CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to present a critical analysis of Elias Khoury's writings in Relationship to themes and styles of his novels especially in *'Yalo'* and *Ka'annaha Na'ema'*. The most interesting aspect of Khoury's writing is the perfect embodiment of war and its consequences in the form and contents of his novels. In the stories which succeed one another, war-torn Beirut, dismembered Beirut, fragmented Beirut, is reflected in torn up bodies, destroyed streets, decimated houses, lost stories, punctuated by the haunting refrain.

Most of the novels of Elias Khoury, he chooses the theme of the civil war in Lebanon. And all he wants is the author of war that took place in Lebanon during the 1975-1990 and was officially ended by the Taif Agreement, no other war in Lebanon, but the civil war. The experience of the novelist Elias Khoury takes the true tales and stories of the form feature in the novel through unique narrative techniques.

The historical traumas in the Arab world refer to the 1967 defeat as well as the Lebanese civil war, two wars that destroyed the two major Arab cities and cultural centers, Egypt and Beirut. These historical traumas reworked Arab literature’s relation to the real. Thus, in its attempt to mediate the Arab worlds’ traumatized and radical redefinition of selfhood, the novel *Yalo* enacts these historical traumas by adopting an ambiguous relationship to the real, violating the mimetic aesthetics of the novel of the first period, and placing the de-centered main character in floating spaces that randomly intersect.

In Elias Khoury’s novel, fragmentation is intensified as it reflects off the immediate backdrop of the Lebanese Civil War and its aftermath. The

Lebanese Civil War delineated a visible boundary that severed the Eastern region of the country from the Western one in the same way as the American Civil War marked out a more visible American frontier. The devastating results of the Lebanese Civil War, along with the losses it wreaked on those involved, brought about an overwhelming feeling of shame that has further problematized the definition of Lebanese identity. Khoury tackles the issue of regional versus national identity in depth through his revision of the region's history.

Elias Khoury has probed existing models of Arabic literature to create new possibilities that enlighten the world we live in. Elias Khoury's project may be said to operate on two Levels. First, he wants to liberate the Arabic language traditionally divided into standard (written) and colloquial (spoken) from its rigid diction and syntax.

This does not mean he disregards the classical idiom completely; instead, Elias Khoury introduces the spoken idiom into the written one. His interest in modernising the Arabic language is crucial to the second level of his project: a concern for recording the experiences of daily living. According to Elias Khoury, daily occurrences are best appreciated when the gap between orality and its written form has been bridged.

Although we cannot separate Elias Khoury's literary development from the history of the Lebanese civil war (1975-90), it would be extremely unfair to consider his writing important only as it relates to the civil war. While the civil war is a point of departure in many of his works, it typically functions as a vital locus to investigate more general the human conditions with specific questions pertaining to life, death, religion, and history.

1.2 Objectives of the research

The main objectives of the research work are to assess the role of Elias Khoury to the development of Arabic novel, to evaluate the position of Elias Khoury among his contemporary novelists, to highlight the themes and styles of Elias Khoury's novel and lastly to evaluate the value of his novels *Yalo* and *Ka'annaha Na'ema* to the society.

1.3 Data and Methodology

The data for the study of this topic has been collected from both the primary and secondary sources directly and indirectly from various universities, colleges, academic and public libraries. Thus this work is based on various published works, research articles in addition to the Internet sources. To complete the research work both descriptive and analytical methods are accepted and applied.

1.4 Research Plan

The four chapters of this thesis in addition to the conclusion comprise the following: the **first chapter** comprises an introduction, which states the importance of the research, its objectives, and the method used by the researcher in his study as well as including two sub chapters, from them one is comprises a historical background on the origin and development of Arabic novel to the approximate period the thesis covers; the half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the 21st century, showing briefly the political, economical and educational situation in the Arab countries and another one comprises a contemporary Arab novelists of Elias Khoury to evaluate the position of Elias Khoury among them.

The **second chapter** covers Elias Khoury's life, and his literary works such as 12 novels, four volumes of literary critical work and some of his

plays. These works are covered in such a way that it will show his unique and innovative style of writing for which he is famous.

The **chapter three** is about the part of the topic, namely a critical study on the themes and styles of Elias Khoury's novel 'Yalo'. Khoury's theme is the effect on the human mind of torture, shown through many vivid and excruciating scenes. Yalo ironically congratulates his tormentors for the inventiveness of the forms of torture he employs and on his capacity to extract confessions from the accused as easily as extracting his soul. However violent torture may be, its physical effects wear off quickly and all that remains is the spiritual effect, which makes us feel the soul is about to depart.

The **fourth** chapter deals with the themes and styles of Elias Khoury in the novel *'Ka'annaha Na'ema'*. Khoury's fiction is known for its complex approach to political themes and the effects of war on human behaviour, which he has not only witnessed but also personally experienced. The novel *'Ka'annaha Na'ema' (As if she were sleeping)* is set on the eve of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war that forever changed the political, cultural and social landscape in Lebanon. Khoury explain that he wanted to show this society before catastrophe came to it.

Lastly the researcher has concluded the thesis with the major findings of the research work.

1.5: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARABIC NOVEL

1.5.1 Origin of Arabic Novel

It is a controversy about origin of Arabic novel among the literary critics. The critics differed, over the years, as to how the modern Arabic novel first came to an existence. Some critics are argued that Arabs have

written narrative literature to cite the epic folk romances which are considered as the Arabic novel. According to them *The thousand and One Nights,* Abu ala al-Ma'ari's *Epistle of Forgiveness,* Ibn Tufayl's philosophical romance *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* etc are origin of Arabic novel.[1]

But, the truth of the matter is that the roots of narrative literature, as known in tales, myths, and epic romances, have existed very early in every society- Arab, European, Asian and African. When the novel is discussed in the international literary circles, English and French critics tend to agree that the novel began in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

With regards to the Arabic Novel, there is fairly general agreement among critics that its origin lie in western traditions. Charles Vial, for example, says as much in un-equivocal terms:

> The modern *qissa* owes nothing to Arabic tradition. It is linked neither with the folklore of the *Thousand and One Nights* nor with tales of chivalry nor with narratives of *Adab*.[2]

And yet, such a categorical and dogmatic statement as this ignores certain subtleties of tradition and cultural interchange. For, while the influence of the famous *Thousand and One Nights* on emerging novelistic tradition in the Arab world may be minimal, the same cannot be said of the impact of several of the popular folktale traditions on Europe in the eighteenth century. It is, in fact, rather ironical that the *Thousand and One Nights* , the most famous work of Arabic literature. It should have had such a tremendous impact on Europe at the time of its translation by Galland

[1] Sakkout, Hamdi. *The Arabic Novel, Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995, p-13-14
[2] Art. "kissa", in EI2, Leiden : E. J. Brill, 1954.

(1703-13).[3] While its status as popular literature has until recently casts it into what one critic has termed 'that critical nether land of Middle Arabic and dialect 'non literature',"[4] and has thus kept it almost *hors-de-combat* in the early stages of the development of a tradition of modern Arabic fiction. Jabra Ibrahim Jabra himself is one of those critics who emphasis that the use of multi layered techniques, the fragmentation of time, the concern with the life of the individual in society-all major concerns of the contemporary novel- are present in the *Thousand and One Nights* . Leaving aside the fascinating formal complexities and moral message of such tales as that of Sindbad the sailor,[5] One can point to the tale of the three Apples as an almost classic detective novel: the dead body is found at the beginning of the story, the Caliph wants to find out who the culprit is, and in the end, the entire story is unraveled. The literary qualities of this vast store of mediaeval Arabic popular literature are only just beginning to be explored and analyzed. Meanwhile, it is sufficient to observe that the *Thousand and One Nights* and other popular *Sira'* traditions seem to offer a fertile area of investigation into possible precedents to the modern narrative prose tradition in Arabic, as Jabra points out.[6] The Iraqi critic, Safa' al-Khulusi, even sees a close relationship between the appearance of a translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* in English and the emergence of the modern novel.[7]

In anticipation of further research on the popular literature of the Islamic Middle Ages, such conclusions may seem somewhat premature. More acceptable in present circumstances is the statement of Edward Said :

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[3] C.Knipp, *The Arabian nights in England : Galland's translation and its successors,* JAL V (1974), 44-54
[4] Bridget Connely, *The structure of four Bani Hilal Tales*, JAL IV (1973, 18-47)
[5] Peeter molan, *sindbad the Sailor, a commentary on the ethics of violence*, JAOS XCVIII/3 (July-Sept, 1978), 237-47
[6] *Yana'bi al-ru'ya*, Beirut : al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya, 1979, 68-71
[7] S.A.Khulusi, *Modern Arabic fiction with special reference to Iraq'*, IC XXX (1936), 199-210

> The twentieth century novel in Arabic has a variety of forbears, none of them formally and dynastically prior and useful as, say, in the rather directly useful way that Fielding antedates Dickens. Arabic literature before the twentieth century has a rich assortment of narrative forms- *qissa, Sira, hadith, Khurafa, ustura, khabar, nadira, maqama*- of which no one seems to have become, as the European novel did, the major narrative type.[8]

However, as these rich and exciting possibilities continue to be investigated, the tradition of the Arabic novel proceeds with its own momentum. To some novelists in the Arab world the western provenance of the novel is accepted ; consider for example the words of 'Abd al-Rahman Munif, one of a younger generation of novelists :

> The Arabic novel has no heritage. Thus, any contemporary Arab novelists has to look for a means of expression for himself, with hardly any guidance to aid him. It is thus inevitable that he will make some mistakes and display shortcomings.[9]

Fortunately, this willingness to acknowledge a debt to the west on the matter of the novel has in no way inhibited the creativity of Arab writers ; the basic question has been one of "catching up", as both Najib Mahfouz, the Arab World's most famous novelist, and Jabra have pointed out.[10] In any case, such writers can, no doubt, take comfort from the statement of Jaques Berque that :

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[8] Halim Barakat, *Days of dust*, trans. Trevor Le Gassick, Wilmette, Illinois : Media press International, 1974, p. xiii

[9] Al-Ma'rifa (Feb, 1979), 193

[10] *Al-Maraya, Cairo Maktabat misr, 1972*

The genealogies of creativity do not, and need not, follow a straight line. The history and variations of artistic genius presuppose discontinuity, interaction, an unexpected intersection lineages rather than a simple linear succession. Why look among the *ta'ziyas* , popular skits, or magic lantern shows for the ancestors of the contemporary theatre if the latter does no more than provide a modern language to life's theatricality that formerly assumed quite different forms?[11]

With the benefit of hindsight we may observe that, in the period following the Second World War, the tradition of the Arabic novel remained essentially unaffected by the few gestures of neoclassicism in prose. While it may be true that, during the transitional stage at the beginning of this country, there were distinct echos of earlier types of Arabic prose, the novel tradition turned its back on such conscious archaisms, which in any case failed to survive for any length of time because no one genre could predominate in the same way that the *qasida* could at the hands of the new classical poets.

The Arabs did not write this kind of literature until the late nineteenth century in Egypt and Greater Syria, to be exact. Indeed, until the early years of the nineteenth century and for several centuries earlier, literature was represented largely by unimaginative, imitative poetry lacking vitality and color, although delighting in lexical virtuosity and flights of verbal fancy. [12]

The first attempts at writing the novel would be an extension of *maqama.* Muhammad al- Muwailihi wrote *Hadith 'Isa bin Hisham* (The observations of 'Isa bin Hisham) in serialized form between 1898 and 1902, and subsequently had it printed in one volume in 1907. Also in the

[11] *Cultural expression in Arab society,* Austin : University of Texas press, 1978, 200, cf. 259-60
[12] Ibid,p-14

styled of the maqama Hafiz Ibrahim (1868-1932) wrote *"Layali Satih"* in 1906.

Some literary critics claim that Muhammad al Muwaylihi;s "*Hadith 'Isa ibn Hisham"* constitutes the real beginning of the Arabic novel. But it is said that Al Muwaylihi's *'Hadith 'Isa ibn Hisham'* (The Story of Isa Ibn Hisham) cannot in fact be considered as a novel. In the assessment of Roger Allen, "If the work is to be considered a novel, then by any yardstick, it is very bad one." Indeed there is no scope here for serious discussion either of characterization or artistic structure, which are basic requirements in any novelistic work. Therefore most of the critics are argued that the first true novel in Arabic literature is *Zeinab* which is published by Muhammad Husayn Haykal in 1913. This is considered as the first fledged novel of literary merit in Arabic, in spite of the many serious shortcomings that are inevitable in all pioneering works.

Zaynab is an embodiment of a frontal attack on one of the major problems of Egyptian society. All the characters of Egyptian, and the scene of action is almost entirely an Egyptian village. Haykal deals with numerous general problems, social, political, religious, and moral like that of the veil, to which he attributes many social and moral evils such as prostitution. He attacks the lack of integrity in government officials, who were notorious for their bribery and corruption, and the tyranny of the Turkish and the British, the gross injustice in the system of military service, which allowed the rich to buy their way out of conscription. Besides this general problems common to the whole country, the novel deals with questions peculiar to villages and village life: the abject poverty of the peasant, his hard life, his constant toil, his enslavement to the soil, his eternal lack of means, his anxieties and lack of medical knowledge, the many debts that a small farmer incurs which leave him an

easy prey to foreign money-Landers, who charge him exorbitant interest and end by expropriating all his possessions. All these matters, together with the grayer aspects of village life, the peasant's festivities, dancing, singing, and marry-making are vividly portrayed in this novel.

A third group blazed the trail in writing novels in the Western form directly. Shaykh Muhammad Abduh, already as early as 1871, had called attention to the salutary influence which good novels could provide for readers. Undoubtedly, this positive vision of the potential of the novel helped to encourage al-Manfalutl (1876-1924) as well as his immediate precursors and contemporaries to adopt the Western novel form outright. They believed that the novel could serve educational, moral, and social purposes, while also providing grounding in history. Their intention was to avoid the stigma of those superficial writings which were meant principally for entertainment.[13] Among the eminent writers of this group were Ali Mubarak (1823-1893), who published his *Alam al-din* in 1882; the illustrious poet 'Ahmad Shawql (1870-1932), who authored a number of historical novels; al-Manfalutl (1876-1924), who wrote with a moral and ethical mission; and Husayn Haykal (1886-1956), who emphasized social reform and whose novel *Zaynab* came out in 1913.[14]

In the Levant, such writers as the Syrian Fransis Marrash (1836-1873) and the Lebanese Salim al-Bustani (1847-1884) were pioneers in the Arabic prose renaissance. Wholeheartedly and without reservation, they adopted the Western novel form. In 1865, Fransis Marrash wrote *Ghabat al-haqq (The Forest of Truth),* probably the very first Arabic novel ever published. Salim al-Bustani produced a series of novels in his magazine *al-Jinan (Gardens).* His first novel *al-Huyam fi jinan al-Sham*

[13] Sakkout, *The Egyptian Novel and Its Main Trends (1913-1952)* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1971), p. 8
[14] Sakkout, Hamdi. *The Arabic Novel, Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995, p-17

(Passionate Love in the Gardens of Damascus) appeared in serialized episodes in 1870, followed by *Zanubiya* in 1871, and *Budur* in 1872. In all, a total of nine novels by Salim al-Bustani were printed in *al-Jinan* in the ensuing years.

The most outstanding Lebanese novelist of this early period was the prolific Jurjl Zaydan (1861-1914). His more than twenty historical novels outshone in literary merit the works of Salim al-Bustani and his fellow writers. They also were distinctly superior, at least in the way they were presented, to most of the translated historical romances which were being serialized in periodicals during the same years as Zaydan's novels. In many of these romances the non-historical parts rely for popular appeal on fast moving incidents, surprises, coincidences, adventures, love, and murder, all amid a remarkable array of gripping events. His delineations of character, however, by and large lack individuality and depth. Some novels, nonetheless, for example *The Ottoman Revolution* (1911), do succeed in depicting

numerous situations in a more mature realism, as they also abound in deftly sketched psychological cameo portraits, allowing insightful glimpses of moving human drama.[15]

Arabic novel emerged from several rehearsals and multiple beginnings rather than from one single origin. Given that the very Arabic word "riwaya", which is now used exclusively in reference to the "novel", has traditionally conjured up a tangle of narrative genres, it might not be unfair to contend that the Arabic novel owes its early formation not only to the appropriation of the novel genre from Europe, but also, and more importantly, to the revival and transformation of traditional narrative

[15] H. Sakkout, *in the introduction to Muqaddima* (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1985).

genres in the wake of Napoleon's 1798 expedition into Egypt and the Arab world's firsthand encounter with industrialized imperial Europe.[16]

1.5.2 Development of Arabic Novel

Arabic novel are highly developed in the beginning of 20th century and early Decades of 21st century by the writings of prominent novelists of the Arab world. The Pioneering Generation of Novelists was Egyptian. Arabic novel literature was developed in various country of Arab World like Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Saudi Arab, Morocco, Libya etc.

In the early history of modern Arabic fiction, we noted that the early popularity of the novel genre was engendered in large part by the serialized publication of historical romance novels. This tendency was one of several factors that made the development of an Arabic genre which would replicate the structures, styles, and generic purposes of the nineteenth-century novel in the West a complex and even disjointed process in comparison with that of the short story. The ability to project aspects of 'life on a large scale', to place realistically drawn characters into authentic environments, and to do so in a style that was palatable to the newly emerging readership, these were skills that needed a prolonged and concentrated period of application and technical development, something that was and, in many cases, remains, a luxury that many would-be novelists cannot afford. [17]

As was the case in other literary genres, a number of geographical and cultural factors not the least being the emigration of many Syrian families to Egypt in the 1860s and 1870s made the Egyptian tradition an early focal point of both creativity and emulation. Elsewhere in the Arab world, the timetable involved was different, often considerably so. In the

[16] *The Encyclopedia of the Novel*, p. 573.
[17] Allen , Roger : *An Introduction To Arabic Literature,Cambridge University Press*, 2003,p-184

countries of the Maghrib, for example, the deep penetration of French culture into the educational system has meant that the balance between French and Arabic expression remains a hotly debated issue, with programmes of 'Arabicisation' (*ta'rib*) endeavoring to promote the use of Arabic within cultural milieu. The first Algerian novel in Arabic was Ahmad Rida Huhu's *Ghadat umm al-qura* (Maid of the City) published in 1947, and the first by an Algerian woman writer was Ahlam Mustaghanimi's *Dhakirat al-jasad* (Body's Memory, 1993). Under Ottoman suzerainty (and censorship) Iraqi literature was kept under tight control and tended to adhere to traditional modes; a few historical romances were published, but it was not till the 1920s, when the British mandate was in effect, that the Iraqi novel began to address pressing contemporary issues.[18]

1.5.2.1 Development of Arabic Novel in Egypt

In any historical survey of the development of the Arabic novel, Egyptian novelists have been played the vital role through their valuable writings. The novelists of the pioneering generation of Arab were *Muhammad Husayn Haykal, Al-Mazini, Tawfiq al-Hakim*. Besides the novelists of pioneering generation, there were some famous novelists of Egypt who had been contributed to the development of Arabic novel. Among them *Naguib Mahfouz, Taha Hussain, Abd al-Hamid Judah al-Sahhar, Salama Musa, Ali Ahmad Bakathir, Adil Kamil, Abd al-Rahman al-Sharqawi, Yusuf Idris, Fathi Ghanim* were famous novelists.

The most promising novelist of Egypt was Muhammad Husayn Haykal. He was considered such a novelist who gave break through to the maturity of the Arabic novel. He was the one we wrote his first striking and fully qualified Arabic novel *Zaynab* which was appeared in 1913. It

[18] Ibid,p-184

was clearly occupies an important position in the field of Arabic prose literature. The novel filled with nostalgic depictions of the Egyptian countryside and of discussions of social philosophy. It criticises Egyptian society and attitudes to marriage through a portrayal of the agonies of love among Egyptian peasants.

It has been almost universally recognized and extensively discussed not merely as an important milestone, but indeed as a focal turning point, in the development of the Egyptian and Arabic novel. The author, a member of a wealthy landowning family, had been sent to France to study for a doctorate in law, and the work carries more than a hint of nostalgia for his native country.[19]

The essential plot of the work, which can be summarised in a few sentences, revolves around two main Characters: one is a peasant-girl Zaynab, and the hero this novel is more educated Hamid, a student in Cairo who returns to visit his family in the countryside during the vacations. The heroine of this novel Zaynab falls in love with a fellow-peasant, named Ibrahim, but is married off to Hamid when Ibrahim cannot afford the bride price; while for his part, Hamid, who has enjoyed a brief flirtation with Zaynab, is for a second time frustrated in love with his cousin Aziza, whom he had always expected to marry. In a classically romantic ending to the plot, obviously inspired by Western models, Zaynab dies of tuberculosis, asking to be buried with Ibrahim's handkerchief, while for his part Hamid first escapes to the city, then disappears without trace, leaving behind a long letter explaining his actions to his parents and putting forward his views on society and its problems.[20]

[19] Paul Starkey, *Modern Arabic Literature,Edinburgh University Press*,2006 Pp.102
[20] Ibid,pp.102

It is clear that in writing *Zaynab* the author was, to some extent at least, creating a self-portrait in the character of Hamid. Indeed, this tendency of early novelists to invest their heroes, either explicitly or implicitly, with autobiographical qualities, is a feature that we shall notice in many authors of this and the next generation. Moreover, although it is beyond dispute that *Zaynab* represents a major advance in Arabic novelistic technique, it has to be said that its faults are equally obvious. Neither the characterisation nor the plot itself is impressive, the stories of Zaynab and Hamid developing to a large extent in isolation from each other. Most obviously, however, the novel is marred by overlong descriptive passages passages that seem to have been inserted almost without regard for their function within the narrative, and which to a large extent probably simply reflect the author's own feelings of nostalgia for Egypt during his stay in Paris. [21]

Artistic merit of *Zaynab*, however, there is no doubt that it not only marked a significant landmark in the development of the novel as an Arabic literary form but is also of considerable interest in its own right. The author's endorsement of the use of colloquial Arabic for peasant dialogue while retaining formal Arabic for the narrative sections of his work, though not original, provided a model that was widely imitated by succeeding writers. More generally, and despite its idealised, at times even sentimental, attempts at the portrayal of village life, Haykal's attempt to integrate an element of social criticism into a Western-style plot provided a model for future development.[22]

The another Egyptian novelist who produce a work of major significance in the development of what for the moment we may call the 'non-

[21] Ibid,pp.103
[22] Ibid,pp.103

historical' novel was Ibrahim Qadir al-Mazini (1890-1949). He embarked on his career as a novelist with the publication of *'Ibrahim the Writer in* 1931. It met with widespread enthusiasm early on, from critics and the reading public alike, and is probably the first novel to depend primarily for its well-recognized fame on its artistic value. It appears that al-Mazini was loyal to the position which he and his fellow members of the *Diwan* Group, Shukri and al Aqqad, adopted namely to avoid the tradition of composing poetry for political and social occasions. Hence, he avoided writing anything critical of the prevailing social conditions in his novels, with the exception of fleeting references. Indeed, he stands in distinct contrast to practically all of the short story writers of the modern school in the 1920s, who wrote stories full of social criticism. In spite of some artistic weaknesses in the novel, the most salient being certain disjointedness in the structure, al-Mazini has succeeded in presenting to the reading public, in a convincing manner, a highly cultured Egyptian intellectual for the first time in an Arabic novel. At this level, which is to say in portraying a complex, witty, and refined thinker, al-Mazini has considerably outdistanced his fellow authors of the pioneering generation.[23]

In *'Ibrahim the Writer'* the language excels by far that in *Zaynab,* as Mazini employs clear and powerful Arabic and uses an impressively successful style in presenting mocking, ironic, or satirical episodes. These are characteristic of his writing. Al-Mazini's language can also be at times sublime. The clearest instances of exalted expression are scenes where 'Ibrahim contemplates the ultimate issues of life and existence. In these passages, the reader may feel something of the poetic atmosphere

[23] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995, p.20

resonant in Mahfouz's novels of the 1960s. Al-Mazini and Mahfouz also concur in the language of their dialogue.

Al-Mazini did not publish any other novels after *'Ibrahim the Writer* until 1943, when his four other novels appeared at one go: *'Ibrahim al-thani ('Ibrahim the Second), Thalathat rijal wa imra'a (Three Men and a Woman), Ud ala al-bad'(Back to the Beginning),* and *Midu wa shuraka'uhu (Midu and His Associates).* The mystery behind the silence of al-Mazini's muse of novel composition seems to lie in the great uproar stirred up by al-Mazini's insertion into *'Ibrahim the Writer* of some pages of a Russian novel he had translated.[24] The uproar seems to have inhibited him from publishing other novels until the storm had blown over. In this interim period between 1931 and 1943, al-Mazini restricted himself to writing narrative and political articles. Some of these are contained in two of his books, *Khuyut al-ankabut (Spider Webs)* and *Fi al-tariq (On the Road),* which appeared in 1935 and 1937 respectively.[25]

Tawfiq al-Hakim was another pioneer of Arabic novel. The first novel of Tawfiq al-Hakim (1898-1987), *Awdat al-ruh (The Return of the Spirit),* appeared in 1933. The novel received enthusiastic acclaim which was well deserved. The critics glowing evaluations of *The Return of the Spirit* probably stem from their realization that al-Hakim had in fact advanced the Arabic novel to a higher plane. In this novel the author place his own styles of intellectual thinking in the conversations of other characters inappropriately, irrespective of differing levels of social and educational background. In this novel, as in most of his novels, al-Hakim is sincerely concerned about social conditions and ways to reform outworn attitudes and abusive practices. But in al-Hakim's novels, and especially in

[24] Nimat 'Ahmad Fu'ad, *'Adab al-Mazini* (Cairo: Mu'assasat al-Khankl, 1961), pp. 258-268
[25] Ibid,p-259

Yawmiyat na'ib fi al- 'aryaf (Diary of a Country Prosecutor) of 1937, these issues are transformed as well into occasions for entertainment and merriment. In *The Return of the Spirit,* al-Hakim's sure mastery of the mature techniques of narration becomes abundantly clear. His narratives flow swiftly, smoothly, and spontaneously, drawing the reader within a few pages *in medias res,* into the heart of the plot. Al-Hakim also succeeds admirably in his dramatic handling of dialogue, which he utilizes to acquaint the reader with his characters, their physical features, their temperaments, their stations in life, and the standing of each one in the eyes of the others. All the while he develops the moving plot while probing the emotions and attitudes of each actor. In his dialogues, al-Hakim follows the example of Haykal in using Egyptian colloquial Arabic without hesitation. He managed to consolidate appreciation for using the colloquial in conversation and, in so doing, influenced many other authors of the younger generation.[26]

On the basis of numerous positive strengths, some of which have already been pointed out, and which surely more than outweigh some minor flaws, *The Return of the Spirit,* in the opinion of certain British orientalists, can sustain comparison with Western works of class. In the words of Neville Barbour, it is "well up to the standard of literary workmanship in the West. In this respect, it marks a distinct advance in modern Egyptian literature."[27] *The Return of the Spirit* thus constitutes a prominent landmark in the history of the Arabic novel.

Tawfiq al-Hakim wrote three other novels which deserve mention in this survey. *Diary of a Country Prosecutor,* published in 1937, which was translated into English in 1944. A French critic who was especially

[26] Ibid,p-265
[27] Sakkout, *The Egyptian Novel and Its Main Trends (1913-1952),* p. 89.

delighted with its sparkling wit and satire remarked that the reader even forgets the idea of social reform, which was what motivated al-Hakim to write it in the first place. He declares that he wished this group of people might remain exactly as they were, just so long as they continued to provide all this wit and spirit of fun.[28] Two further excellent novels followed: *Usfur min al-sharq (A Bird from the East),* appearing in 1938 and also translated into English in 1966; and *al-Ribat al-muqaddas (The Sacred Bond),* published in 1944. Tawfiq al-Hakim subsequently gave up his calling as a novelist for the remainder of his life.

Another milestone in the development of the multi-faceted aspects of novel writing came in 1926 when Taha Husayn published in serial form a fictionalised account of his early childhood, entitled *Al-Ayyam* (The Days, 1925; *An Egyptian Childhood*, 1932), the narrative features of which especially the ironic play between the narrator and the protagonist have rightly earned it a significant place in the history of the development of modern Arabic fiction. [29] Taha Husayn had published *Dua' al-karuwan (The Call of the Plover)* in 1941, and *'Ahlam Shahrazad (The Dreams of Shahrazad)* and *al-Hubb al-da'ic (Lost Love),* both of which were published also in the early forties. In 1944, he wrote *Shajarat al-bu's (The Tree of Misery),* which was his last novel.

In the middle of 1940s when the realistic novels of Naguib Mahfouz began to appear, one following the other in almost yearly succession, the Arabic novel entered a new era. Gone from the pages of Mahfouz's writings were the flaws which critics had noted in earlier Arab ventures into novel writing, albeit flaws which the best novelists of the pioneers' generation were skillful in avoiding. Missing in Mahfouz's prose were

[28] *Ibid.,* p. 91
[29] Ibid,p-185

the prolix passages of rambling verbiage the padding and the disjointedness in narrative structure. There were no drawn out descriptive passages, no intrusive direct personal statements by the author, no long winded digressions. Nor did readers come upon richly overblown descriptions of situations, events, and character portrayals. In Mahfouz's works, the necessary elements of good narrative are set in proper proportion, appearing spontaneously, naturally, straightforwardly. Mastery of the Arabic language allows Mahfouz to pass smoothly and felicitously from the accents of refined poetry to the familiar conversations of lane and alley. With Mahfouz one descends, as it were, into the depths of the human soul. He casts a searchlight into the motives and driving forces of human behavior. He listens to the most intricate psychic resonances in each act and occurrence. Naguib Mahfouz guides his readers with worldly sophistication, total candor, unique originality, and persuasiveness; Mahfouz's work enables his public to enter the hearts and souls of the individuals he describes. He allows his readers, to an uncanny degree, to assume the *Weltanschauung* of his protagonists, to view the world through their eyes and to see how drastic changes take place in the human personality. He provides an inner view of how individuals rejoice, how they panic, what their rage is like, how they grieve. From this perspective, Naguib Mahfouz has fulfilled a creative destiny no less than the great writers in England, France, Russia, America, and other lands. [30]

Naguib Mahfouz has written an impressive number of novels. Some of which are counted among the Arabic classics of this century: *Midaq Alley, The Beginning and the End, Palace Walk, Palace of Desire, Sugar Street, al-Liss wa al-kilab (The Thief and the Dogs), al- Summan wa al-*

[30] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995,p-33

kharif (Autumn Quail), al-Shahhadh (The Beggar), Tharthara fawq al-NIl (Adrift on the Nile), Miramar (the name of a fictional pension in Alexandria), and *Malhamat al-harafish (The Harafish).* A brief perusal of these works will reveal that they encompass realistic novels, naturalistic novels, family sagas, novels of the absurd, existentialist novels, and novels of magical realism. In most of these novels, one finds stream of consciousness, accounts told by multiple narrators, and intertextuality. In short, it could be said that Naguib Mahfouz's novels constitute an abridged history of the world novel (which evolved over some three centuries) in just three decades. Moreover Naguib Mahfouz's novels, which represent various world literary trends and schools of writing, are also on a par with leading writers representing those trends and schools internationally. Being a broad survey, this introduction obviously cannot go into an adequate discussion of the works of any one author. [31]

Abd al-Hamid Judah al-Sahhar was an eminent novelist of Egypt. He wrote a number of novels of which the most famous is probably *Fi qafilat al-zaman (In the Caravan of Time)* published in 1947. This work and *al-Sharic al-jadid (The New Street)* are novels of generation. In each of these al-Sahhar relates the lives of three generations of a family. Perhaps it was al-Sahhar that Mahfouz had in mind when he remarked that he had made a mistake in explaining to his friends his plans to write a novel of three generations similar to what Taha Husayn had done in *The Tree of Misery.* Not long afterwards, Mahfouz was shocked that one of his circles of writer friends had seized upon the idea and published a novel of generations. *In the Caravan of Time* was published years before Mahfouz published his *Trilogy.* This was a lesson to Mahfouz not to divulge the secrets about works he was planning.[32] The novel *In the Caravan of Time*

[31] Ibid p.34
[32] Jamal al-Ghitani, ed., *Najib Mahfuz yatadhakkar* (Beirut: Dar al-Masira, 1980), p.63

is concerned with Egyptian society, which al-Sahhar succeeds in presenting in a lively portrayal of prevailing customs and traditions in Cairo at the beginning of the twentieth century. A further aspect of the novel is that certain political events are woven into the narrative and are bound up in the plot. A problem from which the novel, suffers, however, is the lack of balance among the various parts of the book. The reader comes to realizes that the love intrigue of Mustafa, a grandson of the original progenitors, practically monopolizes a whole generation's portion of the saga. Al-Sahhar's other novel, *The New Street,* suffers from a similar lack of balance on an even greater scale. Moreover, the work lacks adequate delineation of character in too many instances, to the extent that, after a lapse of time, precious few figures stand out in the reader's mind. An amazing multitude of characters enters the scene without proper attention to the portrayal of individual personalities. For instance, there were the father and mother who had two sons, one of whom got married and had six children. Then there were five daughters who all took husbands and begot a large number of babies all of these are mentioned briefly without counting their relations, friends, and acquaintances.[33]

Ali Ahmad Bakatheer was also a famous novelist of Egypt. Although he was initially famous for his numerous plays, he wrote a good number of historical novels. The first of these, *Wa 'Islamahu (oh my Islam),* won the Arabic Academy prize. Bakatheer's most significant novel was *al-Tha'ir al-'ahmar (The Red Revolutionary)* which was appeared in 1949 where he endeavors to put forward the idea of an Islamic socialism. Bakatheer is convinced that a socialism in harmony with Islam would be more successful, more excellent, and more suitable for Arab societies and,

[33] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995,p-35

naturally, for non-Arab societies also, than the communism which had emerged with powerful effect on many in Egypt in the 1940s. The novel is not concerned with the lives of kings and political events. The author rather directs his attention to the social oppression endured by the hero of the novel. Obviously, Bakatheer uses history to treat modern problems. Hence the title *The Red Revolutionary* which, subsequently on second printing, was changed to *The Story of the Struggle Between Socialism and Communism.* On one hand, it is true that the novel deals with a great variety of events over a vast geographical expanse without going very deeply into carefully conceived character portrayals. Yet on the other hand, the novelist deserves hearty accolades, above all for his distinguished talent in bringing to life a period in Islamic history full of momentous social events hitherto seldom discussed and unfamiliar to the general reader. Nor is he interested in reviewing the lives of kings and rulers or political upheavals as was so often done in the past. Bakatheer focuses on the lives of the lower classes who had been quite deprived of any social justice.[34]

Adil Kamil was a prolific novelist of Egypt. He was contemporary novelist of Naguib Mahfouz. He has written three novels. The first two were published in the early 1940s. Kamil did not write another novel until almost fifty years later when *al-Hall wal-rabt* appeared in 1993. Of the earlier novels, the first, and better of the two, *King of Heavenly Rays,* won the Arab Academy Prize in 1941 as previously mentioned. This novel relates the life of the pharaoh Akhnaton, whose religious teachings and realistic attitude appealed also to Bakatheer, who wrote a play entitled *'Akhnatun wa Nafartiti.* It is interesting to recall here that Adil Kamil's friends Abd al-Hamid Judah al-Sahhar and Naguib Mahfouz had

[34] Sakkout, *The Egyptian Novel and Its Main Trends (1913-1952),* p.186

both also written about another pharaoh, Ahmose; al-Sahhar's novel *'Ahmus* was published in 1943 and Mahfouz's *The Struggle for Thebes* was printed in 1944. It is clear that the four young friends including Hadramawti Bakathir, all recent university graduates, were attracted to pharaonic history. [35]

During the very same years members of the pioneering generation, along with Muhammad Farid 'Abd al-Hadid (1893-1967) and his colleagues, were deriving their plots from Arab and Islamic history, as mentioned earlier. It is also accepted that in their recourse to history under the shadow of foreign occupation, the motivation of these authors was not simply to provide escape from the grievous present, but rather quite the contrary: they were intent on reinforcing a sense of belonging, to strengthen a firm grounding in national identity and to arouse hope in the hearts of the younger generation. Coming back to his novel *A King of Heavenly Rays,* it is worth noting that Adil Kamil was entirely in agreement with Naguib Mahfouz when he drew from his personal experience in portraying the major part of Akhnaton's personality. Adil Kamil himself lived through crises similar to those the pharaoh endured before his spiritual crisis was resolved by a transforming enlightenment of revelation. The formative phase in the pharaoh's intellectual life was fraught with spells of perplexity, of despair, of revulsion for life, and of a sense that everything in life is futile, which indeed were like the feelings of estrangement experienced by Adil Kamil himself in the company of Naguib Mahfouz in their early adulthood, as Mahfouz mentions.[36]

Hence the character of Akhnaton gains enormously in credibility and comprehensible humanity. In the later period of Akhnaton's life when he

[35] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995,p.37
[36] Fu'ad Dawarah, *Rihlat al-khamsin ma' al-qira'a wa al-kitaba*,al-Katib (January 1963), p. 21.

experiences revelation, Adil Kamil utilizes in his descriptions *hadith,* the collected non-Qur'anic sayings and accounts of the Prophet Muhammad, which describe the event of revelation to the Prophet. An innovation in narrative technique here was Adil Kamil's tentative use of stream of consciousness for the first time in an Arabic novel. After this novel, Adil Kamil took up realistic writing and published *Mallim al- 'akbar* (Halfpenny the Great) in 1944. He exposes the injustices which the working classes suffer under the capitalists and feudal landowners. The author's intensely doctrinaire sympathy for the proletariat leads to an overly simplistic division of his characters into black and white. This was an approach completely alien to Naguib Mahfouz, whose characterizations in describing social classes are drawn with absolute objectivity, whatever the situation.[37]

Another writer of the same generation who also received the Arabic language Academy Prize is Muhammad Abd al-Halim Abdallah (1913-70). He wrote a number of novels which in the beginning of his career as author were in the romantic style, and sometimes exaggeratedly sentimental. These were, and still are, quite popular. His characterizations are generally over simplistic, either thoroughly evil or paragons of virtue. The characters of the poorer classes stand out as innocent victims of an unjust oppressive society. His later works show an evolution as, for example, in *Ghusn alzaytun (The Olive Branch)* (1955), in which he wrote about the problems of marriage in the family. In *al-Bayt al-samit (The Silent House)* (1966), he treats the nature of evil and the relation between the sexes. Abdullah published his first more realistic novel *Laqita (A Foundling Girl)* in 1948, which was precisely the same year that Yusuf al-Sibai (1917-1987) published his first novel *Na'ib Azra'il*

[37] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995,p.38

(Azra'il's Deputy). Al-Sibai's next novel *'Ard al-nifaq (Land of Hypocrisy)* came out in 1949. Both novels are based on imaginary situations with a pervasive humorous outlook in a manner reminiscent of the writings of al-Mazini. In subsequent years, al-Sibai launched into romantic writing centering on love between individuals of the upper middle class, although a couple of novels are exceptions. He was joined by 'Ihsan Abd al-Quddus (1919-1990), who pursued a parallel path in style, mood, and subject material, producing an enormous number of novels and short stories (consult the Bibliography for details). The novels by these two writers have enjoyed great popularity not only in Egypt, but in other countries in the Arab world as well.[38]

Abd al-Rahman al-Sharqawi was also a prominent novelist of Egypt. In contrast to al-Sibai and Abd al-Quddus, whose novels deal with the romantic lives of the upper class, al-Sharqawi was concerned with the plight of the *fallahin* in the Egyptian village. His novel *al- 'Ard,* translated into English as *Egyptian Earth,* was the first modern work where the *fallahin* actually speak their own language, which was of course their country dialect of the Delta. He presents the villagers in a most realistic down-to-earth manner, dramatizing to the reader the fact that they are real people whom one has to take seriously. One becomes acquainted with them as distinct human beings with crushing problems and concerns. The reader knows that they have their own values and ideals for which they will make great sacrifices. The *fallahin* are not simple buffoonish bumpkins as the cinema and television usually portrays them. This novel succeeds commendably in offering a vivid, truthful, close-up view of village customs and the way of life in the rural Delta. The author has gleaned hundreds of evocative details of life in action with

[38] Ibid p.38

such skill that indeed he casts the village in the role of the heroine, and not merely the backdrop to tragedy as in Muhammad Husayn Haykal's *Zaynab* or Yusuf 'Idris's *al-Haram,* translated into English as *The Sinners.* Al-Sharqawi however, it seems, was under the influence of the principles of the Marxist critique when he wrote this novel. Hence he falls victim to some unnecessary flaws of the Marxist approach which were not particularly applicable here. For example, he sees the village as divided into two conflicting camps. The one consists of the *umda,* or village mayor, and his followers, behind who stands the pasha. These figures are presented only through the eyes of the *fallahin.* Consequently, the *umda* and his supporters, who are the citadel of power, are presented as evil personified. In the other camp are the *fallahin,* depicted as admirable, good folk by disposition. Even when they quarrel, have rows with each other, or cheat, they quickly snap back to their original sterling character, cooperating and getting along amiably with each other. Between the two camps stands a man of religion: the village *'imam,* alternately arousing resentment or ridicule wherever he turns up. Naturally, he hobnobs with the camp of power. The situation has changed enormously by the time we reach *al-Fallah (The Villager),* al-Sharqawi's fourth and last novel. Here the man of religion appears respected by the *fallahin* and sympathetic to them. He supports them tacitly to the extent that he is able. Al-Sharqawi reveals in *al-Fallah* that he has backed off from the communist path and radical socialist ideology. Whereas in *Egyptian Earth,* the earth (i.e. *al-'ard)* is tantamount to dignity and honor, the hero of *al-Fallah* declares that he had been better off without the land which the state granted him, yet with the freedom which the revolution had robbed from him. In addition, the novel exposes the extent of corruption in the Socialist Union, the single political party which the state had adopted. Al-Sharqawi's most impressive novel from the artistic point

of view is surely *al-Shawaric al-khalfiya (The Back Streets).* Like *Egyptian Earth,* it relates the struggle of the early thirties against authority, this time in the cities, which culminated in 1935 when several populist groups in Cairo and other cities waged a series of demonstrations. Finally, as a result, the constitution of 1923 was restored and the National Front and the Reformed Government were formed. Al-Sharqawi lived through these events personally and took part in them as a student at the Khedival Secondary School. Hence the accounts gain a great deal of credibility which was not so convincingly substantiated in the struggle of the *fallahin* in *Egyptian Earth.* Actually, al-Sharqawi here has managed, as no other writer has, to convey an immediate sense of living the events of the struggle. He reviews the many steps and aspects of secret planning leading up to acts of protest, the accompanying details required to pull off an operation, the clandestine meetings and the ruses dreamt up to hoodwink the police. Al-Sharqawi also masterfully describes the intense bonding which joined the companions in struggle with a lively realism not present in any other nationalistic novel. [39]

Al-Sharqawi also successfully introduces the reader to the psychological back streets and the intimate secrets of the heroes of his novel on a level generally absent in *Egyptian Earth.* In presenting their secret lives, the author captures scenes of powerful human emotions. The full scope of al-Sharqawi's narrative talents is most clearly displayed here in this multifaceted moral and emotional dilemma where no one knows the whole truth about the martyrdom of the hero. *The Back Streets* abounds in scenes of profoundly moving human pathos. It almost seems as though al-Sharqawi here was making up for the lack of psychological insights and development in *Egyptian Earth.* By contrast, in *Egyptian Earth* he had

[39] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995,p.40

focused almost wholly on the struggle of the *fallahin,* scarcely allowing any occasion for introspective revelations. In this novel, the high art of eloquent rhetoric is applied in colloquial Arabic, to which al-Sharqawi had accustomed his readers in *Egyptian Earth.* Al-Sharqawi displays his superb literary style in formal Arabic, at times rising to fine levels of poetic diction as he recounts moving psychological situations.[40]

Another famous novelist of Egypt was *Yusuf 'Idris*. He wrote his first novel *Qissat hubb (City of Love and Ashes),* published in 1956. Hamza, the protagonist of the novel, experiences nationalistic fervor simultaneously with his passionate attraction to a young school mistress. She has been soliciting contributions at her school for the Resistance and brings them to the young patriot and his companions in struggle against the British in the Suez Canal Zone. When Hamza confesses his love to the schoolmistress, she berates him sharply for this unexpected declaration of feeling. She hurries out, leaving him because he does not seem to her sufficiently committed to the cause of resistance. Hamza feels humiliated and embarrassed. Eventually their relationship resumes and blossoms as the school mistress admit that she has fallen in love with him. Yusuf 'Idris's most significant novel is in fact *al-Haram (The Sinners),* published in 1959. It is the tragic story of a young peasant woman working among a group of migrant laborers, or *al-gharabwa* as they are called in the novel. They are the poorest of the *fallahin* and the object of scorn among the employees in charge of administering the estate where the migrant workers have come to work seasonally.[41]

At the beginning of the novel one of the watchmen of the estate comes across the dead body of a newborn child beside an irrigation ditch. He

[40] Ibid p.37
[41] Ibid p.37

immediately spreads the news among the local inhabitants who make up their minds that the wayward mother must be one of the migrant women workers. Doubts, however, soon begin to assail their minds that just possibly one of their own women might be guilty. Yusuf 'Idris is at his most brilliant in describing how very little, in fact, each one knows about his neighbors or indeed how little he knows about his own household for certain. So much so that a father, in one case, even suspects his daughter simply because she feels indisposed and is keeping to her bed. After some days it is finally discovered that the mother of the infant is indeed one of the migrant laborers. She had come to work there, as she was obliged to support a sick husband and two small children. One day her foot slipped on a stone while she was digging in the field. She fell down while trying to pick up a sweet potato for her ailing husband, who had a special hankering for them. The landowner's son, suddenly appearing out of nowhere, darted over and pretended to help her up. She resisted his overenthusiastic assistance but finally succumbed, first because he had overpowered her but also because she had long been deprived of love. [42]

Thereafter the unfortunate woman could not forgive herself for her moment of weakness. The local villagers are vastly reassured as to the state of virtue in their own households and sympathize with the migrant workers after learning about the heartrending tragedy of Aziza, who dies of childbed fever. In her final feverish rantings, she reveals exactly what happened. One early dawn, when she felt birth pangs, she finally delivered the baby herself by a canal. But putting her hand over the baby's mouth to stop his screaming, for fear of scandal, she accidentally smothered him. As for the father who had suspected his daughter, his mind is set at rest about his daughter's virtue. He rewards her by allowing

[42] Ibid p.38

her to visit the *mu'adhdhin's* wife, who is in fact an adulterous and a procurer to boot. He has no idea that she is going in reality to meet the notorious young playboy of the estate who eventually runs away with her.[43]

Fathi Ghanim was a distinguished Arabic novelist of Egypt. Fathi Ghanim's first novel *al-Jabal (The Mountain),* which came out in 1958, and *al-Rajul alladhi faqada zillahu,* translated into English as *The Man Who Lost His Shadov* (1961-62). Yet what an enormous difference there is between these two novels. The first novel incorporates a true story which actually happened to the author, told here approximately as it occurred. He even announces that his name is Fathi Ghanim and that he works for the Bureau of Investigation of the Ministry of Education. He had been appointed to travel to the village of al-Gurna to investigate the complaints of the Upper Egyptian inhabitants who, it had been decided, were to be moved from their traditional village near Luxor to a new village built especially for them. They had, however, turned down this arrangement to leave their old village. This is all factual information on public record. The author tries, stumblingly, to use the technique of multiple narrators in the first person singular. The narrators here are villagers who testified as witnesses in the actual interrogation which Fathi Ghanim himself conducted, it seems. This technique was utilized obviously to present the same situation through the numerous voices of the characters in the novel. He succeeds relatively well in this tactic. There is, however, a world of difference between his experiment in using this narrative style here, which passed largely unnoticed by readers, and the later mature and fully competent use of this technique in the second novel. His felicitous use of this technique is what tempted great writers

[43] Ibid p.42

later on to apply it, as did both Naguib Mahfouz and Jabra 'Ibrahim Jabra. Of the many novels which Fathi Ghanim has authored, his best beyond any doubt is *The Man Who Lost His Shadow.* This novel achieves in an experimental style a faithful representation, even though harsh, of the hidden recesses, secrets, and moral stances of the world of the press, which come as a rough jolt to some readers. The novel is divided into four parts, each revolving around the chief protagonist Yusuf. Each part is related by a different narrator. The first section is told by Mabruka, who worked as a maid in the home of a wealthy man related to Yusuf's father, who lives in poverty. Mabruka later marries Yusuf's father. The second part is narrated by Samiya, the ingenuous actress and Yusuf's lover. He later jilts her, thus sacrificing her as unworthy in his schemes of glory, in order to gratify his ambitions and to buttress his future. The narrator of the third part is Muhammad Naji, editor-in-chief of the newspaper for which Yusuf works. Yusuf shoved him out of his way and took over his position. Yusuf himself narrates the fourth and final part.[44]

Fathi Ghanim's very successful use of witnesses to relate the events of the novel is a first in the history of the Arabic novel. Many Arab novelists have since employed this device. While Yusuf is the hero of the novel, he is revealed to us through the testimonies of three persons closely acquainted with him either at work or in his private life, and also by his own vision of himself in the last part of the novel. Yusuf appears as an exemplar of single-minded ambition, the clever opportunistic individual who has been blinded by personal advantage to any moral and humane criteria of behavior. He embodies the gamut of self serving attitudes, the willingness to sacrifice any person or principle for the sake of getting what he is after. Among the other characters, there is Shuhdi Pasha, who

[44] Ibid p.43

lays out money for the newspaper from behind the scenes and controls the editors. Their morality shocks readers in varying degrees. After Yusuf, probably the most important personality is Muhammad Naji, the editor-in-chief, who appointed Yusuf to the staff of the newspaper. He adopted him from the start and opened before him all doors for advancement, unaware that Yusuf would before long be trampling over his own body. Yet in spite of all that, the reader does not instinctively feel any great sympathy for Naji, in that his moral code is hardly any better than Yusuf quite patently, Fathi Ghanim was objective in drawing these personalities, whom he has taken from real life, as it seems. Besides using the narrative technique of multiple speakers, Fathi Ghanim has successfully used other devices which were new at the time: stream of consciousness narrative and the flashback, to mention but two. It is no wonder, then, that the name of Fathi Ghanim is particularly linked to this novel, despite the fact that he wrote many other novels before it and after it. Space does not allow in this present volume for a discussion of works of other writers of this period. [45]

1.5.2.2 Development of Arabic Novel in Lebanon

Although Egyptian writers continued to dominate the production of Arabic fiction, the period towards the end of the 1930s also saw a significant increase in interest in the novel form in other parts of the Arab world, including in particular Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. Despite the pivotal role played in the nineteenth-century *nahda* by Syria and Lebanon, literary activity in these two countries appears to have suffered something of an eclipse during the first decades of the twentieth century. The reasons for this decline are not entirely clear, though the emigration of a significant number of the most eminent intellectuals to Egypt and the

[45] Ibid p.44

Americas was undoubtedly one factor. Be that as it may, it is not until 1939 that we find a Lebanese novel of a comparable quality and interest to the productions of the 1930s in Egypt just described. The early 1930s had, however, already begun to witness the revival of intellectual and literary activity, most particularly in Beirut, and a circle known as the 'Group of Ten' (al-Usba al-Ashara') had begun to inject new life into the city's flagging cultural scene, inspired by the example of the Mahjar poets and others. Closely associated with this group, Tawfiq Yusuf Awwad was already known for his novel *al-Raghif* (1939) appeared, clearly marking him out as an author of considerable talent. Clearly inspired by contemporary Arab nationalism, the work is set at the time of the Arab revolt of 1916 against the Turks, but, as with some Egyptian historical novels already discussed, the historical setting can hardly disguise its relevance to Awwad's own time, and it is perhaps this relevance as much as the work's literary merit that accounted for its popularity. Unfortunately, Awwad, who also served part of his life as a diplomat, appears to have lacked the dogged devotion to the novel form shown by, for example, Naguib Mahfouz, and it was not until 1972 that his success in capturing the mood of the moment was repeated, in *Tawahin Bayrut*, a graphic depiction of the fragmented state of Beiruti society in the period between the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War and the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975.[46]

Among the other writers coming to prominence in the 1930s and 1940s in Lebanon, many associated either with 'al-Usba al-Ashara' or with the slightly later Cenacle Libanais (1946–66), were the novelist and short-story writer *Khalil Taqi al-Din* (1906–87), the poet *Sa'id 'Aql* (1912),[47]

[46] McLoughlin ,Leslie Translated into English as *Death in Beirut*, London, 1976.
[47] Paul Starkey, *Modern Arabic Literature,Edinburgh University Press*,2006 Pp. 73–5

and the critic and imaginative writer *Marun 'Abbad* (1886–1962), whose prodigious output of some fifty books made him one of the most influential figures in Lebanese intellectual and cultural life of his day; of particular importance is his study of Lebanese colloquial poetry (*zajal*), entitled *al-Shir al-Ammi* (1968). To the same intellectual environment, which saw Beirut assume the role of cultural (as well as financial) capital of the Middle East in the period following the Second World War, belongs Suhayl Idris, often mentioned in connection with the 'committed' literary periodical *al-adab*-only one of the numerous periodicals and publishing houses to be founded in Beirut during this period. In addition to his role as a publisher, Suhayl Idris also made a signify cant contribution to the novel in particular through his well-known novel *al-Hayy al-Latini* (1954), a work that stands in a direct line of descent from comparable works by Taha Husayn, Tawfiq al-Hakim and others[48] on the theme of the cultural conflicts experienced by the 'Arab student in Europe'. Two further novels followed, *al- Khandaq al-ghamiq* (1958) and *Asabiun allati tatariq* (1962), both like *al-Hayy al-Latini* are partly autobiographical in nature although neither managed to achieve the justified popularity of the earlier work.

Although Lebanese authors had begun writing novels earlier than Egyptian men of letters, the fully mature novel did not appear in Lebanon until the late 1930s. In 1939, to be exact, Tawfiq Yusuf Awwad (1911-1988) published a fully developed novel, *al-Raghif (The Loaf of Bread).* The flowering of the novel in Egypt during the thirties and the appearance of such famous names as 'Ibrahim al-Mazini, Tawfiq al-Hakim, Taha Husayn, and later on Najib Mahfuz, did have its effect, so it seems, on the

[48] Rifa'a Rafi al-Tahtawi. *Takhlis al-ibriz ila talkhis Bariz*, pp. 27–8.

development of the novel in Lebanon, as in other Arab lands.[49]

Among Awwad's forerunners were Salim al-Bustani, the earliest novelist of Beirut, already mentioned above; Farah 'Antun (1874-1922), authorof the novel *'Urushalim al-jadlda (The New Jerusalem)* (1904) and other works; Niqula Haddad (1872-1953), who wrote *Hawa' al-jadida (The New Eve), Ivonne Movar* (1905), and other novels; Yacqub Sarruf (1852-1927), the author of the novel *Fatal Misr (The Young Lady of Egypt)* as well as other fiction; and Jibran Khalil Jibran (1885-1931), who wrote *al-'Ajniha al-mutakassira (Broken Wings),* published in 1912. All of these novels and other narratives, however, fall short of the mark to some degree. In most of their works one typically misses well-proportioned structure and clearly developed character delineation.[50]

Tawfiq Yusuf Awwad was a prominent novelist of Lebanon. His novel *al-Raghif (The Loaf of Bread)* revolves around the village of Saqiyat al-Misk during the First World War. It depicts the lower classes of Lebanese society under Ottoman rule. Significantly Tawfiq Yusuf cAwwad in this novel writes with a candid objectivity reminiscent of Najib Mahfuz, describing the poor with their admirable qualities along with their shortcomings. Awwad portrays the poverty, destitution, and dispossession which are destroying the lives of the landless workers. He is likewise a shrewd observer of character in describing those who collaborate with the Ottomans, the spies and the informers in the pay of the Turks against their fellow countrymen. Out of a series of scenes and episodes of this novel emerges a convincing, lifelike portrayal of a Lebanese village and its inhabitants caught in the ordeal of war until final victory. Despite some pages of melodramatic exaggeration, *The Loaf of Bread* is ranked

[49] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995. p.57
[50] Ibid-p-58

generally as a highly successful novel.

Tawfiq Yusuf Awwad wrote only one other novel after *The Loaf of Bread.* More than thirty years later, in 1972, he published *Tawahin Bayrut (The Mills of Beirut).*[51] It is a more mature and, in fact, a more distinguished novel than *A Loaf of Bread with* regard to the structure of the plot, the intensely sensitive language, the treatment of extreme human situations, and the portrayals of character. The author's objectivity comes out more powerfully in this second novel, which takes place during the events of 1968 following the Arab defeat. It reveals the political corruption, the intersectarian strife, the moral perversity of men in high places, the incessant Israeli raids by air and over land, the student demonstrations, and the hollow speeches of leaders. The novel prefigures the Lebanese Civil War (1974-1994), in which the author was ultimately to lose his life in 1988 Other famous Lebanese novelists who deserve special mention are Layla al-Bacalabaki (b. 1936), Layla Usayran (b. 1936), Emily Nasrallah (b. 1938), Ilyas al-Khuri (b. 1948), Rashid al-Da'if (b. 1945), and Hanan al- Shaykh (b. 1954). (See their listed works in the index of the Lebanese novel in this bibliography.) This survey obviously cannot discuss in detail all the broad array of novels in Lebanon. A review has been undertaken of some of the works of two of the authors mentioned above to provide examples of the excellent novels written here in recent years.[52]

Emily Nasrallah had his valuable contribution to the development of Arabic novel through his famous novel *Touyour Ayloul* (Birds of September). It was Nasrallah's first published novel, in 1962. This story about her native village and its people as the heroes won immediate

[51] Ibid p.59
[52] Ibid p.60

acclaim and two outstanding prizes: the "Said Akl" prize and the "Friends of the Book" prize. This novel describes the saga of the village people who witness their loved ones (sons, husbands…) depart for far away more promising lands and countries, just as they see in the month of September, birds, in awe of the expected cold winter, head south in search of warmer place.[53]

The another novel of Nasrsllah is *Shajarat ad Dufla* (The October Tree). It is a social novel that weaves its story around a young attractive girl, "Raya", who in her desire to be free and live her own life, revolts in strange ways against her village society and comes to a tragic end.

Al Rahina (The Bond aged) is an important novel of Emily . This novel tells the life story of a young woman, promised (bondaged) into marriage when still yet a child, to the village godfather by her poor peasant parents. Although not anymore in practice, the story is symbolic of the destiny of many women who are subjugated by social forces (parents or family, or social unwritten rules) to this or that despite their opposition[54]

Tilka az Zikrayat (Those Memories) is also a famous novel of Emily Nasrallah. This novel is the other side of the coin to "Birds of September". While the latter deals with the tragedy of the parents who stay in the village, the first follows the "birds" (sons and daughters) to their western countries of emigration. The story deals with their struggle and suffering and disappointments, and describes the tragic return home of some of them after failures and illnesses[55]

Another fabulous novel by Emily that was *Al Iklaa Aks Az Zaman* (Flight Against Time). The Civil War of 1975-1990 forms a backdrop to Emily

[53] Ibid p.67
[54] Ibid p.69
[55] Ibid p.70

Nasrallah's Flight Against Time, but the story Nasrallah tells is far older and more universal than the Lebanese Civil War of 1975-1990. Nasrallah eloquently captures the enduring anguish of parents whose children feel they must spread their wings in other lands, touched by the "contagion of emigration", never to return to the "nursery that embraced the seedlings for a while". In a tale of mythic proportions, Nasrallah captures the searing love of parents for children and children for their parents, despite two decades of separation, and sister for brother, despite half a century of separation. She portrays the yearning for loved ones from whom one will forever be separated, not by death, but by distance. In a world of global migrations, no one can be untouched by stories of separation, yearning for loved ones far away, and nostalgia for a time when parents, children, family, friends and neighbors lived in a small world of integrity and dignity. [56]

Hanan al-Shaykh was a distinguished novelist of Lebanon. He has written many novel in Arabic and left his contribution to make rich Arabic literature. His novel *Hikayat Zahra (The Story of Zahra)* has been a resounding success since its appearance in 1980 both inside Lebanon and among a widening circle of Arab and foreign readers beyond Lebanon. The author's focus on the heroine, Zahra, is made clear in the title. As the stages of Zahra's life unfold, they reveal various injustices to which girls growing up to womanhood in our societies are often exposed. The earliest instance is the family's preferential treatment of a brother over his sister, from infancy through adolescence and after. Another case in point is that the girl alone is held to be the criminal offender against family honor whenever and however intimate relations occur. Certain factors contributing to the growing interest in this book include the

[56] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995. p.73

exposure, in detail, of situations such as those indicated above; the time of publication, which coincided with the expansion of the feminist movement; and the emergence of feminist criticism in educated and intellectual circles have contributed to the keen interest in Hanan al-Shaykh's novel among readers, who study it both in Arabic and in English, as well as in several other European languages.[57]

Jurji Zaydan was also a most prominent novelist of Lebanon. He introduced the historical novel into Arabic literature, and was the first to serialize novels in a magazine. His purpose was not just literary entertainment but also national education. The twenty one novels he wrote dealt all with different aspects of Arab history. They intended to familiarize the reader in an easy popularized form with his own past. Though these novels cannot compare in their literary quality to the achievements of later generations, they were the basis for later developments and are still popular with Arab readers. Several new editions have been published in recent years. He tried to educate and instruct his Arab contemporaries about the modern world, as well as about the Arab past and national identity. He is considered to have laid down the foundation for a pan-Arab national identity.[58]

1.5.2.3 Development of Arabic Novel in Syria:

A similar pattern of development that we have observed in Egypt from early translation, imitation and experimentation, through the historical novel, to mature Western-style novel may also be observed in Syria, where the pioneering works of Fransis Marrash (1836–73), whose poetic prose style influenced Jubran Khalil Jubran, were followed by the historical novels of Ma'ruf Ahmad al-Arna'ut (1892–1948), published

[57] Ibid p.74
[58] Ibid p.75

between 1929 and 1942: the four novels were subsequently collected together and republished under the revealing title of *al-Malhama al-kubra.* Of greater interest for the development of the novel form generally, however, were the efforts of Shakib al-Jabiri (1912–), generally regarded as the founder of the modern Syrian novel, whose first novel *Naham* (1937), set in Germany, is, like several other works discussed in this section, again highly dependent on the author's experiences while living abroad as a young man. The author's three subsequent novels, *Qadar yalhu* (1939), *Qaws quzah* (1946) and the later *Wada'an ya Afamiya* (1960) continued this general theme, each being concerned with different aspects of the tensions between 'East' and 'West' on both a personal and a more nationalistic level, though none appears to have achieved the status of *Naham* as a landmark in the development of modern Syrian fiction.[59]

Hanna Mina is a Syrian writer, described as Syria's most prominent novelist, He published his first novel, *Blue Lamps,* in 1954. Had he ceased writing at this point in his life few readers interested in the Arabic novel would even have remembered him, much less have studied his writing.[60]

The earliest novel of Hanna Mina suffers from a number of shortcomings, both in structure and in character development. Hanna Mina, however, returned to novel-writing after a lapse of some twelve years, when his first more mature and more distinguished novel, *al-Shirac wa al-casifa (The Sail and the Storm),* appeared in 1966. Since that time, he has been producing a steady stream of novels.

[59] Ibid p.75
[60] Ibid p.76

Hanna Mina's novels reveal his scrupulously careful observation of people's living conditions, of nature, and, particularly, of the sea. His writing is distinguished by his superior talent in depicting character and weaving together complex events to which his brilliant narrative skill confers a spontaneous momentum. He is a master in penetrating the depths of human nature and personal relationships and in unfolding human secrets. Complexities such as these are expressed in language both serene and lucid, precisely fitting the situations described. His language can also at times be superbly lyrical, especially in scenes involving the sea. His early novels belong to the movement of social realism, and focus on class conflict; his later works contain a more symbolic analysis of class differences.[61]

His writing on the suffering of ordinary people was partly inspired by his own experiences, alternately working as a stevedore; barber and journalist works are set during the period of the French Mandate of Syria, or in the period immediately following independence.

Halim Barakat was also an eminent writer of Syria. He has written two well-known novels that demonstrate his preoccupation with the Arab-Israeli wars. These are *Sittat 'ayyam (Six Days),* published in 1961, and *Awdatal-ta'ir 'ila al-bahr*(translated into English as *Days of Dust),* published in 1969.

Six Days retraces some of the horrors of the War of 1948 and in particular the massacre at Dayr al-Bahr. The inhabitants of Dayr al-Bahr are issued an ultimatum demanding that they surrender within six days or be annihilated. The Israelis, however, raze the town one day before the

[61] *Words Without Borders, Literature from the "Axis of Evil",* ISBN 978-1-59558-205-8, 2006, pp.55-6

deadline set in the ultimatum. Only one person, a young university graduate, who is the hero of the novel, survives.[62]

Ghada Samman was a distinguished novelist of Syria. Her first novel *Beiruth* (Beirut) was published in 1975, then her another novel *Kawabis wa Beiruth* (Beirut Nightmares) was published in 1976, and *Laylat al Milyar* (The Night of the First Billion) was published in 1986. The first three are a trilogy based on the experience of the civil war in Lebanon, immigration, nationalism, and exile during the Israeli invasion 1982.

Her writing focused on issues concerning Arab women and Arab nationalism. Honest and outspoken in her opinions, she founded her own publishing company in order to continue to write her opinions uncensored.

In "Beirut '75" Samman explores the social, economic, and political conditions embodied in an outmoded and corrupt form of male-dominated feudalism, exposing in the process many of the factors that eventually resulted in the eruption of the Lebanese civil war in 1975, shortly after the publication of her book. In "Beirut Nightmares" she recreates the surrealistic and nightmarish quality of the civil war in Lebanon during the infamous hotel battles of 1976, concentrating especially on such questions as the role of the intellectual in revolution and the relationship between the pen and the bullet. In "Laylat al Milyar," she explores the self-imposed predicament of the Lebanese living in Geneva during the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982 and reveals how the characters simply replay, in the safety of the wealthy symbol of European

[62] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995. p.81

democracy that is Geneva, the same opportunistic exploitation by the rich and powerful Lebanese of their poor and weak compatriots.[63]

Through symbolism and allegory, Samman addresses sensitive social and political issues that might be either too dangerous or less effective if confronted directly. A distinctive feature of her work is the symbolic use of animals to give insight into the human condition.[64]

1.5.2.4. Development of Arabic Novel in Palestine

The mature Palestinian novel has flourished within a very short time and is now represented by works of considerable refinement, in spite of its relatively recent appearance on the Arab scene. There are many Palestinian novelists, both in their historical homeland and in the Diaspora, and many Jordanian novelists as well. Among the leading writers of Palestine and Jordan are *Sahar Khalifa, Yahya Yakhluf, Tawfiq Fayad, Ghassan Kanafani, Jabra 'Ibrahim Jabra, Emil Habibi, Ghalib Halasa, 'Ibrahim Nasrallah, and Taysir Sabul*. Within the limited space allowed in this present volume, this brief review will concentrate on the works of Ghassan Kanafani, Jabra 'Ibrahim Jabra, and Emil Habibi.

Ghassan Kanafani was a famous novelist of Palestine. His first novel, *Rijal fil shams (Men in the Sun)* was made into a film called *al-Makhdu'un* (The Dupes).This is one of the first films to address the Palestinian predicament: set in Iraq in the 1950s, it is the story of three Palestinian refugees concealed in the steel tank of a truck, trying to make their way across the border into Kuwait, the "promised land". [65]

His second novel, *Ma tabaqqa lakum,* (All That's Left to You) was published in 1966. It is considered one of the earliest and most successful

[63] http://www.aljadid.com/content/ghada-samman-writer-many layers#sthash.a206P3ir.dpuf
[64] http://www.aljadid.com/content/ghada-samman-writer-many layers#sthash.a206P3ir.dpuf
[65] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995 p.80

modernist experiments in Arabic fiction. Kanafani used multiple narrators - two of them, the clock and the desert, were inanimate. It is the story of Hamid, a young man who dreams of being reunited with his mother from whom he was separated in 1948. Hamid had fled to Gaza while his mother left for the West Bank. He tries to find her but becomes lost in the desert, where he encounters an Israeli soldier. Although he dies before locating his mother, in death he is reunited with his lost land.

The main themes in Kanafani's writings are exile, uprootedness, and national struggle. He published novels, short stories, plays, literary criticism and also did some painting.[66]

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra was a poet, a novelist, a literary critic, a painter, and a translator of high caliber. Furthermore, he was widely cultured in Western civilization. Unquestionably all of this background enriched his novels and infused them with a unique individuality not often found among other Palestinian nor, in fact, the majority of other Arab novels.[67]

His broad culture, his penetrating critical talent and experience, and his translations of Shakespeare and Faulkner have unquestionably left marked influences on his novels. This explains why his novels generally center around cultured Arabs who display an extensive understanding of Western culture, ancient and modern. The techniques of the modern novel also figure prominently: precise design and flowing lyrical expression are characteristic of all his works.

Jabra wrote his first novel *Surakh fi layl tawil (A Shriek in a Long Night)* in 1946, which was not actually published until 1955, and his second novel *Sayyadun fi sharic dayyiq (Hunters on a Narrow Street),* first published in English, in 1960. His fame as a novelist, however, was only

[66] *Al-hakawati.net/English/Arabpers/ghassan-kanafani.asp*
[67] Sakkout, *The Arabic Novel Bibliography and Critical Introduction* 1865-1995 p.81

recognized in the Arab world with the publication of his novel *al-Safina (The Ship) in* 1969.[68]

Emil Habibi was also a famous novelist of Palestine. He began writing his first novel was *The Secret Life of Saeed* the Pessoptimist, which became a classic in modern Arabic literature. The book depicts the life of a Palestinian, employing black humour and satire. It was based on the traditional anti-hero Said in Arab literature. In a playful way it deals with how it is for Arabs to live in the state of Israel, and how one who has nothing to do with politics is drawn in to it. He followed this by other books, short stories and a play. His another novel was *Saraya* (the Ogre's Daughter) was published in 1992. Then he wrote another novel

Al-Waqa'i al-ghariba fi ikhtifa' Sa'id 'Abi al-Nahs al-Mutasha'il (The Strange Events in the Disappearance of Sa'id 'Abi Nahs, the Pessoptimist) published in 1974. In this work Emil Habibi gives a factually realistic picture of the life of the Palestinians who remained in their homeland after the breakup of Palestine in 1948. It is a portrayal of rollicking vitality and sharply cutting irony of the factual situation in which Palestinians live under Israeli occupation. Negative features emerge before positive qualities. Staunch patriots and freedom fighters come on to the scene. The oppression of the usurpers appears in a style devoid of exaggeration. It is made clear that whoever lets himself be seduced into bowing down to or collaborating with the occupying authorities will only earn the shame and humiliation of betrayal. Nor will the turncoat escape the tyranny of the Israelis or their prisons. The series of succeeding scenes is rounded out by the historical dimension of Palestine and other Arab countries, the struggle of the people against the forces of occupation since the invasions of the Crusaders, the siege of

[68] Ibid p.82

Acre, and the British Mandate, up through the fall of Palestine in 1948, the Tripartite Aggression by Israel, Britain, and France in 1956, the defeat of 1967, and the massacres of Black September, 1970. All of this historical background passes in review in deftly arranged time flashes in which the present stirs up the" memory of past and previously repeated episodes in harmony or in contradiction.

1.5.2.5. Development of Arabic Novel in the Arabian Peninsula

A number of notable writers of fiction have appeared in recent decades in the Arabian Peninsula. In Saudi Arabia, novelists *Abd al-Rahman Munif, Abd al- Aziz Mishri* and *'Ismail Fahd 'Ismail* have earned special distinction for their works. In Kuwait, *Layla Uthman* and *Walid al-Rajib* have produced novels of fine quality. In Yemen, *Zayd Muti Dammaj* and *Muhammad 'Ahmad Abd al-Mawla* are much appreciated writers. *'Ibrahim Khalifa* and *'Amin Salih* are considered the leading novelists of Bahrain.[69]

Abd al-Rahman Munif was an Arab intellectual and a great novelist of modern Arabic literature. He was born in 1933, this prolific Saudi Arabian novelist has thus far published thirteen novels. Of those, *Alam bila khara'it (World Without Maps*) was written in collaboration with the Palestinian novelist Jabra 'Ibrahim Jabra. Munif did not begin writing until the age of forty years when his first novel, *al-'Ashjar wa ightiyal Marzuq (The Trees and the Assassination of Marzuq),* came out in 1973. Abd al-Rahman Munif is a markedly committed novelist. Nearly all of his novels revolve around the cause of freedom, the right of the Arab citizen to be free from political tyranny, arbitrary imprisonment, and torture.[70]

[69] Sakkout, *The Egyptian Novel and Its Main Trends (1913-1952), p.*84
[70] Ibid p.85

Of all his novels, *Sharq al-mutawassit (East of the Mediterranean),* published in 1975, most powerfully brings out Munif's commitment to the cause of freedom. The hero Rajab 'Ismail, condemned to eleven years of prison, is subjected to the crudest forms of torture. Broken by years of extreme physical abuse and at long last persuaded by overwhelming emotional pressure from his sister, who desperately wants to assist him to gain his release, he signs an oath renouncing political life and all further antigovernment activity. His sister, who loves him very dearly, is blinded to the horrific consequences for Rajab of this surrender of conscience, which to him constitutes a moral breakdown.

The author, unlike most other novelists, does not balance solemnity with humor, or psychological tension with relaxation. Munif's novel is one of profound intensity. In this work he leaves the reader the burden of handling the overwhelming despair his writing portrays.

Endings is the first novel by Munif to focus with such striking luxuriance of detail on the natural splendors of the desert. The author also concentrates on a particular village, called al-Tiba, located in an area moderately fertile in the desert uplands. The inhabitants exist on what the soil produces when watered by rains. If the rains are late, or fail to come, they live by hunting desert animals and birds. The villagers cherish hopes that a dam which they have been promised will relieve them from the thirst and tribulations of drought. However, dam construction is delayed for years by the powerful bureaucracy.

The novel of Munif is *Cities of Salt* which has the distinction of being the longest Arabic novel published to date. The work is divided into five volumes, each averaging some five hundred pages. It, therefore, reaches twice the length of Najib Mahfuz's Trilogy. The reader will do well to

realize that this comparison with Mahfuz's compendious novel is by bulk only. Munlf's *Cities of Salt* ranks, nonetheless, among the genuinely outstanding Arabic novels overall, being rightly judged as excellent. It is, likewise, Munlf's finest and most important work. In his own assessment, Munif declares, "All the novels I wrote before *Cities of Salt* were tantamount to experiments or trial endeavors leading up to this novel which in particular I had been dreaming of writing for a very long time indeed."[71]

1.5.2.6. Development of Arabic Novel in North Africa

In the several lands across North Africa, maturely conceived and competently fashioned novels written in Arabic have only appeared relatively recently, which is to say during the last three decades of the twentieth century. There are indeed a number of North African writers of Arabic who have succeeded in bringing their talented accomplishments to the attention of readers in the Arab East as well. Among novelists deserving special mention in Algeria are al-Tahir Wattar, Abd al-Hamid ibn Hadduqa, and Wasini al-'Acraj. Morocco has produced a large number of novelists: Abd al-Karim Ghallab, Mubarak Rabi, Abdallah al-Urawi, Muhammad Zafzaf, Muhammad Barrada 'Ahmad al-Madani, and Lahamdani Hamid. In Tunisia, Mahmud al-Mascadi, Muhsin bin Diyaf, al-Bashir Khurayyif and Muhammad al-Salih al-Jabiri are novelists of high standing. In Libya, 'Ahmad al-Faqlh and 'Ibrahim al-Kuni are leading novelists. Mauritania has thus far not produced any novel to compare with their fine achievements in poetry. Some outstanding works of a limited number of North African novelists will be discussed in the following pages of the present survey. The choice of novels reviewed is

[71] Mahmud 'Amin al-Alim, *'Arba'un 'aman min al-naqd al-tatbiqi* (Cairo: Dar al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi, 1994), p. 43.

in no way intended to imply that works of other accomplished novelists are also not worthy of study.

In North Africa, the same period also witnessed the emergence of the Tunisian writer Mahmud al-Mas'adi (1911–), whose extended work *al-Sudd* sometimes classified as a play which constitutes a unique, if slightly idiosyncratic, contribution to the field.[72] The period also saw the emergence of a number of other North African writers, including 'Ali al-Duaji (1909–49), sometimes known as the 'father of the Tunisian short story', whose *Jawla bayna hanat al bahr al mutawassit* (1935) broke new ground with its straightforward but lively and entertaining style (though its title places it squarely in a well-established tradition); the 1930s also saw the growth of literary activity with the publication of the literary periodical *al-Aalam al-adabi* and the rise of a literary grouping that met in the Taht al-Sur ('Under the Rampart') cafe *'Ali al-Duaji* indeed being closely associated with both activities. Despite these developments, however, and their equivalents in Morocco and Algeria, it remains generally true that the development of elite literature in Arabic in the Maghrib with the conspicuous exception of the Tunisian poet al-Shabbi[73] continued to lag behind that of the eastern Arab world for most of the first half of the twentieth century, largely (though not entirely) because of the dominance of French culture and the French language. As already noted, in general, it was not until the moves towards independence from the French in the 1950s, when writing in Arabic began to assume a greater importance, that the countries of the Maghrib began to make their own distinctive contribution to the development of Arabic literature generally.

Thus Arabic Novel literature was highly developed in the Arab

[72] R. C. Ostle, *Mahmud al-Mas'adi and Tunisia's "Lost Generation"', JAL* 8 (1977), pp. 155–66.
[73] Paul Starkey, *Modern Arabic Literature,Edinburgh University Press*,2006 Pp.71

world through the writings of distinguished Novelists of Arab Countries.

1.6. Contemporary Arab Novelists of Elias Khoury

Among the contemporary novelist of Elias Khoury we have mention some prominent novelists of Arab countries. Among them *Muhammad Barrada* of Morocco, *Idwar-al-Kharrat* of Egypt and *Fuad al-Takarli* of Iraq are famous. All the authors have been written their novels last two decades of 20th century.

1.6.1. Muhammad Berrada and his Contribution to Arabic Novel

Muhammed Berrada was born in Rabat in 1938 and grew up in Fes. From 1964 until his retirement in the late 1990s he taught at Muhammad V University in Rabat, except for three years spent in the early 1970s at the Sorbonne in Paris, where he wrote a thesis on the critical works of Egyptian author Muhammad Mandour.[74]

Since graduating from Cairo University and leaving for Morocco in 1960, Berrada has made numerous visits back to Cairo, often to participate in cultural conferences. The book is filled with accounts of friendships, meetings and discussions with prominent writers, thinkers and artists.

Berrada has long been engaged with Arab intellectual currents, and was from 1976 to 1984 president of the Moroccan Writers' Union which he helped found in 1961. There are several chapters of criticism in his novel, which could virtually stand alone as essays. They include critiques of Naguib Mahfouz, of film, and of the Egyptian and Arab cultural scene.[75]

[74] Berrada,Mohammed. *Like a Summer Never to be Repeated* review by Susannah Tarbush, 2009
[75] Berrada,op.cit

He has written many works on Arabic literature and literary criticism and published a collection of short stories, and two novels in English translation, *The Game of Forgetting*, (Quartet Books, 1987) and *Al-Daw' al-Harib (The Fugitive Light in 2002).*

In his first novel, *Lu'bat al-nisyan (The Game of Forgetting)* to provide two distinct views about Moroccan identity in relation to modernity and antiquity; present and past; and private and communal. The novel also deals with other issues of great importance to post-colonial Morocco, namely how to write our personal and collective memory, by reinterpreting the nation's colonial history and the sensibilities of the post-independence era. Offering imaginative challenges to the country's actual situation characterized by corruption, poverty, injustice etc, *The Game* seeks to put into question the personal and the collective history, in an attempt to spot the flaws of the past and search for explanations to the miserable conditions of the post-independence Morocco. Literature, then, becomes an important medium which helps in diagnosing the nature of evil as well as bearing witness.

The novel's concern with colonial history, political corruption, the idea of justice and the transfer of power reflect on the diseased political and economic situation. Within this context, the novel presents a varying conception of daily Moroccan life before and after the fall of the colonial regimes. Furthermore, it enriches our apprehension of the complex history of the country through the production of a cultural memory. The main concern of the production of cultural memory is the question of how the past and the present can interact with and be linked to each other.

Berrada's novel is a richly rewarding read in terms of its literary and experimental qualities and as an insider's record of the Arab, and

especially Egyptian cultural milieu over the past five decades. It is also a fine homage to Egypt from someone to whom that country has been so important. Berrada is responsive not only to the country's contemporary capital but also to its ancient history.[76]

But Berrada is just as interested in the non-famous and their stories. He devotes a chapter to Umm Fathiya, the Nubian housekeeper of Hammad and his university friends. He also portrays at length a woman named Sitt Zaynat, in whose house Hammad lodged in his final university year. He constantly observes characters in the street or in hotels, and eavesdrops on conversations. And he writes with tenderness of his central character's sexual encounters, recalling in sensuous detail his generally fleeting relationships with women.

A deeply reflective writer, Berrada constantly examines the processes of creating, selecting and recalling memories. There is a playful quality to his writing, as he slides between novel, memoir and criticism. From the first page he draws the reader's attention to the fact that a narrative with many possible beginnings is being constructed. The non-linear time structure dips and dives between the decades as memories are triggered.[77]

1.6.2 Idwar al-Kharrat and his contribution to Arabic Novel

Idwar Al-Kharrat was born in 1926 in Alexandria to a Coptic Christian family. At age 17 he became the household's sole breadwinner following the death of his father, who was the owner of a small business. Despite his heavy responsibilities, al-Kharrat successfully completed a degree in law from Alexandria University in 1946. Two years later he was thrown

[76] Berrada,op.cit
[77] Berrada.op.cit

in jail for belonging to a left-wing political group. He was released in 1950. [78]

Al-Kharrat's art is shaped by diverse cultural influences, which include his Christian Coptic heritage, the Arabic culture of Egypt and the Western literary tradition. The first book he ever read was a collection of Christian hymns. At age 10 he read "A Thousand and One Nights", a book that still fascinates him. He absorbed the rich Arabic literary tradition, in both its popular and classic strains. "Deep and basic" is how al-Kharrat describes the Arabic heritage's influence on him. This heritage, he emphasizes, "is something alive, potent, and very contemporary." Knowledge of English and French allowed al-Kharrat to familiarize himself with Western classics, especially the works of the romantic poets (he translated the poetry of Keats and Shelley into Arabic), and the classic Russian novelists, particularly Dostoevsky. The combination of these diverse influences, as they are refined through the crucible of al-Kharrat's creative genius and his extraordinary command of the Arabic language, has yielded some of the most important literary works in modern Arabic literature.[79]

Al-Kharrat began his literary career as a writer of short stories. His first collection, "Hitan'aliya" (High Walls), was published in 1958. In this book he was, in the words of the Egyptian critic Sabri Hafez, "swimming against the current." He departed from the prevailing tendencies in art as embodied by the then dominant school of realism. In these stories al-Kharrat introduced a new literary language that subverts the traditional language of realism by juxtaposing it to a poetic language rich with symbols, metaphors and myth. He continued to defy the reader's

[78] Amireh,Amal. *Edwar al-Kharrat and the Modernist Revolution in the Egyptian Novel* Al-Jadid,vol-2, no.9 july 1996
[79] Amireh,op.cit

expectations in his subsequent collections of short stories, "Sa'at al-Kibriya'" (Moments of Pride) and "Ikhtinaqat al-'ishq wal-sabah" (Suffocations of Passion and the Morning), which appeared in 1972 and 1979, respectively.[80]

Al-Kharrat became a prominent figure among the group of Egyptian writers known in literary circles as the "Sixties Generation," which includes such figures as Son'allah Ibrahim, Baha Tahir, Ibrahim Aslan, Yehya Al Tahir Abdallah, Mohammad Yousif Al Qu'eid and Jamal Al Gitani. In different ways, these writers continued the modernist project that al-Kharrat started, writing technically innovative novels that were subversive both in a literary and a political sense.[81]

As the oldest among these writers, al-Kharrat played the role of mentor and supporter for a whole generation of young novelists and poets, who always sought his advice and encouragement and who benefited greatly from both his experiments in fiction and from his criticism. He was the founder and editor of the important literary and cultural journal "Galiri 68" (Gallery 68), the name of which symbolized a rejection of a corrupt past embodied by the crushing Arab defeat of 1967. Many of these writers' work first came to light on the pages of this influential journal. [82]

Twenty years after publishing his first book, al-Kharrat turned his attention to the novel, writing the highly acclaimed and daringly experimental "Rama wal-Tannin" (Rama and the Dragon) in 1979. In this challenging book (by no means an easy read), the reader follows the love story between Mikhael, a Christian, and the extraordinary woman Rama, a Muslim, as their relationship is filtered through Mikhael's

[80] Amireh,op.cit
[81] Amireh,op.cit
[82] Amireh,op.cit

consciousness. Hailed by critics as a breakthrough for the Arab novel, "Rama and the Dragon" deals with modernist issues, like subjective perception and alienation. In the book, al-Kharrat draws attention to the creative process itself and to the complex use of language.[83]

These issues will continue to preoccupy him in his other novels, such as "Al-Zaman al-Akhar" (The Other Time, 1985), "Turabuha Za'faran" (City of Saffron) and "Banat Iskendereya" (Girls of Alexandria). These last two semi-autobiographical novels were translated into English in 1989 and 1993, respectively. Al-Kharrat's highly experimental novels made him in the eyes of many critics a pioneer of the Egyptian modern novel and earned him comparisons with Marcel Proust and James Joyce.[84]

Among the major concerns of al-Kharrat's art is our loneliness and estrangement from society and from those around us. The walls that separate us, even from those to whom we are most intimately connected, make each person "an island unto himself," in al-Kharrat's words. Some of these walls, the writer believes, are imposed by the social system. But others result from what he calls "the inevitability of human consciousness and uniqueness and aloneness of this consciousness." Al-Kharrat also believes that man feels at the same time "an irresistible desire and a burning urge towards communication; towards breaking down these walls; towards communion – even more, infusion – with himself, between man and woman, between himself and his companions, comrades, and peers in society, and finally between man and the universe." Along with these two themes, al-Kharrat's works probe the relationship between the

[83] Amireh,op.cit
[84] Amireh,op.cit

transient and the everlasting, the relative and the absolute, the human and the divine.[85]

While al-Kharrat's prison experience makes its way into his fiction, he refuses to see the artist as a promoter of one particular cause. Rather, to him "art has a comprehensive, epistemological value that partakes in the human experience in all its complexity." This complex human experience, he emphasizes, cannot be captured through naive and simplistic modes of representation dominant in the 1940s and the 1950s, when language supposedly "reflect[ed]" reality. A more complex kind of literary language is needed, one that seeks to create and construct experience. This language produces a "problematic text," one that is ambiguous and therefore open to many interpretations. The multiplicity of meanings of this modernist text allows, al-Kharrat maintains, for "a constant questioning with no pretense to ready answers, a leap into the dark by neither a complacent nor a complaisant literary enterprise."[86]

This enterprise is best described in al-Kharrat's own words: "Why do I write then? I write because I don't know why I write. Does the impulse come from some powerful force? I know that I use it as a weapon to bring about change, change both in the self and others…for something better, more beautiful perhaps… something warmer to ward off the bitter chill of barbarity and loneliness… something soothing in the oppressive heat of violence and suffocation… I write because I want there to be something in what I write—in everything I write—which will make even a single reader lift his head proudly and feel with me that in the end the world is not a desolate, meaningless landscape… I write because the world's a riddle, a woman is a riddle and so is my fellow man. All creation is a

[85] Amireh,op.cit
[86] Amireh,op.cit

riddle…that is what I want to write about, and that is why I write."[87]

1.6.3. Fuad al-Takarli and his Contribution to Arabic Novel

Fuad al-Takarli was one of Iraq's pioneering fiction writers. Born in Baghdad in 1927, he graduated in Law from Baghdad University in 1949 and worked in the Justice Ministry, becoming a judge in 1956. He later headed the Baghdad Court of Appeal. He studied Law in Paris between 1964-66, and on his retirement in 1983 took up full-time writing. [88]

Since 1951 he published a number of short stories, one-act plays and three novels, but came to prominence with the powerful novel *Al-Rajea al-Baeed*, The Long Way Back, published in Arabic in 1980, in a French-language edition in 1985, and in English translation by Catherine Cobham in 2001.

Set over the last years of Abd al-Karim Qassim's regime and ending amid the violence of his overthrow by the Baathist forerunners of Saddam Hussein in February 1963, *The Long Way Back* is an audacious and authentic chronicle of generations of an Iraqi family in Baghdad as they deal with "the tangled complications of life, trying to explain the inexplicable, engendered feelings of anxiety and depression". [89]

Fuad al-Takarli started writing The Long Way Back on 9 February 1966, when he was studying law in Paris, the events of 1963 still very much to the fore. He completed it on 5 September 1977 in Baghdad, writing a postscript which almost asks the reader to throw away the book or to keep schtum, to see nothing, to say nothing, that very usual state of affairs that Iraqi citizens knew all too well: "This mass of pages does not contain what people believe it does. No sighs, no talk, no groans or smiles. No

[87] Amireh,op.cit
[88] Banipal,U.K. *Fuad al-Takarli* Banipal no.14, summer 2002
[89] Banipal,op.cit

sublimity, suffering, fear, or desire. No eyes, lips, blood or tears. If they are thrown away they will not protest. They are dumb pages which are neither harmful nor beneficial, and it is better for them and for everyone if they are left in peace and forgotten."[90]

In her introduction to the novel Catherine Cobham wrote that when Fuad al-Takarli first tried to get the novel published in Iraq, the censor demanded that the Baathist character Adnan be entirely erased. Al-Takarli therefore turned to Beirut where the complete novel was published in 1980 by Dar Ibn Rushd – and sold inside Iraq without the censor noticing. In 1993 a second edition was published with its Iraqi colloquial dialogue simplified at the request of the publisher to ensure a wider readership. In 2000 Al-Takarli was awarded the prestigious Owais Prize for the Arabic novel.

Since 1990 he lived mainly in Tunis and in the last three years in Amman, where he died of pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his second wife, their son, and three daughters from his first marriage.

1.6.4. Position of Elias Khoury among his Contemporary novelists

Before going to evaluate the position of Elias Khoury among his Contemporary Novelist, like Muhammed Berrada, Idwar al-Kharrat, and Fua'd al-Takarli, we have found a conclusion that all the novelists have been left their valuable contribution to the development of Arabic novel. Here is brief findings of their works on the themes and styles of their writings.

The theme of memory and forgetfulness is similarly explored by Berrada : in his case a more individual and personal portrayal is given. Another unusual feature of Berrada's novels is that their characters are either

[90] Banipal,op.cit

individuals and apolitical or disillusioned with politics. The post-independence Arab characters he portrays are far removed from the initial optimism generated by political independence from the colonial powers. In some cases, even a nostalgic view of the pre-independence, cosmopolitan period is expressed. Even Berrada, Like Khoury and al-Takarli, promotes a self-referential discourse on writing and gives us sketches of characters who, although not professional writers, embark on the writing experience and voice some of his reflections on his own craft as a writer.[91]

Al-Kharrat introduces into the Arabic novel his particular philosophical vision. Boutros Hallaq reflects on the fact that al- Kharrat's fiction (defined as *transgenerici* shows how the goal of literature is neither to represent the real world, nor to change it. According to Hallaq, the great sociopolitical and economic crises of Arab society, not to mention the stagnation of Arab culture, demand Arabic literature to fulfill the role once assigned to philosophy, religion and science, and to be the privileged instrument for reform.[92] In this context, the writer is seen as a prophet whose main goal is to reveal man to him.[93]

In more practical terms, al-Kharrat strives to articulate a philosophical conception of man which is significantly syncretism in its attempt to marry the Arab-Islamic, *sufi* understanding of human existence with Christian and Pharaonic beliefs. This is, according to him the essence of Egyptian identity. If, on one hand, this idea has clear political implications, from a cultural perspective, it points towards an Arabic

[91] Caiani,Fabio. *Contemporary Arab fiction, Innovation from Rama to Yalu* Routledge, 1st ed.2007 p-131
[92] Hallaq, Wael. Authority,Continuaty and change in Islamic Law,Cambridge University press,2001, p-163

[93] Caiani,p-130

literature able to investigate its past and at the same time open to other cultures.[94]

Al-Takarli convincingly portrays the struggle of individuals to gain self knowledge. This often painful striving can reveal even to the most independent and strong-minded characters how their identity is shaped by the weight of the society in which they live with its ancestral rules and laws. The connections between inner and external worlds are often depicted in his works through the violent impact of history on the lives of characters that are modeled on common people. These human beings, often victims of history or, more simply, of backward social conventions and traditional, middle-class moral values, often egotistic and self-centred, sometimes exploitative and cruel, show all their humanity in their attempts to become aware of themselves, even if this awareness will not lead them to improve their life and solve their problems.[95]

Khoury treats the violence of war in a way which gives dignity to its victims, and at the same raises questions relevant to writing, storytelling and historiography. In doing so, he underlines the importance of his craft as a writer while he is ready to be self-critical and skeptical: like al-Takarli's Tawfiq, Khoury's character finds himself compelled to write even if such an enterprise might not conjure any immediate change. Khoury's writing seems to reject focusing only on one main story and on one main theme, Another aspect of violence investigated by Khoury is the way it affects the memory of its victims. Typically, even this phenomenon is ambivalent and controversial: the characters are depicted as they alternatively attempt to recall what they have suffered (to make sense of their lives and to learn from their mistakes), try to *edit* some of

[94] Caiani,p-131
[95] Caiani,p-130,131

the events they have lived to make political use of their narratives (at times, unconsciously), and finally decide to forget in order to go on with their lives.[96]

After this brief conclusion on the themes and styles of the contemporary novelists of Elias Khoury, we can evaluate the position of Elias Khoury among them.

Basically Elias Khoury was notable for his war novels. Therefore the war's effects have been reflected in the work of this leading contemporary male novelist of Arab countries. The work of the author, variously described as 'modernist' or even 'post-modernist', undoubtedly lies at the 'cutting edge' of contemporary Arabic prose fiction; and although not everything he has written is of the first order, the achievement of his fiction at its best is to mirror the spirit and anguish of war-torn Lebanon in a way that elevates it to a conflict of universal rather than merely local significance.

A prominent characteristic of Elias Khoury's work is its 'self-referential', or 'metafictional' nature, a strategy that attempts to involve the reader as a creative partner in the making of the text, which both marks the author out as a 'post-modernist' in the full sense of the term but which also reflects the fragmentation of the society to which he belongs.

Amidst the chaos of war Khoury's productivity as a writer rose. Whereas in most of his novels the war is dealt with explicitly, *Gates of the City* (1981) offers an allegorical reading of the war. Interspersed with numerous intertextual references to Kahlil Gibran's *The Madman* (1918) and *The City of Brass* from *The Thousand and One Nights,* this novel transforms Beirut into a mythical city whose name is never mentioned.

[96] Caiani,p-131

In highly poetic language, unusual for Khoury's fiction (and compared by Stefan G. Meyer to the experimental prose of Gertrude Stein), it describes the apocalyptic demise of a city in which all important topographical landmarks and inner reference points sink into oblivion an ending that Beirut was facing with the imminent Israeli invasion of 1982.

He was awarded the Prize of Palestine for *The Gate of the Sun,* which is based on the orally transmitted recollections and stories of Palestinians living in the refugee camps of Lebanon. The voluminous novel, subsequently made into a film by the Egyptian filmmaker Yusri Nasrallah for the TV channel ARTE, and premiered in Cannes in 2004, is an epic account of the *nakba* (disaster), the exodus of the Palestinians caused by the creation of the state of Israel. The novel took years to research as its material is based on countless interviews.

During the first Gulf War, he came into conflict with Syrian interests, which had increasingly influenced the political stance of *al-Safir* since the end of the 1980s. Khoury had openly criticized the participation of Arab countries, in particular that of Syria, in the US led coalition against Iraq. A year later he became the editor of *Mulhaq,* the cultural supplement of the largest Lebanese newspaper *al-Nahar,* which has since been acclaimed throughout the region for its critical stance.

Khoury dates the birth of the novel in Lebanon to the outbreak of civil war. Of course novels were written beforehand, but it was not until then that the novel first stepped out of the long shadow cast by poetry. According to Khoury, the birth of the novel in Lebanon is not to be understood as the result of national consolidation but rather as a consequence of its destruction. Only the devastation of war enabled

society to name directly what was previously shrouded in taboos: the social, political, economic and religious discrepancies within Lebanon.

Like many of the novels written during and since the civil war, Khoury's novels are characterized by a critical coming to terms with Lebanon's recent history. They preserve and transmit what officially still seems to be unspeakable. Khoury is on the lookout for the recollections and stories of ordinary people, of the marginalized and downtrodden; the recollections and stories in which unacknowledged contradictions to official history written, as is generally known, by the victors become visible. In this aspect he comes very close to the so called postcolonial authors, such as the Caribbean writer Edouard Glissant, who emphasize the necessity of claiming a history that remains generally neglected, subjugated to Western historiography. Last but not least is the dispute about who writes history: historians not only define the lineaments of the past but also stamp their authority on the present and shape the future.[97]

Khoury does not restrict the scope of his efforts to filling the "gaps" in historiography. He is not concerned with the past as such but rather with its direct relevance to the present. This is clearly evident in his use of Arabic. Introducing spoken Arabic, the local dialect, into written Standard Arabic a controversial issue in Arab literature down to the present day establishes a direct link to the orally transmitted, lived experience of contemporary history. Arabic, Khoury explains, has always consisted of more than one language. Attempts to trans-form it into a homogenous entity, which have been undertaken repeatedly by nationalist ideologies, would turn it first into an instrument of exclusion and ultimately a dead language.[98]

[97] Hallaq,p-167
[98] Hallaq,p-167