity and honour of family and personal honour and life. Eventually the love of country would triumph over love of family so that the country can remain secure and safe, and love of family would triumph over love of self when the hero sacrificed his own life by preferring to go to the guillotines instead of telling the truth which would have exposed his father as a traitor, and even though he knew that his father was already dead.

The setting of the story was the Balkans where the Balkanians defended their country. One of the main characters was Bishop Etienne who was, in al-Manfaluti's words, "the most superior in intelligence, the most knowledgeable and the most powerful in controlling the army and the populace".[248] He gathered the army and people, and urged King

[248] Quoted in Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Majmu al-Kamila*. 2nd edition, Lebanon: Mu'assasa al-Ma'arif, p.402.

Milovich to revolt against the occupying Turks.

After the King's death, two persons were qualified to lead the country, namely Etienne and the army general, Michel Brancomir. The people chose Etienne as their new king, leaving Brancomir in control of the army.

Brancomir had a son called Constantine, and when his wife died, he married a very beautiful woman, a Greek by the name of Bazilid. She was so beautiful and desirable that she took possession of his whole heart and all his feelings.

One of the Turkish leaders was able to encourage Bazilid to try and install her husband as king. War broke out when the Turkish army set fire to the frontline borders, no one knowing when it would end and what the consequences would be.

Due to her cunningness and her power, Bazilid was able to convince her husband to make an attempt on the king's life. Michael went to the frontier in a knight's uniform to execute his treason. Constantine learned from a gypsy lady whom he saved from a Turkish soldier who had accosted and molested her about his father's plan and went to the frontier to persuade him to abandon his mission. The father refused and the son killed him with his sword. When the Balkan soldiers discovered their general's corpse, they thought that he had died bravely fighting the enemy in the battle and regarded him a martyr. They established a monument for him as an immortal remembrance.

Despite her husband's death, the woman continued in her endeavour to get, this time, her son Constantine on the throne, oblivious to the fact that he killed his father for his treachery. When he eventually told her what had really happened, she became very upset and vowed to avenge her husband's death. She informed the king that her son Constantine wanted to commit treason to his

country. This is where Constantine is faced with a dilemma: he must either admit the truth and then his father's reputation as a national hero and martyr will be ruined, or he must be killed on the guillotine and then be regarded as a traitor of his country. He preferred to sacrifice himself for the sake of his father's reputation and the honour of his family.

The real truth would surface shortly before the death of Bazilid, namely after thirty five years. The people only then realized that the real hero and martyr was the son Constantine.

2.6.6: *Al-Shair* (ThePoet)

This story is based on the play *Cyrano de Bergerac* by the great French writer Edmond Rostand. It is one of the world's most wonderful plays. Al-Manfaluti discovered this story when he was entrusted by Dr Muhammad Abd al- Salam al-Jundi to revise and rectify its translation for an acting group[249]. He published it in Ramadan 1339 AH, corresponding to May 1921[250].

Al-Manfaluti thus changed the play genre to that of a short story. In his introduction to this work, he says:

> I have tried to abide by the original in its entirety, and controlled myself to only remove sentences that were of no importance or added only expressions that were necessary for the context. He who reads the Arabicized version is reading the actual French original … I changed it from a play into a short story so that the reader can see it on paper as the audience sees it in the theatre.[251]

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[249] Jabbur, Dr. Jibrail Sulaiman, ed. (1983). *Mu'allafat Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Al-Sha'ir*. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, p.5.
[250] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.63.
[251] Jabbur, Dr. Jibrail Sulaiman, ed. (1983). *Mu'allafat Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Al-Sha'ir*. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, p.6.

As has also become al-Manfaluti's norm in most of his stories, he included a dedication saying:

> *Ila al-Shu'ara'* (To all Poets) – The composer of this story is a poet, its hero is a poet, most of its characters are poets, and its topic is poetry and literature. Its lesson and consideration is that the poetic self is the most beautiful thing in the world and the most eloquent picture of creation that a great painter's brush paints… I therefore dedicate this to the poets, for they are its (the painted picture's) men, its heroes, and its people of consequence. I do not ask them more reward for it than (the reward) to see in their social and literary life: Cyrano de Bergerac.[252].

Al-Manfaluti in this work includes a detailed description of all of the main characters (10 in all) which helps the reader to understand the roles they would play in all the various stages of the story[253]. What is noticeable about his style in this story is that it is relatively easier than any of his other stories. He refrains from repeating sentences with the same meaning and chooses easy words (compared to his choice of words which are at times obscure and ancient, and which are not in use any more). Everything about the story was near and dear to his heart: the author was a poet, the main characters were poets or loved poetry, the topics were poetry and literature, and the main theme was about virtue and high morals.

This story is about a fine, young French girl, called Roxanne, who loved poetry and literature. She was from a noble, wealthy family, and many noble men and army generals were infatuated with her. Her cousin, Cyrano de Bergerac, was also in love with her, but due to a deformed appearance, namely an unusually large nose, he never declared his love for her. Cyrano had a friend, called Christian, in the

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[252] Jabbur, Dr. Jibrail Sulaiman, ed. (1983). *Mu'allafat Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Al-Sha'ir*. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, p.4.
[253] Ibid., pp. 7-20.

same army division. Christian was attractive, but slow-witted, unintelligent, not good with words, and had no taste for beauty and art. Roxanne was attracted by Christian's good looks and tried to win his love. She confided in her cousin, Cyrano, who, despite the love for her which he hid deeply in his heart and which he was scared to divulge, tried to help her in her quest to win Christian's affection. He thought that in that way there would remain a relationship between him and Roxanne. Cyrano would tell Christian what to say to Roxanne and would write, on his behalf, love letters that aroused her feelings. In other words, Cyrano was using Christian's beauty to convey his emotions and feelings to the heart of his cousin, Roxanne.

It so happened that the commander of the two young men's army division was also infatuated with Roxanne. After a few incidents, their leader, out of revenge, sent both of them to the frontier where the war was raging fiercely. Cyrano continued writing love letters on Christian's behalf to Roxanne from the frontier. Christian once discovered Cyrano's teardrop on a letter and realised that his friend was also in love with Roxanne. He told Cyrano that Roxanne did not love him for his handsome body, but for his beautiful spirit that she saw in his words and love letters. He decided to inform the girl about the truth and to get out of her life. Fate would have it that he went onto the battlefield and was killed with the first volley of enemy fire. Cyrano continued to lead his troops to victory over the enemy just as the latter seemed to be winning the battle.

After the war, Cyrano met Roxanne occasionally to console her over their friend's demise. He himself was seriously injured, but Roxanne was not aware of it. When the injury worsened and he was nearing his end, Cyrano asked to read the last letter that Christian had sent to her. When she heard the words and expressions, she realised

that they were the same as those that were uttered to her by Christian more than fifteen years ago and afterwards in different places. It then dawned upon her that the words in all those letters were Cyrano's and that it was his beautiful spirit she was in love with. Cyrano breathed his last and died in his cousin's arms. She embraced his dead body and begged him for forgiveness, crying, "How wretched I am! In my life I have loved one person and have lost him twice!"[254].

It is a story about the most precious and noblest of human attributes, namely sacrifice. The young man Cyrano, a soldier and poet, made one of the most wonderful sacrifices for his beloved, the daughter of his uncle. He helped her in the love that she had chosen, so that she could be happy and satisfied. This love dominated all aspects of his life, and the rare and precious sacrifice he had made for the sake of this love, exhausted his energies. Eventually the girl would discover that what she had actually loved were the talents of her cousin. At that moment the wide, vast horizons of the gigantic sacrifice which her cousin had offered her, opened in front of her, but then it was too late. She discovered her ignorance, and realized what was hidden from her sight, far away, in the depths of her great knight and noble poet.

2.6.7: *Al-Fadila* (Moral Excellence)

Al-Manfaluti took this story from *Paul et Virginie* by the famous French writer Bernardin de St. Pierre (b. 1727). It was published in 1787 and was regarded as so great and popular that De St. Pierre was

[254] Jabbur, Dr. Jibrail Sulaiman, ed. (1983). *Mu'allafat Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Al-Sha'ir*. Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, pp. 21-350.

awarded a medal of honour by emperor Napoleon Bonaparte[255]. Al-Manfaluti arabicized it by using two translations, the one by Muhammad Uthman Jalal and the other one by Farah Antun[256]. It was Mahmud Khayrat al-Muhami who translated it from the original for al-Manfaluti[257]. The story was published in 1923 and was al-Manfaluti's last literary work.

As with most of his stories, al-Manfaluti wrote a dedication for this too. This one was dedicated to the young girls and boys of Egypt. Al-Manfaluti wrote:

> What impresses me about a male youth is his bravery and boldness, and about a female youth is her behaviour and modesty, because the bravery of a young man is the foundation of all of his behaviour and manners, and the modesty of a young lady is her one and only beauty. So I dedicate this narrative to the young females and males of Egypt, so that both groups can benefit from the trait which I would love to see in them, and so that they can build their future life on the principle of *fadila* (virtue) as did Paul and Virginia[258].

As with *Majdulin*, the original story fascinated al-Manfaluti because its events took place in the countryside and village environment similar to that where he grew up, and because its characters personified the virtues of goodness, truth, and beauty. He even wrote an ode about the two main characters at the end of the story by the same title 'Paul and Virginia'[259].

With its original author the book excelled with nature, and with al-Manfaluti it excelled in virtue, because the heroine preferred death to

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[255] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Majmu al-Kamila*. 2nd edition, Lebanon: Mu'assasa al-Ma'arif, p. 602.
[256] Al-Anwar, op. cit., p.63.
[257] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, p.8.
[258] Tarad, Majid, ed. (1997). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Fadila*. Beirut: Maktaba al-Ma'arif, p. 9.
[259] Ibid., PP.170-71.

life, and did not accept committing a deed which contradicted high morals, even in a moment when committing that deed is legal and natural. During the narration al-Manfaluti spread, like he did in most of his translations, his nationalist, social and moral ideas and opinions[260]. In the 1997 edition Majid Tarad includes a short biography, written by Mahmud Khairat, of Bernardin de St. Pierre[261].

According to Bernardin de St. Pierre, the story is based on real events. The author visited the island of Mauritius with its breath-taking natural beauty as part of his military duties, and happened to stumble on a ruined hut. He was captivated by this scene and reflected on it. An old man informed him that this hut belonged to two French *mesdames*, Margaret and Helen. The former was the lover of a man from the nobility class in France who made her pregnant and she travelled to Mauritius to hide her shameful deed. There she gave birth to a boy and named him Paul. She repented for her sin and led the rest of her life a virtuous woman. Helen was a woman from a noble family who did not approve of her marriage to a man from a poor family. She and the man escaped to Mauritius. Not long afterwards, the man passed away and Helen gave birth to their daughter, naming her Virginia.

The two ladies were friends and lived together in the same hut, weaving and working in the fields as was the custom in Mauritius. They raised the two children to love virtue and the doing of good until they were teenagers. Virginia's mother, Helen, received a letter from her elderly, noble, wealthy aunt informing her to return to France because she had decided to bequeath all her wealth to her niece, Virginia. The latter refused to leave because she and Paul were in love. The town's mayor and the family priest would eventually persuade

[260] Al-Anwar, op. cit., PP.63-64.
[261] See Tarad, Majid, ed. (1997). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Fadila*. Beirut: Maktaba al-Ma'arif, pp.11-17.

Virginia to go to France, and after three days she departed on the earliest available ship.

Three years had passed and Paul heard no news from his girlfriend. He learned to read and write, and worked towards sailing to France where he could find work as a servant and to meet up with his beloved who promised him that she would return to him no matter how long it took. However, a letter from Virginia was received, informing her mother that she was on her way back to Mauritius because her aunt threw her out of her castle as she refused to marry a rich man they had chosen for her. As the ship was approaching the Mauritian coast, she was prevented from docking due to a fierce storm that was blowing on the island. Virginia was able to send a message, stating that she was on board the ship and that they would meet the next day, with a sailor. During the night, however, the storm became fiercer; the boat was thrown against huge boulders and destroyed. People on the shore witnessed everything. Paul tried in vain to reach his beloved who was returning to him. Just before the boat sank, a sailor tried to save Virginia, asking her to take off her dress so that he could carry her on his back to the shore. She refused to be carried naked on his body. A massive wave hit the boat and threw the sailor into the ocean. Everyone on board drowned.

Paul went literally mad with sadness and grief. He spent the next few days lost in thought, wandering around aimlessly, lonely and sad, until he came to Virginia's grave after eight days and committed suicide in order to join his most beloved in heaven. After less than a month, the two mothers also passed away to join their two children. That hut remained without inhabitants ever since[262]

[262] Tarad, Majid, ed. (1997). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Fadila*. Beirut: Maktaba al-Ma'arif, pp.19-169.

2.6.8: Al-Manfaluti's Poems

To give a full picture of al-Manfaluti and his literary works, one must mention that he also has a large collection of poems to his credit. Most of them were first published in newspapers and magazines. Al-Manfaluti started his writing career with a collection of odes. The majority of the poems belonged to the category of romanticism which he wrote at the beginning of his writing career (and) part of it was published by Ahmad 'Abid in his book *Mashahir Shuara' al-Sha'ir* (Famous Contemporary Poets)[263]. The book by Bassam Abd al-Wahhab al-Jabi contains a selection of his poetry which is, according to al-Jabi, "a few (poems) of many, and a drop in the large ocean"[264]. But as Qasim says his poetic inclinations came forth in his inimitable prosaic style[265].

Returning to al-Manfaluti's greatest asset as a writer, namely his style, one can notice that he did not address the reader with the tongue only or used embellished sentences or dry words; on the contrary, his discourse came from the heart and the words touched the heart and soul of the reader, for he did not use words unnecessarily – only those that brought out his required meaning – and he did not look for word meanings other than what he intended. His words were very natural and he chose them in such a way as to be suitable and effective. This was the secret of his writing and distinguishing style: he used his natural aptitude and disposition and artistic skill to imitate together. As

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[263] Tarad, Majid, ed. (2003). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Majmu al-Kamila*. 2nd edition, Lebanon: Mu'assasa al-Ma'arif, p.8.
[264] Al-Jabi, Bassam Abd al-Wahhab, ed. (2002). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: al-Nazarat.* 3vols.,1st edition, Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm. Vol. –I, p.56.
[265] Qasim, Dr. Riyad. ed. (2001). *Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti: Fi Sabil al-Taj*. Beirut: Mu'assasa Basasun, p.28.

far as his sentences and expressions were concerned, his formula was to describe and to make crystal clear, and by mixing reality and imagination. Combining this with an appeal to the emotions in a melancholy, pensive and somber tone, we can understand why the youth responded and accepted his writings enthusiastically and why young and old read his stories with wonder and awe, and wanted to imitate his style.

The stories discussed above illustrate his romantic leanings and his preoccupation with the suffering of the weak and wretched, and show why he could elicit the empathy of his readers. The trait which distinguishes him the most from previous short story writers and his contemporaries was his sad, grievous and painful leanings because not one of his stories has a happy ending; on the contrary, every story ends with the death of its main characters – sometimes even four people die at once as can be seen in some of his translations. The possible reason for that were the prevailing 'tragic-romantic' leanings of that period or his personal sad and melancholy nature. He himself said that he views life as the abode of the wretched and suffering, the place of pain and sadness, and the best and sincerest people to talk about them are the suffering and the wretched[266]. They also show how he spread his social, economic and political ideas and opinions in his stories. These ideas and opinions will be discussed in more detail in the succeeding chapter.

[266] Buqari, op. cit., p.85.