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The origins of the modern Arabic novel can be traced to a long process of cultural revival and assimilation, referred to in Arabic as the ***Nahdah***, or Renaissance. Characteristic of this period were two distinct trends. The Neo-Classical movement sought to rediscover the literary traditions of the past, and was influenced by traditional literary genres such as the maqamah and the *Thousand and One Nights*. In contrast, the modernist movement began by translating Western works, primarily novels, into Arabic. Poetry has always been its most prominent genre, but there is also an ancient tradition of narrative that expresses itself in a wealth of different oral forms. It Egypt, the collection of stories called *The Arabian Nights*, a series of tale of Indian, Iranian, and Iraqi origin was brought to its final and most developed form.

In my work, I have identified some of the most significant contributors to the development of the novel in Egypt, involving contributors from other countries. It needs mentioning here that Egypt was chosen to provide a model for the earliest phases in the development of a novelistic tradition in the Arabic-speaking world because **historical**, geographical, and cultural factors combined to make it, the Arabic-speaking society most conductive to the advancement of the novel genre during the period under discussion.

Such as the variety of themes and the major part of novels that make up **Naguib Mahfouz's total output** that it is hardly surprising his life and works, which I made an elaboration in my work, he is accorded as central position in this lengthy survey of the themes in modern Arabic Novel, I found his career marks the establishment of the genre as a centrally important player in the cultural life of the Arab World. With the award of the **Nobel Prize** in Literature to him in **1988** it clearly becomes necessary to consider his role in the development of the novel genre in Arabic with the chapters follows up in detail.

It has also found that, how all the three **historical novels** bear the marks of an apprentice artist who, even when he finished the third of them, had not yet

completely mastered the tools of his craft. Had Mahfouz stopped writing then, these novels would not have earned his name a lasting place in the annals of modern Arabic letters and would themselves have long been forgotten today. The fact, however, remains that these novels provide a valuable glimpse into the mind of the young Mahfouz. Thus, while their consideration form this viewpoint is bound to be a largely fruitful practice, it may prove immensely rewarding to look in them for the beginning of his later themes, characters and, to a lesser extent, techniques. This is what I have done here.

The 1st chapter of my research work is **THE ARABIC NOVEL IN EGYPT: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.** The following is the brief of my findings of this chapter:

Five important factors contributed to **The birth of the Egyptian novel**, in modern period; 1) the influence of European literature, where the novel developed into a major genre in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; 2) the establishment of Egyptian printing works and pressrooms in the nineteenth century along with the rise of newspaper production; 3) public education and the spread of literacy; 4) a gradual liberation from oppression by foreign powers, starting with the reign of Muhammad Ali in the aftermath of the Napoleonic occupation in the early 1800s; and 5) the emergence of an intellectual class with broad international learning.

Al-Nahdah (the movement of cultural renaissance which began in earnest during the 19th century) is the basis of this process, although some of its roots can be traced to an earlier period. The concept of *Nahdah* in Arabic literary criticism is a "rising up" or revitalization, an awakening of old literary traditions. The term also refers to creativity, new syntheses, modernization, dynamic experiments, and progress.

Thus, at the beginning of 1820s, Muhammad Ali, an Ottoman soldier from Albania, sent missions of young Egyptians to Europe, initially to Italy but later primarily to France. Rifa'ah Rafi' al-Tahtawi (1801-1873) was chosen to accompany one of these early missions to Paris as *imam*. After a stay of five years

in France, he wrote his famous work, *Takhlis al-ibris fi talkhis Bariz*, a description of life in France that included accounts of dress, food, government, laws, and many other topics. It serves as one of the very first examples of a whole series of narratives in which Arab visitors to Europe have recorded their impressions. In fact, the subject has served as the framework for a series of novels which have appeared during the course of the twentieth century by Tawfique al-Hakim, Taha Husayn, Yahya Haqqi, Suhayl Idris, al-Tayyib Salih, and Abd al-Munif etc.

A whole series of writers, who have contributed to the **development** of Arabic narrative literature, **especially in Egypt**, I am going to cite just a few examples here: Butrus al-Bustani (1819-83) came under the influence of Cornelius Van Dyke, An American missionary and helped in the translation of the Bible into Arabic. He also wrote a dictionary, *Muhit al-Muhit*, and the larger part of an encyclopedia, *Da'irat al-Ma'arif*, on which he was working at the time of his death. Nasif al-Yaziji (1800-1871) is credited as being the pioneer in reinvestigation of the great works of Arabic literature from the past. He read the *maqamat* of the eleventh century prose writer al-Hariri in the French edition of Sylvestre De Sacy and was thus inspired to write a set of his own entitled *Majma' al-Bahrayn*. Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq (1804-1887) was also much influenced by the classical tradition and the renewed interest in the history of the Arabic language when he came to write his famous work, *al-Saq 'ala al-saq fima huwa al-Faryaq*. The puns rhymes within the title and the complex language employed in certain chapters provide abundant evidence of Shidyaq's interest in, and dept to, earlier examples of elaborate prose.

Among the experiments in the development of modern Arabic fiction in the Syrio-Lebanese region, the works of Faransis Marrash (1836-73) and Salim al-Bustani (1848-84) deserve mention. In 1865 he published in Aleppo a work entitled *Ghabat al-haqq* (The Forest of Truth), a highly idealized, philosophical work, which is essentially an allegory about freedom. Salim al-Bustani, eldest son of above mentioned Butrus al-Bustani, began the crucial process of attracting a

readership for historical fiction with a series of novels published in the periodical *al-Jinan*.

While Al-Tahtawi's work certainly aroused the interest of the Egyptian readership concerning European society and its bases, his importance within the early development of the novel lies more in two other areas; translation and the press. It may be depicted that, Muhammad Uthman Jalal, the student of Tahtawi translated a large number of literary works, such as Moliere's plays and the fables of La Fontaine; he also set in motion an important facet in the development of an indigenous fictional tradition by "Egyptianizing" their plots and characters, thus paving the way first for attempts at imitation and later for the development of an incipient novel genre.

It is hard to overestimate the important role of the press has played in the revival of Arab cultural awareness throughout the Arab World during the last century. There were even a few publications which were entirely devoted to the publication of entertainment literature. One of the first published novels of this type in Al-Ahran was *Dhat al-Khidr* by a member of the illustrious al-Bustani family, Sa'id (d. 1901) in 1884. While publishing opportunities and circumstances may differ in nature and scope from one country to another, Naguib Mahfouz, the Nobel Laureate from Egypt, still avails himself of the literary pages of newspapers and journals in Cairo to introduce his new works to the public. He was only able to devote himself entirely to writing following his requirement from civil service job. For that reason, the Arabic press has continued to play a valuable role in the development of the Arabic novel.

While several writers contributed to the development process, none was more influential than Mustafa Lutfi al-Munfaluti (1876-1924). Using the medium of process once again, he published a whole series of essays and vignettes on a variety of topics; they were later published in book form as *al-Nazarat* and *al-Abarat*, and Ibrahim al-Mazini's famous critical work , *al-Diwan,* that he published along with 'Abbas Mahmud al-'Aqqad.

The novels of Jurji Zaydan (1861-1914) provide us with a splendid illustration of the Egyptian environment which I have described in my work. He was Lebanese immigrant to Egypt, where in 1892 he founded the magazine, *al-Hilal*, which is still being published in Cairo. While the Egyptian critic, 'Abd al-muhsin Taha Badr, chose to place these novels into a category "between education and entertainment." While such works may represent period pieces on the development of fiction in Arabic, which played a vital role to draw the readership for works of modern Arabic fiction in Egypt. The novels of Zaydan and other contributors to the historical, romantic and philosophical novels certainly fulfilled the important function of bringing fictional genres into the public awareness. It was Sabry Hafez who recognized Haykal's *Zaynab* as a major fictional type of literature in the early period of the Arabic novel. Thus, while these types of novel continued in a certain field, Arab writers found in the problems of the present and aspirations for a better life of fertile ground for their novel works. In moving toward that goal, a different vision of the novel's generic purpose and newly developed skills were needed.

Hadith 'Isa ibn Hisham serves an invaluable bridging function. The invocation *of* al-Hamdani's narrator and the brilliant use that **al-Muwailihi** made of the *saj* style of the *maqamah* certainly suggest the norms of a neoclassical prose work. One can seek to revive an awareness of the glories of the cultural heritage of Arabic literature.

There has been a good deal of discussion in my work, concerning the status of Muhammad Husayn Haykal's novel, *Zaynab* ever since H. A. R. Gibb and others identified it as the first "real novel" in Arabic. *Zaynab* was published in Egypt in 1913 under the pseudonym *Misri fallah* although, as Hamdi Sakkut observes, the true identity of Haykal was known to literary critics at the time. A work after *Zaynab* that was to make a major contribution to the development of prose literature was published during the 1920's; it has become one of the most

beloved of all works in modern Arabic literature: *al-ayyam*, Taha Husayn's famous autography, originally serialized in al-Hilal and then published as a book.

In 1930 a competition in novel writing was announced; the eventual winner was *Ibrahim al-Katib (1931; Ibrahim the writer*, 1976) by Ibrahim al-Mazini. It is no accident that the first novel which succeeds in providing a totally convincing portrait of a family within a restricted environment should have been written by Tawfiq al-Hakim, whose major interest was and remained in drama. *Yawmiyyat na'ib shows* al-Hakim's talent for constructing narrative and painting lively characters through dialogue in a remarkably developed fashion. The result is clearly one of the finest examples of early modern Egyptian fiction. Another contributor to the development of the novel in Egypt is al-Aqqad certainly falls within the category of psychological analysis literature and his introduction to the second edition of Sarah (1938), he himself suggests that *Sarah* is either "a novel of psychological analysis or an analysis in a narrative form.

The Egyptian novel matured in great works by twentieth century writers such as Muhammad Husayn Haykal (1888-1956), Taha Husayn (1889-1973), Ibrahim al-Mazini (1890-1949), Mahmud Tahir Lashin (1894-1954), and Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898-1987), whose I have discussed elaborately in my work.

Similarly, I found that in the second generation of Arabic novel writers the name of Naguib Mahfouz emerged as the most popular novel writer who had the first Nobel Laureate in Arabic. He received Nobel Prize in Literature in 1988.

In the Chapter –II **Naguib Mahfouz: Life and Works**, I have found how Naguib Mahfouz contributed the novel literature to reach its pinnacle of success.

Naguib Mahfouz was born in December, 1911 in the popular quarter of Gamaliya in the heart of old Cairo in a middle class family. His mother, after the difficult birth, gratefully named him for the obstetrician who delivered him. In 1924 his family moved to the Abbasiyya, a modern quarter of Cairo, where he grew up. He calls his childhood normal, meaning that he grew up in a solid, cohesive family undisturbed by the various ills he associates with broken home.

His parents were happily married, and he loved and respected them. His father, who died in 1937, was a strict Muslim who asserted his patriarchal authority, and the home's atmosphere was strongly religious.

As the youngest son of a family of seven children, he enjoyed attention and affection and relished his happy childhood. In his spare time he took the family to visit the Egyptian Museum to see the relics of Pharaonic, Coptic, and Islamic Egypt. On the other occasions Mahfouz accompanied his mother to the same museum. Such visits must have interested him in the history of Egypt, to which he devoted three historical novels. His vivid recollection of old Cairo inspired his work, from his early novels up to his last Qustumor (1988). Mahfouz's father was a middle-class civil servant and afforded his family a comfortable life.

As did many Muslim children, Mahfouz began his formal education learning the recitation of the Quran at Quranic School run by a certain Shaykh al-Buhayri. Afterward he attended the Husayniyya Elementary School, and the Fuad I High School. He was a diligent student, proficient in the Arabic language, history and Mathematics but weak in foreign languages. In order to gain proficiency in English he undertook the translation of James Baikie's book *Ancient Egypt* into Arabic.

Mahfouz went to Cairo University, where he studied philosophy, and upon his graduation in 1934 he worked for the university, contemplated postgraduate study and even registered for Ph. D to study Sufism in Islamic philosophy, but he abandoned this academic endeavour and embarked on a career of literary creativity. Yet philosophical ideas and Sufi preoccupations pervade his literary work.

He started publishing articles and short stories soon after his graduation and in 1938 published his first book, Hams al-Junun ("Whisper of Madness"), a collection of short stories. The following year he left the world of academia, opted for an undemanding civil service job and published his first novel, Abath-al-Aqdar("Absured Fates", 1939).

This and the following two novels, ***Radubis*** ("Rhadopis". 1043) and ***Kifah Tibah*** ("The Struggle of Thebes". 1944), were the **historical works** written as a part of a grand plan to employ the narrative genre in relating the history of Egypt from the time of the Pharaohs to the present.

In short, after reading Ivanhoe at secondary school, Mahfouz had become fascinated by the historical novels of Walter Scott and embarked on this grand project under his influence. Mahfouz's early historical novels were clearly different from predecessors in the genre. The historical setting was merely an attempt to foot the work in Egypt's glorious history and use this to develop a sense of national identity. The quest for independent and the need to develop both the national character and the individual's awareness of his role in society are the major preoccupations of these novels.

But after writing three novels without making a dent in the vast history of Egypt and after reading more 19th century European novels, particularly the work of Zula, Balzac and Dickens, he turned his attention to the present. This coincided with the Second World War, which proved to be an important period in Mahfouz's career. During these turbulent years he became increasingly aware of the need to avoid historical metaphor and deal directly with the burning social issues. Although his historical novels were first published during the early years of the war they were all written before its outbreak.

The title of his first socio-political novel, Al-Qahera al –Jadida ("New Cairo"), written in the first year of the war but not published until 1943, sums up new preoccupation. He was concerned with the transformation of Cairo both as a city and as a distinct urban culture. The novels of this phase of Mahfouz's literary career reflect various facets of the trauma of change and its social, human and political reflections.

This culminated in *Al-thulathiya* (Cairo Trilogy) the masterpiece of the Cairene urban chronicles. The Cairo Trilogy – its three volumes *Bynal Qasrayn*, *Qasr al- Shawq*, and *Al-Sukkariyya* (Sugar Street) spans half a century of Egypt's

quest for national identity and modernization over three different generations. It is the greatest family saga of modern Arabic literature and the work that middle-class morality and culture.

In short it has been seen that Mahfouz's contribution to the search for a new direction after Egypt had achieved its independence – as his implicit advice to the new rulers to adopt a more liberal and rational attitude towards the complex socio-political reality of Egypt. The advice was not heeded. This provoked Mahfouz to start a series of novels, constituting his output in the 1960s and forming what the critics call the period of critical realism in his development.

These are highly political novels emphasizing the importance of freedom and the dire consequence of its absence from society as a whole. They can be seen as documents of the disappointment of Mahfouz's generation in Naseer's regime and their attempt to undermine his growing popularity. They are documents of defiance and glorification of the spirit of rebellion (*Al-Liss wal-kilab*, 1961: The Thief and the Dogs, 1984). They lament the blindness and cruelty of changes and sympathies with its victims (*Al-Samman wal-Kharif*, 1962: Autmn Qail, 1985). The impossible quest for meaning and search for a way out of the impasse pervades the majority of these novels and reaches its acme in (Al-Tariq, "The Road", 1964) and (***Al-Shahhaz***, 1965: The Begger, 1986). Mahfouz's repartee and sharp sense of humour (particularly in ***Tharthara fawqa al-nail***, 1966: Adrift on the Nile, 1993), turns the novel into powerful critical commentaries on corruption and tyranny.

Egypt's defeat in the 1967 war, realizing the prophecy of doom enshrined in Miramar (1967), the last novel of their period, came as a shock none the less and led to another period of silence in Mahfouz's career. Instead of turning his attention to writing films, he poured his energy into short stories and one-act plays. These works were marked by their symbolic, even surrealistic, structure in order to portray the complexity and absurdity of the unexpected events that followed the 1967 defeat.

Naguib Mahfouz, the most prolific novelist, wrote more than 40 novels and shot story collections, 30 screenplays and many plays. Although many of these were quickly written and loosely structured and some of them are closer to film treatments that fully developed novels, Mahfouz justifies this by his strong urge to illustrate the various aspects of a rapidly shifting reality. Among these numerous works, three novels stand out as some of the best examples of the modern Arabic novel. *Malhamat al-Harafish* (1977, The Harafish, 1993) is a remarkable achievement that rivals The Cairo Trilogy in its richness and complexity. *Layali alf layla* (1982; Arabian Nights and Days, 1995), is an ambitious attempt to inscribe the modern preoccupations of the Arab world in to the fantastic world of the Arabian Nights. Mahfouz posits the modern novel as rival to the great classic of Arabic narrative, and succeeds in reproducing the magic world of the old classic but with completely modern content.

One of the major achievements of *Hadith al-sabah wa-almas* is its success in finding fragmentary novelistic structure capable of portraying the disintegration of the old coherent system of values, human relationships, ethics, and a strong sense of national identity. The alphabetical order of the characters subverts any causal development and demand a high degree of alertness from the reader to understand the logic that permeates this ostensively random structure. The written text hides beneath it a suppressed one that relates the destiny of the characters to that their own nation.

The world of Naguib Mahfouz is a vast and extremely rich one extending from pharaohnic times down to the present day. He spans in the various changes in the reality, dreams and aspirations of his nation and provides an elaborate record of its attempts to come to terms with the process of modernization. Although his world is mainly Cairo and predominantly the old quarter of *Gamalia* in which he spent his childhood, he made the urban scene an elaborate and highly significant metaphor of the national condition.

His narrative world is peopled with characters from all walks of Egyptian life, from beggars to aristocrats, with a special place reserved for the intellectuals with whom Mahfouz identifies. On the literary plane, his career spans the whole process of development of the Arabic novel from the historical to the modernistic and lyrical. He earned the Arabic novel respect and popularity and lived to see it flourish in the work of numerous writers throughout the Arab world.

In 1994, near his home, Mahfouz was stabbed in the neck with kitchen knife and two Egyptian Islamic militants were sentenced to death for attempting to kill him. In his old age Mahfouz became nearly blind, and he thought he continued to write, had difficulties in holding a pen or a pencil. He also had to abandon his daily habit of meeting his friends at coffeehouse. Mahfouz **died in Cairo on August 30, 2006** at the age of 94, in the presence of his wife Athiya and his daughters Fatma and Umm Kuthum.

Mahfouz has received the Egyptian State Prize twice for his writings and in **1988 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature**. His works has been translated and published some five hundred editions in forty languages. The first Novel to be translated into English was Miramar, in 1978, and the most translated novel is Midaq Alley, which appeared in more than thirty foreign editions in fifteen languages.

The Chapter – III of my work deals with **Analysis of his Historical Novels:**

To the best of my knowledge, the first Arab writer of historical novels was Salim al-Bustani (d. 1884), whose novels *Zenobia* and *Budur* took their themes from Arab history. But the writer, who more than anyone else in the Arab world popularized Islamic history through fiction was Jurji Zaydan (d. 1914), was a Lebanese Christian who lived most of his life in Egypt. A prolific writer, he produced more than twenty novels whose themes came from Islamic history, from the time of prophet of Islam to the Ottoman coup d'etat of 1908, including several dealing with Egyptian history.

This trend towards human analysis in the **historical novel** reached a high point in the works of Muhammed Farid Abu Hadid, and other writers. More than Zaydan, these writers concentrated on the development of characters and the extensive analysis of their social, political, and cultural milieu.

The trend in the Egyptian historical novel took on another dimension in the writing of a new generation of novelists like Muhammad Awad Muhammad, Adil Kamil, Jamal al-Shayyal, Ibrahim Jalal, and Naguib Mahfouz. Most of they were university graduates who had been greatly influenced by the trends of the Western historical novel and by the Egyptian novelists already mentioned. They were deeply concerned with portraying social and political movements and the various problems of their time. More important, they sought similarities between events in the ancient and contemporary history of Egypt offering the historical novels a new nationalistic connotation. They tried to analyze the different aspects of individual personality and human nature. To them, relating the historical story was a way to inculcate a moral lesson. They strove to unravel the mysteries of the human sole in a historically objective and faithful manner. Prominent among them was Mahfouz, who more then any of the others used the historical novel to study human nature. He gave it a new dimension by tackling vibrant themes from Egypt's ancient history, some of which were reflected in the surge of nationalism, whose aim was to liberate its people politically, socially and culturally from foreign domination. For this reason, some Egyptian critiques maintain that Mahfouz's *Abath al-Aqdar* (Ironies of Fate) condemns and ridicules kings for their despotism while it praises the common people for their fortitude.

***Abath al-Aqdar*:** Abath al-Aqdar, Mahfouz's first historical novel, draws the theme from an ancient Egyptian Legend. As the title indicates, fate plays a central role in the novel, manipulating the characters like puppets. The novel revolves around the struggle between the powerful will of the pharaoh and omnipotent fate and ends with the victory of indomitable fate over the recalcitrant pharaoh.

Abath al-Aqdar (The Ironies of Fates, 1939) is set during the reign of *Khufu* (Cheops), builder of the Great Pyramid and Second King of the Fourth Dynasty in the time of the Old Kingdom. The action begins when one day *Khufu* asks a soothsayer how long his posterity was to reign over Egypt. The soothsayer answers that though the king himself was to rule undisturbed until the last day of his life, none of his descendents would sit on the throne after him, but rather a boy just born to a priest of the temple of Ra'. Immediately the king sets out the ahead of a military campaign to protect his throne against the young would be usurper. Thus he is set on a collision course with the fates and Mahfouz has his first opportunity in fiction to demonstrate to his readers' a tenet that was to remain central to his work, namely that man's rationalized world is never secure from the haphazard and destructive interference of some mysterious force or law of existence. The force or law will take many forms and names in Mahfouz's work. It could be called fate, accident, chance, coincidence, time or death, but will always have the same effect to upset man's plans and shake the foundation of his rational calculations for his life and the world. This does not necessarily imply belief in the supernatural on the part of Mahfouz. What he seems generally interested in is merely to record that the failure of human endeavour is not always comprehensible in the simple terms of course and effect.

Thus, from the summery, it seems clear that *Abath al-Aqdar* is based on an ancient legend, most likely derived from James Baikie's book Ancient Egypt, which aimed to inform the reader about daily life in ancient Egypt by describing the journey of a ship that sailed over the Nile to Thebes. Mahfouz used some of the Egyptian names appearing in it, and his personal characters are almost identical in both works. But he altered the old prophecy about the pharaoh's successor to make the action more framatic. In Baikie's book, Khufu was succeeded by his son the crown prince, then by the later's son; after that power was transferred to the three sons of the priest of Re, who successively fell heir to thrown. Furthermore, the legend as related by Baikie does not show whether Pharaoh Khufu attempted to get

rid of the priest's three sons. Baikie's account of this folktale is similar to that given by the Egyptologist James Henry Breasted. According to Breasted's account, based on the papyrus original, Khufu felt bored one day and asked to be entertained by his sons, who related to him tales of past times. One of the sons, Prince Harzazef, told his father that there was in his kingdom a magician who should do even grater marvels then the men of the past whose wondrous works the son were relating. Summoned by *Khufu* to appear before him, the magician performed miraculous deeds. In response to a question by the Pharaoh, the magician said that the three children soon to be born by the wife of a certain priest of Re had been begotten by Re himself, and that they would become the king of Egypt. Upon hearing this prophecy, Khufu became sad. The magician, who thought that there was no reasons for the king's melancholy, assured him that his son would reign, then his grandson, and after one of these three children.

In essence, ***Abath al-Aqdar*** is a conflict between man and fate. No matter what man does, he is subject to an inexorable and mysterious external power controlling his actions. It defines his will and manipulates him like a puppet. In this context Khufu represents man, trying unsuccessfully to defy fate and subjugate it to his own will. He was the omnipotent will. He was sure of his majestic power, which no man could defy, until he discovered that whatever he intended could be followed by events for which there was no logical explanation. He learned belatedly that it is futile to defy fate.

Thus, when Khufu first hared from the soothsayer Djedi the prophecy that a stranger, not one of his sons, would succeed him, he began to investigate the relation of man with fate. He asked the stage *Khomini* whether fate could be avoided if a man acted beforehand to protect himself. *Khomini*'s answer was that according to the Egyptian wisdom transmitted from times of old man's precaution can not dispose of fate. This sounded pessimistic, and responded with a serious look that indicated he; too believed man cannot defy fate, no matter what precaution he takes. Khufu smiled and told the men, in effect, if fate is what they

say it is, then there can be no meaning to the creation, life, and the dignity of man. In fact, there is no distinction between work and idleness, strength and weakness, rebellion and subservience. But, the pharaoh said, fate is no more than a false belief, not to be held by mighty men.

Events proved Khufu wrong, however; despite his might, he could not prevent fate from determining his life, and on his deathbed he acknowledged the futility of his actions. More than twenty years ago, he said, he had commanded a contingent of soldiers to kill an unknown infant who he believed was to succeed him to the throne. Instead, he killed another infant by mistake. Ironically, he found himself protecting the stranger infant, whom he allowed to marry his daughter and proclaimed as his successor. He thought that he had overcome fate and secured the throne for his sons, but now found himself humbled by the gods, who "slapped my pride". This last statement by Khufu is significant, for it raises the question of whether fate is mere coincidence, that is, sheer luck, or the determinant action of a divine power operating beyond man's will.

Whatsoever, the novel abounds with detailed descriptions of situations and dialogues that reflect the author's ideas and imagination, his library, his hunting party, and the educational system in Egypt. The theme of this novel derives from a myth handed down from the time of Khufu in the old kingdom, but there is little specific information about how this pharaoh lived, thought, or communicated. Thus, it was inevitable that Mahfouz should inject his own ideas into the narrative through the different characters and the events they experience, cloaked with a veneer of historical facts. Khufu is not only the divine ruler of Egypt whose authority no man may contradict, but a worm and considerate person who loves his family and cares for his friends. At the outset of the novel, Mahfouz presents him as a fully developed character, relating his different traits and characteristics.

Mahfouz's central idea in this novel has been found that man's actions are subject to an omnipotent fate. It is in this context that we must understand both the prediction about the stranger who would succeed to the throne and Khufu's

ultimate failure to overcome fate. Ironically, he found himself protecting and supporting the very man he tried to kill after hearing the prophecy. The novel has many shortcomings in both from and content, Mahfouz himself called it "kid stuff".

Nevertheless, it marks the end of his obscurity as a novelist and the beginning of a long, busy career during which he refined the writing of the Egyptian novel and gradually won recognition as a leader in his craft.

***Radobis*:** Mahfouz's second historical novel, Radobis, focuses on a love that is totally subject to fate. Whereas in *Abath al-Aqdar* fate is depicted as a strong external power opposed to the will of man, in Radobis it is an uncontrollable force emanating from the very depth of man's soul.

In essence, the novel found as a romance whose theme, the love between Pharaoh Mernere II and Radobis, is not coincidental but determined by fate. The setting is the southern city of Abo; the occasion is the festival of the Nile, which attracts crowds from every corner of Egypt. Mahfouz describes in detail the people awaiting the Pharaoh's arrival; their conversation previews the events and characters of the novel. Looking over the crowd, a man whose appearance shows his upper-class status dolefully remarks that many such festivals have been celebrated and many pharaohs have attended that, but all have gone as if they never existed. They have gone to rule another world better than the present one, he adds, and all people will one day follow them to that world. He wonders aloud whether future generations will remember him and the crowds celebrating the festival of the Nile, as those present remember others who have come before. He wishes that death did not exist. Another says philosophically that death is as natural as life and questions the value of immortality when people cannot satisfy their hunger, stop growing old, or even attain love. Such statements may reflect the skepticism of Mahfouz, who apparently could not find an answer to the whole question of existence. The pessimistic view taken by this character reflects the innermost sentiments of a perplexed soul.

It is set during the short reign of Mirinar towards the end of the sixth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom. The young *Pheraoh* of the novel is engaged in a power conflict with the clergy over their enormous land possessions. Meanwhile, accident brings the king in contact with *Rhodopis*, the courtesan at whose fact the cream of the city's men lie prostrate. It is love at first sight – love which takes possession of the king to the deriment of the affairs of the state and the feelings and pride of the queen, his sister and wife. More tragically, the affair gives the elegy a moral weapon to use against their opponent, who is finally killed in a popular uprising which he bravely faces without protection. True to romantic form, Rhodopis commits suicide with poison.

Rhodopis, like *The Game of Fates*, is centrally built on coincidence. Life here is again shown to be a frolic of fate, now assuming the form of an eagle which carries away Rhodopis sandal and drops it is *Pharaoh*'s lap, thus offering him the bait of love and eventually death.

The central role that Mahfouz assigns to coincidence in life is eloquently explained by one of his characters of Rhodopis: 'Coincidence is an abused word confused with randomness yet, all fortunes, both good and ill, are attributed to it and seldom do the gods rely on logic'. Elsewhere in the novel, coincidence is described as 'fate in disguise'. The unfolding of the action to its tragic end comes as a testimony to this fatalistic thread that runs through the book. One difference, though, between this novel and the previous one is that in *The Game of Fates* the conflict between man and fate is direct and brutal. There is a divine prophecy and a man setting out to circumvent it, where as in Rhodopis fate acts by proxy using circumstantial elements to accelerate the inevitable end. This the sense of predestination in the latter novel is some what reduced by allowing action, once it was set in motion by the initial coincidence or act of fate, to be developed by character to its predestined end. In this sense there are perhaps grounds for saying that Rhodopis is conceptually and structurally less defective then the earlier novel. It is already a step in the direction of upgrading coincidence from a mechanical

device to a discreetly used philosophical conviction. One thing is certain through, that this early appearance of fate in the work of Mahfouz would prove, if one may say so, a genetic quality: it would persist in his work, only gaining with subtlety with time.

Kifah Tiba: the third and last of Mahfouz's historical novels, is essentially an epic portraying the struggle of the southern city of Thebes against the Hyksos, whose eventual expulsion gave Egypt independence from foreign domination and set it on the way to becoming an empire. Unlike his earlier novels, in which history is subordinated to the philosophical treatment of fate, *Kifah Tiba* is focused more directly on events set in a specific time and place, while the love story between Pharaoh Ahmose and the daughter of the Hyksos king seems to be of secondary importance. Nevertheless, Mahfouz does not strictly adhere to the historical facts and even finds himself forced to manipulate the in order to support his own convictions about certain matters, such as Ahmose's distribution of land, which has no basis in fact. He may be forgiven source materials on the Hyksos and the Theban dynasts who fought against the are deficient and confusing. For example, the novel has Apophis as the Hyksos king and Seqenenra as the ruler of Thebes; but the Hyksos had more than one King Apophis, and the Thebans had more than one Seqenenra.

The novel deals with the struggle of the Egyptians, against the Egyptians against the foreign rule of the *Hyksos*, the invaders who ruled Lower Egypt for around a hundred years in the sixteenth century B C. the action of the novel spans some twelve years and the reign of three pharaohs until Egypt is finally and fully liberated under the leadership of king *Ahmous* later known in history as the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The heroic, nationalistic line of the plot is further complicated by a love story between the victorious king *Ahmous* and the captive daughter of the vanquished *Hyksos* King, *Abufis*, a love which he will have to renounce in favour of duty.

Structurally it is a better novel than its predecessors in the action does not depend on coincidence, and conflict between human wills takes precedence over conflict between man and fate. Altogether *The Struggle of Thebes* represents a considerable movement forward for Mahfouz as a novelist. It is the maturest and most balanced of his early historical trio. On the other hand the fact that it was to his last venture into history for a very long time should come as no surprise: his obvious preoccupation with the present through his treatment of the past seems in retrospect to have been a natural step on the road to realism, which he adopted in the next novel.

The novels which deals with the Egyptians struggle to liberate their country from foreign rule at a certain period in the past was written at a time when Egypt was under combined foreign rule the British on the one hand, and an Aristocracy of Turkish stock on the other. Throughout, the novel contrasts the brown skinned Egyptian *fallahin* (peasants) with the white – skinned *Hyksos* shepherds. The old Hyksos held the Egyptian fellahin in contempt just as their in the novel are equally contemptuous of the *Hyksos* who are portrayed as uncouth shepherds coming from the north-Asian desert. In modern terms this corresponds to the nomadic origins of the Ottoman Turks. In the novel again the *Hyksos* are consistently described as arrogant and quick tempered "tyrants without minds" epithets which correspond neatly to the modern Egyptians' popular image of the Turk. All of which leaves us with no doubt that Mahfouz had in mind the contemporary offered both parallel and hope.

The struggle of Thebes did not only herald the political reality of modern Egypt, but also in the social and economic structured dictated by it. The socio-economic pattern regulating the relationship between governor and governed in the novel is summed up by two characters, the *Hyksos*, the second an Egyptian: 'If you want to make use of a *fallah*, first make him poor and then whip him!', and 'The rule followed in Egypt is for the rich to rob the poor while the poor are not allowed to steal from the rich'. The modernity of the very phraseology used here cannot be

missed. In fact, so preoccupied was Mahfouz with the injustices of the present that he ascribed to *Ahmous*, at the expense of anachronism, the economic and social reforms that he wished for modern Egypt.

Mahfouz is happy to admit to this historical untruth: he was trying to mix history with the social utopia he had been dreaming of, as he puts it.

In the Chapter – IV: **Thematic Study of his Historical Novels**, it has been observed that, *Abath al-Aqdar* is set during the reign of Khufu (Cheops), builder of the Great Pyramid and Second King of the Fourty Dynasty in the time of the Old Kingdom. The action begins when one day Khufu asks a soothsayer how long his posterity was to reign over Egypt. The soothsayer that though the king himself was to rule undisturbed until the last day of his life, none of his descendents would sit on the throne after him, but rather a boy just born to a priest of the temple of Ra'. Immediately the king sets out the ahead of a military campaign to protect his throne against the young would be usurper. Thus he is set on a collision course with the fates and Mahfouz has his first opportunity in fiction to demonstrate to his readers' a tenet that was to remain central to his work, namely that man's rationalized world is never secure from the haphazard and destructive interference of some mysterious force or law of existence. The force or law will take many forms and names in Mahfouz's work. It could be called fate, accident, chance, coincidence, time or death, but will always have the same effect to upset man's plans and shake the foundation of his rational calculations for his life and the world. This does not necessarily imply belief in the supernatural on the part of Mahfouz. What he seems generally interested in is merely to record that the failure of human endeavour is not always comprehensible in the simple terms of course and effect.

Raubis, is Mahfouz's second novel, appeared in 1943. It is set during the short reign of Mirinar towards the end of the sixth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom. The young Pharaoh of the novel is engaged in a power conflict with the clergy over their enormous land possessions. Meanwhile, accident brings the king in contact

with *Rhodopis*, the courtesan at whose fact the cream of the city's men lie prostrate. It is love at first sight – love which takes possession of the king to the deriment of the affairs of the state and the feelings and pride of the queen, his sister and wife. More tragically, the affair gives the elegy a moral weapon to use against their opponent, who is finally killed in a popular uprising which he bravely faces without protection. True to romantic form, *Rhodopis* commits suicide with poison.

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[1] Hamdi Sakkut, The Egyptian Novel and its Main Trends, 1913-1952, p 72-73

Kifah Teba (The Struggle of Thebes): Mahfouz's third novel, deals with the struggle of the Egyptians, against the foreign rule of the *Hyksos*, the invaders who ruled Lower Egypt for around a hundred years in the sixteenth century B C. the action of the novel spans some twelve years and the reign of three pharaohs until Egypt is finally and fully liberated under the leadership of king *Ahmous* later known in history as the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The heroic, nationalistic line of the plot is further complicated by a love story between the victorious king *Ahmus* and the captive daughter of the vanquished *Hyksos* King, *Abufis*, a love which he will have to renounce in favour of duty.[2]

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The Chapter-V: Stylistic Study of His Historical Novels reveals that, Mahfouz found his subject matter in the ancient history of Egypt which, he says, he aspired to recreate in fictional form of style as Sir Walter Scott had some with the history of his country. To achieve this aim, he chose forty themes for historical novels that he hoped to complete in his lifetime, but he finished only three before discovering that he was more interested in social novel. Some writers have exaggerated Mahfouz's importance as a writer of historical novels. Ahmed Haykal says that *Abath al-Aqdar* is considered "the true beginning of the nationalistic historical novel. It does not teach history, but tends to glorify it its objective is to deepen the feeling about the glories of Pharaohnic past.[3] In fact, this work was not the beginning of the nationalistic historical novel nor of the Egyptian historical novel; yet Mahfouz deserves a prominent place among the writers of the historical novel in Egypt, especially those who, as he did, graduated from the Egyptian university. Mahfouz was one of the prominent, who more then any of the others style used the historical novel to study human nature. He gave it a dimension by tackling vibrant themes from Egypt's ancient history, some of which were

[3] . Sabri Hafiz," Naguib Mahfouz," in Naguib Mahfouz: *Atahaddath Ilaıkum*, p. 92

reflected in the surge of nationalism, whose aim was to liberate its people politically, socially and culturally from foreign domination. For this reason, some Egyptian critics maintain that Mahfouz's *Abath al-Aqdar* condemns and ridicules kings for their despotism while it praises the common people for their fortitude.

The language employed by Mahfouz is classical though he does not shun colloquial idioms when dialogues require them. A touch of humour pervades all his writing style. He uses Islamic terms in a pre-Islamic setting, for example, *Sahaba.* For Khufu's retinue and the Quranic term *hawari* to describe his army commander. In fact, the novel abounds with detailed descriptions of situations and dialogues that reflect the author's ideas and imagination, particularly when he discuss the pharaoh's family gathering, his library, his hunting party, and the educational system in Egypt. Much of this description may seem redundant and puerile, but Mahfouz intends to endow the events of the novel with a sense of authenticity. It was inevitable that Mahfouz injected his own ideas into the narrative through the different characters and the events the experience, clocked with a veneer of historical facts. He also injects his own ideas about art and woman's nature into this dialogue between Dedef and his step-brother Napha:

Napha: Do not make an effort to explain.....[4]

Mahfouz's central theme is that man's actions are subject to an omnipotent fate. It is in this style that we must understand both the prediction about the stranger who would succeed to the throne and Khufu's ultimate failure to overcome fate. Ironically, he found himself protecting and supporting the very man he tried to kill after hearing the prophecy. The novel has many shortcomings in both form and style; indeed, Mahfouz himself called it "kid stuff."[5] Nevertheless, it marks the end of his obscurity as a novelist and the beginning of a long, busy career during which he refined the writing of the Egyptian novel and gradually won recognition as a leader in his craft.

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[4] . Rajab Adham, "*Safahat Majhula min Hayat Naguib Mahfouz,*" Dar al-Jil, Beirut, 1989, p. 94

[5] Ibrahim Amar, "Najib Mahfuz Siyasiayan min Thawra 1919 ila yuniu 1967," al-Hilal sp No Feb 70

Like Mahfouz's earlier novel, *Radobis* has some historical inaccuracies, such as references to the use of horses and chariots. Mahfouz provides an interesting but lame excuse for these lapses. He states that he submitted *Radobis* to a literary contest for an award established by the lady Qut al-Qulub al-Damardashiyya. In this work, Mahfouz meant to criticize the condition of Egypt under the monarchy through the medium of historical novel. The style and the characters in the novel are subordinated to Mahfouz's real purpose, the analytical study of man's nature and his reaction to his circumstances. This is why at the beginning the Egyptians appear occupied with the questions of life, death, and especially life after death. This interest is also manifested in the prayers of the priests, the sermon the pharaoh gives at the alter, and the songs of the people in the street. Mahfouz expresses in great style how the Egyptian people lived and behaved. He seems concerned more with Pharaoh the man than with Pharaoh the monarch, more with Radobis the true female than with Radobis the high society prostitute.

In *Kifah Tiba* Mahfouz was found to inject his own understanding of the socialism into the Egyptian society under Ahmous, describing his distribution of land to the peasant farmers in something like a sharecropping transaction. Although there is no historical evidence to support it, he superimposes this socialistic idea on the narrating as part of his vision of the utopian city of his dreams. In the light of Mahfouz's dogmatic moral dichotomy, setting forth the Egyptians and the Hyksos as symbols of good and evil, the love episode between Ahmose and Amenerdis appears pale and tenuous, and it cannot be expected to mitigate the long hatred between the Egyptians and the Hiksos.

It has been observed that, the novel teems with historical characters, most important of whom are the three pharaohs, Seqenenra, Kamose, and Ahmose, and the old queen Tetisheri, mother of Seqenenra. The three pharaohs are the very sole of Egypt personifying Egypt and its people who are preeminently suited to lead their people. The Hyksos's characters, in contrast, posses no redeeming virtues; in

fact, Mahfouz does not even give names to the Hiksos minor characters and refers to them only in the third person.

Mahfouz describes the events in *Kifah Tiba* with so much detail that it diverts the reader's attention from the central theme. Some of these details are superfluous and boring. There are meticulous descriptions of battles, soldier's armaments, and the manner in which these battles were fought, down to how many chariots and horses and captives were involved. From a historian's point of view, Mahfouz appears to have adhered more closely to the facts than he did in the previous novels. He uses pharaohnic and Hiksos names the same way as Egyptologists. He has given the available historical evidence, especially about Ahmose, is meager and confusing; Mahfouz has succeeded in giving the common reader a fictionalized picture of the struggle between the Egyptians and the Hyksos. Naguib Mahfouz seems to believe that Kings are, and that the passage of time and the many foreign invasions have not changed the Egyptians greatly. Not even the Arab conquest could affect the pharaohnic features of Egypt; the conquerors imposed their religion (Islam) and their language on the Egyptians but could not convert them to Arabism. They were and are still pharaohnic Egyptians, with the traits of the ancient culture. Indeed, Mahfouz so firmly believes that the two cultures have mingled that in his address to the Nobel Prize Committee, he called himself the product of two civilizations: pharaohnic and Islamic. He explicitly avoiding saying that the latter is the exclusive civilization of Egypt.[6]

In a nutshell, Naguib Mahfouz wrote in a classical and lucid Arabic style interspersed with colloquial Egyptian and proverbs known throughout the Arab world. Some of these proverbs, which he uses to accentuate his points, utterly defy translation. He wrote not only to entertain but to treat profound social, political, and religious issues and their impact on his society. His overriding purpose is clear to give a true picture of the human condition as he sees it. If his ideas are sometimes controversial, they are nevertheless stimulating and must be

[6] . See Mahfouz's address to the Nobel Prize Committee in no, 59, January, 1989

understood in the context of Mahouz's effort to treat the cultural trends of his society as they affect his own life.