THE NOVEL IN SAUDI ARABIA: EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT 1930–1989

An Historical and Critical Study

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my father Sa'd b. Mas'ud

To my mother and my sons

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to establish the identity of the Saudi novel, which has been hitherto neglected by scholars whether Saudi or non-Saudi; to consider the emergence and development of the Saudi novel during the past sixty years (1930-90) and the reasons for these; to investigate the peculiarities of the Saudi novel as well as the influence on it of the international novel, and the novel in other Arabic-speaking countries; to examine the factors that have led to the growth of the novel as a literary form in Saudi Arabia since the fifties; and appraise the "artistic" development that has taken place in the novel itself, and in individual novelists since that time. It consists of five chapters, as follows:

Chapter one deals with journalism and its role in the appearance of the Saudi novel.

Chapter two discusses the various factors involved in the rise of the Saudi novel.

Chapter three covers the pioneers of the novel and the difficulties that they experienced in trying to publish their works between 1930 and 1948.

Chapter four deals with the appearance of the "artistic" narrative between 1959 and 1979.

Chapter five deals with the novel in the eighties, the decade in which most Saudi novels appeared.

SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

A. Consonants

Transliteration	Arabic
Not shown initially; otherwise: ’	ء
b	ب
t	ت
th	ث
j	ج
ḥ	ح
kh	خ
d	د
dh	ذ
r	ر
z	ز
s	س
sh	ش
ṣ	ص
ḍ	ض
ṭ	ط
ẓ	ظ
‘	ع
gh	غ
f	ف
q	ق
k	ك
l	ل
m	م
n	ن
h	هـ
w	و
y	ي
h	ة
in idāfah: t	

√

B. Vowels

a	ـَ
i	ـِ
u	ـُ
ā	ـَا
	ـَى
ī	ـِي
ū	ـُو
aw	ـَو
ay	ـَي

INTRODUCTION

This is the first academic study of the novel in Saudi Arabia between the years 1930 and 1989. It is based upon 61 works, published over the period of these sixty years.

There have been studies that have taken into account the Saudi novel, but these have consisted of general works that have dealt with all aspects of Saudi writing. There are two reasons for this:

1. During the sixties and seventies, the topic did not provide enough scope for a separate study, so that it was treated within the framework of Saudi literature in general;

2. There were no Saudi scholars, even as recently as the eighties, competent to discuss the novel as a separate genre, in isolation from the short story and other more or less artistic prose forms of writing.

The first major study was by Muhammad al-Shamikh, entitled al-Nathr al-fanni fi al-Sa'udiyyah, 1895-1925, Riyadh 1972, previously submitted as a Ph.D. thesis in the University of London (1966), under the title Artistic prose in the Hijaz, 1895-1925. It is a general study of the prose that appeared within the cultural confines of the area during the years specified; the novel is not mentioned, except as subsequently building upon the basis then laid down.

The next study was by Bakrī Shaykh Amīn, entitled al-Harakah al-adabiyyah fi al-Sa'udiyyah, Beirut 1984, previously submitted as a Ph.D. thesis in the University of Damascus (1972). It deals with culture in general, poetry, prose, fiction, history, other prose writing and education.

The only novelists referred to are ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī, Aḥmad al-Subāʿī, Muḥammad ʿAlī Maghribī, Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣir and Ḥāmid Damanhūrī, who are not distinguished from the short-story writers who are mentioned.

The third study was by Ibrāhīm al-Fawzān, al-Adab al-Ḥijāzī bayn al-tajdīd wa-al-taqlīd Cairo 1981, previously submitted as a Ph.D. thesis in the University of al-Azhar (1977). This, like Amīn's, is a general study, comprising poetry and prose writing of all kinds. It mentions certain novelists as men of letters, detailing their efforts in this field: for example, Aḥmad al-Subāʿī's role in the emergence of Saudi literature, and Muḥammad ʿAlī Maghribī's hopes for the future of Saudi literature, in particular the novel, and his support and encouragement of other literary figures.

The fourth study was by Manṣūr al-Ḥāzimī, Fann al-qissah fī al-adab al-Saʿūdī al-ḥadīth, Riyadh 1981. This, as the title suggests, is a general survey of the 'story' in Saudi literature; the novel is mentioned only as a part of this. Novelists mentioned include Damanhūrī and Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣir.

The fifth study was by Suḥmī al-Ḥājirī, al-Qissah al-qaṣīrah fī al-Saʿūdiyyah, Riyadh 1987, previously submitted as an M.A. thesis in Dar al-ʿUlūm College (1986). This deals with such writers as ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī, Aḥmad al-Subāʿī and Muḥammad ʿAlī Maghribi as short-story writers, but he includes their novels in his appendix, rather as though he was not sure how to classify them.

The final study was by Muḥammad Ṣālih al-Shanṭī, Fann al-riwāyah fī al-adab al-Saʿūdī al-muʿāṣir, Jazān 1990. This study deals

with most of the prose fiction that had appeared in Saudi Arabia, whether by Saudi or non-Saudi writers. It is not an academic study, and it does not distinguish between the short story, the long story and the novel.

The present study consists of five chapters, as follows:

Chapter one deals with journalism and its role in the appearance of the Saudi novel;

Chapter two discusses the various factors involved in the rise of the Saudi novel;

Chapter three covers the pioneers of the novel and the difficulties that they experienced in trying to publish their work, between 1930 and 1948;

Chapter four deals with the appearance of the 'artistic' narrative, between 1959 and 1979;

Chapter five deals with the novel in the eighties, the decade in which most Saudi novels appeared, as a result of a number of factors;

This study has as its aims: to establish the identity of the Saudi novel, which has been hitherto neglected by scholars, whether Saudi or non-Saudi; to consider the emergence and development of the Saudi novel during the past sixty years (1930-89) and the reasons for these; to investigate the peculiarities of the Saudi novel as well as the influence on it of the international novel and the novel in other Arabic-speaking countries; to examine the factors that have led to the growth of the novel as a literary form in Saudi Arabia since the fifties and to appraise the

'artistic' development that has taken place in the novel itself and in individual novelists since that time.

CHAPTER ONE

SAUDI ARABIA AND THE NOVEL

1. Fiction in Saudi Arabia

Until comparatively recently there was no real concept of the novel as such in Saudi Arabia; it was a literary genre unknown even to the educated.

The only fictional form of literature that was recognised was the Qissah ("story") in general and this form was not differentiated in any formal way until the end of the Second World War when holders of Saudi scholarships in Egypt began to return home and immigrants began to arrive from other Arab countries; Ahmad Rida Huhu, who came from Algeria to Saudi Arabia in 1934 with his family, to study in Madrasat al-Ulum al-Shar'iyyah, and became one of its staff after his graduation. Besides this he was a journalist on Majallat al-Manhal. Huhu published a novel Ghadat umm al-Qura (The girl of ummal-Qura) 1947, besides many short stories.

The Algerian educated consider him the pioneer of the short story in Algeria (Abd Allah Rikaybi, introduction to Nufus tha'rah, al-Dar al-Misriyyah 1962 p20 (1).

Meanwhile the Saudis consider him one of the pioneers of the "story" in Hijaz (Ahmad Muhammad Jamal, Madha fi al-Hijaz, p45) (2). Huhu and other immigrants who came to Saudi Arabia to work with the Government were familiar with languages such as an English and French; they also had a background of modern literature. Huhu's story al-Intiqam (The Revenge) 1934 was completely derivative of western models.

The earliest critical writings in Saudi Arabia do not distinguish between the various genres of fiction. For example, when Muhammad

Hasan 'Awwad (1802–80) wrote, in 1933 about Abd al–Quddus al–Ansari's novel al–Taw'aman (the Twins), and his short story Marham al–Tanasi, (The Salve of Forgetfulness) he referred to both as riwayah (3).

Again, in the same year, writing about the same two works, he referred to them both as Qissah (4). Even when a collection of his earlier articles Khawatir musarrahah, the first serious Saudi literary study appeared in the 1940s, he still made no modification in his terminology, demonstrating that he continued to regard fictional writing as essentially of one kind. (5)

Again, writing about two works, one a long story al–Intiquam al–tabi by Muhammad Nur Juharji, published in Jeddah 1935, and the other a short story by Aziz Diya's al–Ibn, al–Aqq published in Jaridat Sawt al–Hijaz No22, 1933, al–Awwad called both "novels" further more referring to them as "artistic" novels (Fanniyyah).

What al–Awwad meant by "artistic" it is hardly possible to say. At any rate, he introduced the term, which seems to conform to no western critical term. However, since it will occur frequently in this study, some definition of the term should be attempted. As used with references to the modern novel, it may be said to describe those that incorporate to a greater or lesser degree E.M. Forster's Aspects of the novel: Story, People, Plot, Fantasy, Prophesy, Pattern and Rhythm.

Other critics, too, like Muhammad Said al–Amudi (1905–) in 1940 (6), referred to all forms of fiction as Adab al–Qissah and al–Qissah al–Hadithah, (Story literature and the Modern Story). Although, with regard

to the latter term, it is noticeable that there is nothing modern in the work about which they were writing at the time.

Other blanket that were also used were Qissah Qasirah, "Short Story", Qissah Saghirah, "Small Story", Uqsusah, "Tale", Qissah riwa'iyyah, "Novelette". Qissah tahliliyyah, "Analytic Story", and Riwayat al-usbu, "The novel of the week". This last term referred to a series of stories of varying lengths published under this heading in the newspaper Sawt al-Hijaz, beginning in 1933 with the short story by Abd al-Quddus al-Ansari already mentioned, Marham al-tamasi (7). This filled one column; others extended to a whole page. al-Awwad, at this time, encouraged writers to imitate western, in particular French writers, in order to establish themselves on a modern base.

The reason why critics failed to distinguish the different genres was, according to Suhmi al-Hajiri, that writers wrote their stories from the point of view of education rather than from that of art. (8) In fact, the writers knew nothing about "artistic" literature and would continue to know nothing about it until the concept was introduced from Europe and Egypt.

Under the Ottoman Empire there was little education in Arabic in the Hijaz. Apart from in the Katatib, teaching was in Turkish, except in four schools, al-Madarasah al-Sawlatiyyah in Makkah, the two Madrasat al-Falah, one in Jeddah and one in Makkah and Madrasat al-Ulum al-Sahriyyah in al-Madinah, all privately founded.

The Hijaz became independent in 1916, under Husayn b. Ali's rule, but although teaching in Turkish was discontinued at that time, little progress was made in education, since the new ruler was more

concerned with fighting his rivals than with social matters. There was no education to speak of in Najd outside of the Katatib, since the population consisted largely of Bedouins and of peasants.

In the east of the peninsula, in al-Ahsa, there was a certain amount of Persian and Indian influence, and the richer inhabitants sent their sons to Iran or to India to be educated. Latterly with much of the Gulf under British protection from the end of the nineteenth century, educational possibilities opened up there and the first school was established in Bahrain in 1919. One of the best known Saudi writers to have studied there is Ghazi Abd al-Rahman al-Qusaybi.

Ibrahim al-Nasir, another noted novelist studied in Iraq, where he assimilated considerable literary influence. (9)

With the establishment of Saudi Arabia in 1932, education became more general and newspapers and journals came into being for the first time. Saudi students went abroad on scholarships particularly to Egypt, from where they returned with new literary and critical concepts, inspired by the many publications that they had encountered there for the first time. Among these were Hamid Damanhuri who graduated from Cairo and Alexandria universities in 1945, and Hamzah Buqri who graduated from Cairo University at about the same time and returned to write in the magazine al-Idha ah al-Sa'udiyyah. Later, in the fifties, a group of Saudi novelists returned to Saudi Arabia, Isam Khaqayr graduated from Cairo University in 1953 and published his works between 1980 and 1983. Fu'ad Sadiq Mufti graduated from Cairo University 1960 and published his novels between 1981 and 1986.

Later in the seventies two women novelists Huda al-Rashid and Amal Shata, also graduated from Cairo University. The former published Ghadan sa yakun al-Khamis (Tomorrow will be Thursday) in Cairo 1979 and the latter published Ghadan ansa (Tomorrow I shall forget) in Saudi Arabia in 1980 and La Ash Qalbi (Let my heart no longer live) in Saudi Arabia in 1989.

These writers returned to Saudi Arabia to participate with the other Saudi educated in various fields such as education, medicine and journalism. Hamid Damanhuri was a teacher, Hamzah Buqri a journalist and literary translator. Fu'ad Sadiq Mufti is a diplomat, Huda al-Rashid is a broadcaster in the BBC Arabic Service, Amal Shata is a medical doctor and Isam Khuqayr is a dentist. All of them know foreign languages, particularly English and are familiar with modern western literature.

2. Periodicals and the Novel

The first number of an officially published periodical, Umm al-Qura, appeared in Makkah in 1924, with Yusuf Yasin (1892-1962) as its editor. Yasin came to Saudi Arabia as an immigrant from Syria to work with the Government. This weekly publication was not devoted to literature but it did pay some attention to literary topics, mostly of a classical nature. Modern literature was not considered, and the closest that it came to fiction was two imaginative accounts of historical events referred to as short stories, Qissah Qasirah min al-Tarikh al-Abbasi, (A Short story from Abbasid history), by Mustafa Ata, and al-Jundi al-majhul, (The unknown soldier), by Abd al-Hakim Abdin, both published in 1937 (nos 656 and 659).

- Sawt al-Jijaz was established by Muhammad Salih Nasir (1896-1973) in Makkah in 1932; he had previously established Barid al-Hijaz (Hijaz

Mail) during the Hashimi reign in Makkah in 1922. This publication gave opportunities for the publication of literary translation, for example, Ahmad Abd al-Ghafur Attar's translation of a story of Rabindranath Tagore, al-Batyt wa al-Alam, (The House and the World) in 1936.

It was contained critical articles such as the critique by Muhammad Hasan Faqi of Ahmad al-Zayyat's translation of Lamartine's novel Raphael, also in 1936. In this he criticises the translation despite his ignorance of French. However, his sound literary sense told him that al-Zayyat had over-rhetoricized his translation, which had spoilt the effect produce by the original.

al-Madinah was established by Ali and Uthman Hafiz in al-Madinah in 1935. It also gave some room to literary matters, again mostly classical, but it published one short story by Muhammad Amin Yahaya, al-Id (The Festival), 2-12-1937.

In 1936 Abd al-Quddus al-Ansari, who had already published the first Saudi novel, al-taw'aman, (The Twins), established the journal al-Manhal especially for the publication of fictional literature. He was the pioneer in his attitude towards the qissah in Saudi literature. He says in al-Kitab al-fiddi 1960; 1. the story represents one of the highest forms of literature; 2. Our literature needs to follow the progress made throughout the world in this field.

Aspiring novelists and short story writers have had their works published in al-Manhal, sometimes in serial parts.

This still continues. For example, Ghalib Hamzah Abu al-Faraj published his novel, Hawsh al-Tajuri (al-Tajuri's courtyard), in it in 1989. One or more short stories also appear in each number, as do also critical essays written by authors from within and outside Saudi Arabia.

al-Ansari generally encouraged young writers who were taking their first steps towards the practice of literature.

al-Bilad al-Sa'udiyyah was established in 1938. This publication is a newspaper that interests itself in literary matters and also has a weekly literary supplement.

From its inception, it has encouraged young writers, and it founder Muhammad Salih Nasif, and it editor (Abd Allah Urayf) (1917--1977), was greatly influenced by Egyptian journalism, having studied in Cairo; he returned to Saudi Arabia to be editor of al-Bilad al-Sa'udiyyah for eleven years from 1944 to 1955. He had the idea of writings part of a story and inviting readers to contribute their own endings, which were published in a later issue. The first story of his to receive this treatment was Mushkilat damir tabhath an al-hall al-Akhir 15-8-1948.

In (1950) Ahmad Abd al-Ghafur Attar (1919-1991) issued a broadsheet, printed in Cairo, entitled al-Bayan, (The Statement), which he then distributed among his friends and patrons in Saudi Arabia. This consisted of an attack on Ahmad al-Suba'i's novel Fikrah, (An idea) denigrating both his style and his narrative structure.

al-Riyad, established in 1953 by Hamad al-Jasir (1910-), like most other literary journals, at first had little to say about the novel. More

recently, however, it has concerned itself more with this genre. For instance, in 1984, two articles appeared on Hamzah Buqri's Saqifat al-Safa, (The arcade of al-Safa), the first by Abd al-Aziz al-Rafai and the second by Adil Adib Agha (10), and one article about the "artistic" novel in Saudi Arabia by Sultan S. al-Qahtani (11).

al-Yamamah (established in 1954 by Hamad al-Jasir) is a journal for literature and culture. When it began it had also the aim of influencing Saudi society. In the first number, the editor, Hamad al-Jasir himself, invited readers to submit a "story" about the effects of tradition upon social development.

The general understanding of literary genres at that time, however, was such that no contribution was received that could be regarded as constituting a "story" in the true sense of the word. Each issue nowadays contains a proper short story and a poem, in addition to articles on literature (12).

al-Idha ah al-Sa'udiyyah (established 1955-1963) was a monthly journal concerning radio programmes and also literary matters. From time to time, short stories were included. When Hamzah Buqri returned from his studies in Cairo, he became editor and published several of his short stories in it. He encouraged young writers to submit their own works for which he offered awards, totalling 25 riyals, (13) for stories by students.

al-Ra'id established in 1959-1963 by Abd al-Fattah Bumidian (1924-), was another newspaper concerned with literature in general. It dealt principally with the short story, since there were still rather few Saudi works that could be regarded as novels. It made no real pretence at

offering proper literary criticism, and its articles consisted of attacks on, or eulogies of, the various authors and their works on non-literary grounds (14).

Quraysh, established 1959-1963) by Ahmad al-Suba'i, is a journal for literature and culture. when it began, it had also the aim of influencing Saudi fictional literature. al-Subai was the pioneer in his attitude towards the changing of the ideas of Saudi society in general and towards the story. He opened the door to young Saudi writers to practice their fictional talent. For example, Ibrahim al-Nasir published his story al-Hadiyyah, (The Gift) in Quraysh 1960 (15).

Many newspapers and journals appeared under Saudi rule, such as Ukaz, al-Jazirah, *Hira, al-*Khalij, *Akhbar al-Zahran, *al-Adwa, *al-Qasim, al-*Isha, and Qafilat al-Zayt.

Those marked with an asterisk (*) were closed in November 1963 by decree 482 and the reminder taken into Government ownership by the Ministry of Information as a corporation. At this time new newspapers and journals also appeared. Schools were set up throughout the Kingdom to which teachers came form Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine bringing with them different ideas and cultural traditions.

3. The Establishment of the Novel

It was from these factors, education, foreign immigration and the proliferation of journals, that the educated Saudis, as readers, writers and critics, initiated a new literary life (16), putting aside the Classical tradition of fiction's being confined to the qasidah and the maqamah.

When Hamid Damanhuri returned to Saudi Arabia in 1954, he found that the concept of the novel was still not well developed, since what had been produced up to that time was deficient both in quantity and quality. However, finding that journalism was proliferating and that the number of educated people was on the increase.

Hamid Damanhuri returned to Saudi Arabia in 1954 and published in 1959 the first novel, properly speaking, by a Saudi writer, that is to say, the first novel that was to be recognised as such. This was Thaman al-tadhiyah, (The Price of Sacrifice). It was published in Egypt, but it obtained a considerable readership in Saudi Arabia, albeit a few years after its first publication, forming part of the literary curriculum in secondary schools, where it remains until today. Critical articles have been devoted to it by Mansur al-Hazimi (17) Izzat Ibrahim (18) and Nabilah Ibrahim Salim (19).

Unfortunately, Damahuri's second novel, Wa marrat al-ayyam, (And the days passed), published in Beirut in 1963, failed to achieve the same level of critical acclaim, and he himself died in 1965. The slow development of the Saudi novel was now accelerated by Ibrahim al-Nasir, who published Thuqb fi rida al-layl, (A hole in the cloak of night) in Egypt in 1961 and Safinat al-Mawta (The Ship of the dead) in Saudi Arabia in 1969. since then he had published two further novels. It was finally in the 1970's and 1980's that the Saudi novel became more than a curiosity, with the advent of writers such as Huda al-Rashid Abd al-Aziz Mishri, Amal Shata and Hamzah Buqri.

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CHAPTER TWO

FACTORS IN THE APPEARANCE OF THE SAUDI NOVEL

A. Education

B. Journalism

C. Publishing and printing

D. The Educated Class

Factors in the appearance of the Saudi novel.

For the novel, that is, the novel as a work of art -- what we shall henceforth refer to as the 'artistic' novel -- to emerge in any literature, certain conditions are necessary. The principal one of these is that there should be a readership of a sufficient level of sophistication to appreciate it. The evolution of this readership again requires certain conditions, and it is for this reason that the appearance of the novel in the literature of any society is of comparatively late date.

Prose writing itself usually post-dates the composition of verse and is, at first, employed for the recording of either ephemeral or purely practical matters -- subjects that are not to be dignified by the name of 'literature'. When prose begins to embrace the world of fiction (which has hitherto been the domain of verse), it does so through the media of history, which is the closest form of non-fictional writing to verse, and of theology and philosophy, which, while being systems that have their own rules, require a form of expression that is capable of making fine distinctions that are not always possible in verse.

Prose fiction in Saudi Arabia begins with educational and instructional works -- what might be called 'improving' literature. The composition of a prose narrative, often of considerable complexity, was practised for some time before the time was ripe for the injection of the 'artistic' element that raised it to the level of 'novel': 'The narrative in Saudi literature is among the recent arts. The Arab reader has become familiar with numerous patterns of it, of which perhaps the oldest is that first narrative attempt of ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī in his 'novel' al-Taw'amān [The twins], which appeared in 1930, bearing upon its cover the legend "The first novel to

appear in the Hijaz". There followed the novels al-Baʿth [Resurrection], by Muhammad ʿAlī Maghribī, Fikrah [Idea (here a woman's name)] by Aḥmad al-Subāʿī and Thaman al-tadhiyah [The price of sacrifice] by Ḥamid Damanhūrī ... and Saudi narrative art had started on its career.' [1]

In this chapter, we shall examine some of the factors that caused, or enabled, the Saudi prose narrative to achieve its present status.

A. EDUCATION

As has been said, most of the early Saudi writers were teachers, who endeavoured to promote the development of their country through the education of its society from its essentially Ottoman culture, which had resulted in its floundering in the 'trinity' of poverty, sickness and ignorance, cut off from the progress that Egypt and Lebanon had enjoyed. [2] One of these was ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī, the first person to establish a literary club for teachers and a training centre for public speaking.[3] In addition to writing 'The first novel to appear in the Ḥijāz', he founded the important literary journal al-Manhal (1936), which is still published.

Aḥmad al-Subāʿī also devoted his thoughts and his pen to the development of the nation. He was a primary-school headmaster and produced the first Saudi reading primer, Sullam al-qirāʾah al-ʿArabiyyah [Steps in the reading of Arabic] 1951. [4] He was a journalist who wrote in a comic style in order to ridicule the antiquated attitudes current in the community at that time. He had a small theatre, in which his students gave performances ridiculing the surviving Ottoman legacy. al-Subāʿī was not alone in this enterprise; most of the educated were with him in the struggle to persuade their communities to exchange their old Turkish

life-style for one that was plainly assisting other countries to make progress. [5]

There were no regular schools during the Ottoman period, apart from one (the Rashidi school) for Turkish children in Makkah. [6] Under the Saudi regime, a few schools were established, often with only a handful of students, and frequently teaching only one or two subjects. There were also, of course, those who had been taught privately to read and write, but these amounted to no more than 1% of the population. [7]

The Ministry of Education was established in 1954, in order to put education on a more modern footing; there are also other bodies that collaborate with the Ministry of Education, such as the Ministry of Defence, the National Guard and the Directorate of Technical Education.

Education at the elementary level is now obligatory for everyone, and there are hundreds of schools, in both towns and villages. Education is free for non-Saudi, as well as Saudi, nationals; there is also private education, which is supervised by the Ministry of Education.

Great importance is now given to education, at all levels, and every year sees the opening of new schools throughout the Kingdom, for both boys and girls. Male and female teachers come from all over the Arabic-speaking world, and in some regions, in which education made an early start, the teachers are all Saudis, men and women who have studied in Education Institutes and Colleges in the Kingdom and abroad.

During my research in this field, I have found that the staff of high schools and colleges are giving great importance to modern Saudi writing

in general and to the novel in particular, in their teaching of literature. Formerly, the emphasis was on poetry and, in the field of prose fiction, on Egyptian and Lebanese writing. This development is a consequence of the Ministry of Education's having included, in its curricula for the last few years, Saudi literature and, in particular, the novel. The novel is still in its infancy in Saudi Arabia, but it is developing all the while. Nevertheless, it will take time for the authors to become known to the general reader; as things are, few novelists are widely known, such as al-Anṣārī, Ḥāmid Damanhūrī and Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣir. It will, equally, take time for those responsible for the curricula of the Ministry of Education to make selections for inclusion. [8]

Teachers are directing the attention of their students to the works of Saudi authors, whether in school libraries, liberal arts libraries or general libraries. There are also regular book exhibitions put on by Saudi publishing houses, as well as other exhibitions, at which Saudi works share space with imported books. [9]

As regards universities and colleges, Arabic language is a compulsory subject on the curriculum. Whether or not Arabic literature is studied depends on whether the course is science- or arts-based; it is a compulsory subject for students in the Arabic language departments of Faculties of Arts.

Public libraries, university and college libraries and the libraries of ministries all have an obligation to buy 30% of books published in Saudi Arabia, in order to give encouragement to writers, and for use as reference material. Each college and school has a library, each university has a central library, and throughout Saudi Arabia each city has a public

library. All of these public libraries are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, except for King Fahad Academic Library, founded in 1986, in Riyadh, to serve scholars.

In the field of Higher Education, there are seven Universities in Saudi Arabia, as well as branches of these in areas which have no independent universities. For example, in Abhā, in the south, there are two Faculties, Education and Medicine, which are part of King Saud University, Riyadh, and two, Arabic Language and Sharī'ah, which are part of al-Imām Muḥammad b. Sa'ūd Islamic University, Riyadh; in al-Qaṣīm, in the north, there are two Faculties, Agriculture and Economics, which are part of King Saud University, and two, Arabic Language and Sharī'ah, which are part of al-Imām University; in al-Aḥsā, there is one Faculty, Sharī'ah, which is part of al-Imām University.

Higher Education began in 1957, with the foundation of King Saud Univrersity, consisting at first only of the Faculty of Arts. At that time, there was one student only in the Department of Arabic. Very soon afterwards, the Faculties of Science and Pharmacy were founded. It now has fourteen Faculties and two hospitals. [10]

Before this, there were only Colleges, such as the Religious College in Makkah, founded in 1949, from which fourteen students graduated at the first graduation in 1953, and the Arabic Language and Sharī'ah College in Riyadh, founded in 1954. Earlier than this, there were no Colleges or High Schools in Saudi Arabia, except for the Saudi Institute in Makkah, founded 1946, which was specially for missions to Egypt. [11]

The second University, King Abdul Aziz University, was founded in 1966 in Jeddah, under the name of Jeddah National University; the name was changed in 1969. This University has ten Faculties, plus one branch in al-Madīnah, a Faculty of Education.

The third University was the Islamic University in al-Madīnah, founded in 1967 as the Islamic Centre; it is open to Muslims from all over the world with a basic secondary education qualification.

The fourth University was al-Imām University, in Riyadh, 1974. It was formerly the Arabic Language and Sharī'ah College. It now has five Faculties and various Institutes, and its activities are orientated towards religion, culture and language. [12]

The fifth University was King Fahd University in Dhahran, founded in 1975. It was formerly a College of Petroleum and Minerals, established in 1963. As a university, it pursues the same subjects; it has an Engineering Faculty and a Research Institute for Ocean Sciences. It also has some cultural activities.

The sixth University is King Faysal University in al-Aḥsā. It has seven Faculties, five in al-Aḥsā itself and two in al-Khubar. The Faculties of Education and Administration pursue some cultural activities.

The seventh University is Umm al-Qurā University, in Makkah, founded 1979. It was originally a branch of King Abdul Aziz University, from which it separated at the above date. It has seven Faculties, with a branch in al-Ṭa'if, the Faculty of Education.

These are the establishments in which Saudi literature, including the novel, is now studied, even if this study is proceeding only in a desultory way. However, it is the development of these Universities, as the pinnacle of the general spread of education in Saudi Arabia, that has contributed greatly to the naturalization and growth of this genre in Saudi Arabia, by providing a milieu in which both its practitioners and its public are educated.

B. JOURNALISM.

As mentioned in Chapter one, journalism has played a major role in the development of modern Saudi culture in general, and in the development of short story writing in particular. It was also mentioned there that literary journalism did important service by introducing translations of foreign works. These translations gave the cultured in Saudi Arabia the opportunity to find out about 'artistic' world fiction. Translators in the literary field found that journalism was their only channel of communication with their audience. There was, at that time, no alternative. From the thirties onwards, until today, the Saudi government gives a fifty-per-cent subsidy to all journals published. This it saw as the easiest way of encouraging the spread of literacy. It was not until the seventies that a similar policy was adopted towards books, the subsidy in this case being thirty per cent. The reason for the precedence of journals is that they concerned themselves with all kinds of topics; it was only incidentally that literature came to be treated by them in any regular fashion.

Most Saudi novelists have been journalists. The tradition goes back to the first novel published, in the thirties, by 'Abd al-Quddus al-

Ansari, who edited the journal al-Manhal from 1936. He opened the door to the apprentice attempts of numerous young writers. Another influential figure was Hamzah Buqri, who, on his return from Egypt, after graduation, became a strong advocate of Saudi values, as editor of the Journal al-Idha'ah al-Sa'udiyyah, in which much short fiction and literary criticism was published, between 1955 and 1963. Other editors of note were Ahmad al-Suba'i, who in 1932 was editor of the newspaper Sawt al-Hijaz, and from 1959-63 editor of Majallat Quraysh [13]; Sayf al-Din 'Ashur, who was editor of Majallat Qafilat al-Zayt from 1960 to 1972 [14]; and Ghalib Abu al-Faraj, who became editor of the newspaper al-Madinah in 1980. [15]

Somewhat apart from the foregoing group are 'Abd -'Aziz Mishri, a journalist and editor, who for ten years in the seventies and eighties was literary and cultural editor on the newspaper al-Yawm [16], and 'Abd Allah Jifri, who is still a journalist for a number of journals, including al-Sharq al-awsat.

Another group of writers associated with literary journals, who have broken new ground with their stories and articles, includes Ibrahim al-Nasir [17], Amal Shata [18], Sultan S. al-Qahtani [19] and Fu'ad Sadiq Mufti. [20]

Journalism in Saudi Arabia went through two stages. First was that of independent journals, and began with Jaridat Sawt al-Hijaz in 1924. This continued to be published under the same name until the Second World War, after which, having ceased publication during hostilities, its name was changed to al-Bilad al-Sa'udiyyah; it now appears as al-Bilad. Other such journals were:

Majallat al-Manhal	1936-
al-Madīnah	1937-
al-Riyāḍ.	1953-
Majallat Qāfilat al-Zayt	1953-
Akhbār al-Ẓahrān	1954-63
Majallat al-Idhāʿah al-Saʿūdiyyah	1955-63
Majallat al-ʾIshʿāʿ	1955-56
Majallat al-Khalīj	1957-63
al-Raʾid	1959-63
Majallat Quraysh	1959-63
al-Qasīm	1959-63
al-Jazīrah	1960-
ʿUkāẓ	1960-

The second stage was, and is, that of semi-official publications. On 4 February, 1964, by Royal Decree no. 62, seven newspapers were established, and provision was made for the present and future establishment of weekly and monthly magazines, in order to promote Saudi journalism. Other publications that agreed to a semi-official status were permitted to continue; those that did not had been discontinued in November, 1963. The names of the newspapers were:

ʿUkāẓ

al-Bilād

al-Nadwah

al-Madīnah

al-Jazīrah

al-Riyāḍ

al-Yawm

The names of the weekly magazines established until now are:

al-Yamāmah (from 1954)

Iqrā' (1974)

al-Sharq (1979)

The names of the monthly magazines established until now are:

Majallat al-Manhal (from 1936)

Majallat Qāfilat al-Zayt (from 1953)

Majallat al-ʿArab (1966)

al-Majallat al-ʿArabīyyah (1975)

Majallat al-Faysal (1976)

Majallat al-Haras al-Waṭanī (1984)

In addition, the following (refereed) learned periodicals are published:

Majallat Jāmiʿat al-Malik Saʿud (formerly Majallat Kulliyyat al-Adab, Jamiʿat al-Riyāḍ) (1970)

al-Dārah (1972)

Majallat Kulliyyat al-Lughah al-ʿArabīyyah, Jamiʿat al-Imām Muḥammad b.

Saʿūd al-Islāmīyyah (1974)

Majallat ʿĀlam al-Kutub (1980)

Majallat al-Tawbād (formerly Malaff al-Thaqāfah wa-al-Funūn 1979) (1986)

Journalism played an important part in the development of the novel; it was through the newspapers and journals that people learned of the publication of a new novel. It was also here that reviews and studies appeared, generally in the cultural supplements that accompanied the newspapers, either weekly or, in some cases, daily.

The journals all dealt with literary matters, often publishing short novels for the first time, either in the regular number or in a special edition. al-Manhal (1936) was the first Saudi journal and the one that was, from its inception, perhaps the most devoted to literary matters. In 1960, to celebrate its 25th anniversary, it issued a special edition (al-Kitāb al-Fiddī) entirely devoted to 'the story'. al-Anṣārī, who had written the first Saudi novel, constantly encouraged young novelists. In al-Kitāb al-Fiddī, he wrote:

> 'I am interested in the story for two reasons: 1. The story represents one of the highest forms of literature; 2. Our literature needs to follow the progress made throughout the world in this field.' [21]

As an example of al-Manhal's continuing concern with the novel, we may mention that it published, in 1989-90, in monthly instalments, Ghalib Hamzah Abu al-Faraj's Ḥawsh al-Tājūrī [al-Tajuri's courtyard]. [22]

Majallat Qāfilat al-Zayt (1953) is largely concerned with culture in general, both Arts and Sciences. It pays great attention to the novel and includes both studies of novels and notices of their publication. Many novelists have been introduced to the public through its columns. One of its editors was the novelist Sayf al-Dīn ʿĀshūr.

In spite of its being the publication of an oil company (Aramco), its object has always been primarily a cultural one. In the last decade it has devoted more space to the novel and the novelist than any other contemporary Saudi journal. Saudi novels have been the subject of critical study in its pages. For example, Bakr ʿAbbās wrote about Ḥāmid

Damanhūrī's Thaman al-tadhiyah [23] and Amal Shatā's Ghadan ansā [24]; Muḥammad ʿAlī Qadas made a study of the narrative art in Saudi Arabia, including the novels of a number of writers [25]; ʿAlī al-Dumaynī interviewed ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī, who recounted his experiences with his novel, gave his views on the future of the Saudi novel and expressed his respect for Saudi novelists [26]; Bakr ʿAbbās wrote an frank article about Fu'ād 'Anqāwī's novel La zill taht al-jabal [27], Fāḍil al-Subāʿī wrote an article about Muḥammad ʿAbduh Yamānī's novel Fatāh min Ha'il and other works [28]; ʿAbd al-Rahmān Shalash made a study of the central character in the Saudi novel, using three novels, Thaman al-tadhiyah, Ghadan sa-yakūn al-Khamīs and La zill taht al-jabal, as exemplars, with a backward glance at the earlier novelists, but emphasizing that, in his view, the 'artistic' novel made its appearance only with Thaman al-tadhiyah (this is the best academic article to have appeared concerning the Saudi novel, with reasoned arguments for his opinion of this genre, excellent comparisons of the central characters in the novels mentioned, and valuable reflections on the differences between the characters portrayed in the novels of al-Nāṣir in the sixties and those of the novels of the eighties) [29]; Muṣṭafā Ḥusayn wrote an article about Aḥmad al-Subāʿī as a Saudi man of letters, his one novel Fikrah and his role in the Saudi literary nahḍah. [30]

Majallat al-ʿArab (1966) is published by Ḥamad al-Jāsir, who previously published al-Yamāmah, the first journal in Riyadh, as already mentioned. Although the journal is concerned with all aspects of the Peninsula, al-Jasir, as editor, gives modern literature a prominent place in it. The policy of the journal is to concentrate on scientific and semi-scientific topics, but the pioneers of the novel, Aḥmad al-Subāʿī, 'M. ʿAlī Maghribī and al-Anṣārī are mentioned in a number of articles. [31]

ʿAlī Jawād al-Ṭāhir wrote an article entitled al-Ḥayāh al-adabiyyah fī al-Saʿūdiyyah [Cultural life in Saudi Arabia]. In this, he spoke about culture in general and added that the novelist in Saudi Arabia had made considerable progress, in spite of adverse conditions for the beginning of the Saudi renaissance; he particularly instanced al-Anṣārī, who had had to publish in Syria. He also mentioned al-Subāʿī, who established the Quraysh press, together with the journal of the same name, thus filling a void within Saudi Arabia, and ʿAbd Allah Jifrī and others, who established a publishing house outside Saudi Arabia, in order to provide Saudi authors more opportunity for publishing. He spoke of the various factors that affected Saudi modern literature, journalism, the availability of publishing and printing facilities, and the existence of an educated readership. [32]

al-Majallah al-ʿArabiyyah (1975) was again established as a generally cultural journal. One article dealing with the novel has appeared in it, by Muḥammad Riḍā Naṣr Allah; again, this was an article on Saudi culture and men of culture, among whom were included Aḥmad al-Subāʿī and ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī, their literary works and their effect upon succeeding writers and Saudi culture as a whole. [33]

Majallat al-Faysal (1976) is a literary and cultural journal, whose policy is to give prominence to the novel, as well as to studies and discussions of the work of Saudi novelists. ʿIzzat Ibrāhīm wrote a study of Thaman al-tadḥiyah. [34] Nabīlah Ibrāhīm Sālim also wrote on this work [35], and the editor discussed Zāʾir al-Masāʾ and other works by Sultan Saʿd al-Qaḥṭānī. [36]

Majallat al-Ḥaras al-Waṭanī (1984) was founded principally, as its name suggests, to deal with National Guard news and military matters in general. Besides this, however, it also pays attention to literature and literary figures, particularly the short story and the novel. It covers the annual cultural festival of al-Jinadiriyyah, which is run by the National Guard. This festival consists of seminars and lectures, in which the novel sometimes figures, as, for example, Mu'jib al-Zahrani lectured on ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Mishrī in 1990.

Ḥusayn ʿAlī Ḥusayn interviewed one Saudi novelist, Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣir, who spoke of his experiences as a novelist and short-story writer over a quarter of a century. [37]

Majallat Jāmiʿat al-Malik Saʿūd (Majallat Kulliyyat al-Ādāb) (1970) was founded as the cultural organ of the Faculty of Arts within the University. The first editor was Mansur al-Hazimi, Professor of Modern Literature in the Department of Arabic.

Manṣūr al-Khurayjī and Manṣūr al-Ḥazimī published their research on Ḥamid Damanhūrī's first novel, Thaman al-tadhiyah, and other works, as the first Saudi writer to produce genuine modern novelistic fiction. [38]

Mark Tyler Day wrote an article under the title 'Contemporary Saudi writers of fiction', in which he discussed various Saudi novelists as representatives of an art form only recently introduced into Saudi Arabia. [39]

Majallat Kulliyyat al-Lughah al-ʿArabiyyah (1973) is published by the College (Faculty) of Arabic Language (now al-Imam University) and is

a cultural organ similar to that of the Faculty of Arts, King Sa'ud University. Both are refereed journals. which give priority to academic articles based on research; articles on the novel are not particularly frequent.

Ibrāhīm al-Fawzān wrote an article on modern literature in general and the Saudi pioneers of the novel in particular -- Aḥmad al-Subā'ī, ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī and others -- and their role in the beginnings of modern literature in Saudi Arabia. [40]
Majallat al-Tawbād (1986) (Malaff al-Thaqāfah wa-al-Funūn) (1979) is concerned with culture and the arts in Saudi Arabia in general.

ʿAbd al-ʿAl Shāhīn wrote an article on ʿIṣām Khuqayr's al-Dawwāmah, criticising Khuqayr's style and novelistic structure. [41]

Since becoming al-Tawbād, the journal has given more importance to international literature and to the novel in particular; it has included studies of Umberto Eco, James Joyce and Anais Nin. [42]

Majallat ʿĀlam al-Kutub (1980) was founded specifically for studies, analyses and news of books; it was established by two publishing houses, Thaqīf and al-Rifāʿī. It is edited by Professor Yaḥyā Sāʿātī, a Saudi man of letters who is particularly concerned with modern literature. In 1981 it devoted a volume entirely to the novel; the contributers were specialists in modern literature.

Nabīlah Ibrāhīm Sālim wrote an article on Thaman al-tadhiyah by Ḥāmid Damanhūrī [43]; Ṣālih Jawād al-Ṭuʿmah wrote on Thuqb fī Ridā' al-Layl by Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣir [44]; Manṣūr al-Ḥāzimī wrote on the story in

general, including the novel. [45] From time to time the journal publishes news or analyses of novels. It is a refereed academic journal.

C. PRINTING AND PUBLISHING.

It was not until the seventies, long after the time when printing and publishing had been established in other Arab countries, that they arrived in Saudi Arabia. Until then, Saudi novelists had to have their works published outside Saudi Arabia; for example, 'Abd al-Quddus al-Ansari had to go to al-Taraqqi Press in Damascus, and Muhammad 'Ali Maghribi and Ahmad al-Suba'i to Cairo.

Printing and publishing spread quickly in Saudi Arabia, however, once the process began. Yaḥyā Sā'ātī, in 1979, reckoned the number of such establishments at about 50 [46], but that number rapidly increased later (5000) in 1990 -- but this number certainly includes countless small printing businesses that have nothing to do with publishing proper), and many of these fall greatly short of the standards represented by recognised publishing houses throughout the world.

Before 1977, no novel appears to have been published in Saudi Arabia, apart from Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣir's Safīnat al-mawtā which was published by al-Anwār press in 1969, but only in stencil from typescript. In the same year, a number of long short stories also appeared, published by their own authors, Muḥammad Sa'īd Daftardār, 'Abd al-Muḥsim Aba-Buṭayn and others.

The first work to appear officially was 'Adhrā' al-manfā (1977), by Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣir, published by Nādī al-Ṭā'if al-Adabī, The Ta'if Literary

Club. [47] This Club, founded in 1976, is one of a number of such governmental clubs, supervised by Riʿāyat al-Shabāb, an official organization that concerns itself with, among many other activities, the publication of approved books, of which, by 1990, it had published four [48] and re-published one, Safīnat al-dayāʿ (1988 -- previously entitled Safīnat al-mawtā). Before this, no publishing house gave any importance to the novel. [49]

Nādī Jiddah al-Adabī, founded 1975, published two novels between 1979 and 1986. [50]
Nādī Abhā al-Adabī, founded 1980, published one, in 1982. [51]
Nādī al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, founded 1976, published one, in 1990. [52]
Nādī al-Riyāḍ al-Adabī, founded 1977, republished one, in 1980. [53]
al-Jamʿiyyah al-Saʿūdiyyah lī-al-Thaqāfah wa-al-Funūn, founded 1978, published one, in 1988. [54]

The principal publishing house in Saudi Arabia to give importance to the novel is Tihāmah, which published seventeen novels between 1980 and 1990, as well as republishing the pioneering works such as those of Aḥmad al-Subāʿī and Muḥammad ʿAlī Maghribī. [55]
al-Dār al-Saʿūdiyyah published two novels, in 1981 and 1986. [56]

Dār al-ʿUmayr published two, in 1983. [57]

Dār al-Rifāʿī published two, in 1983 and 1989 [58]

Dār al-Ṣafī published one and republished another, in 1990. [59]

The total number of novels published by Saudi publishing houses between 1977 and 1990 is thirty-four, apart from six published privately by their own authors.

In the thirties, there were no publishing facilities in Saudi Arabia. By 1990, there were some 5000, most of them small jobbing printing works, throughout the country. [60] Many of these businesses collapse, but a number of the novels that they have published are republished elsewhere, provided that there is a market for them. New novels are published, either at their authors' expense, or, if they merit it, as a speculation by the publishers/printers. There is ample evidence of readers' interest, and discrimination, in the activities of the publishing houses, and in the distribution of novels, which are widely available at outlets such as hospitals, airports and hotels, as well as in the bookshops. Readers now number millions, and the novel is firmly established as an important element in Saudi literature.

D. THE EDUCATED CLASS

The establishing of the Ministry of Education, in 1954, marked the initiation of general education in Saudi Arabia; before that, it had been exclusively in the hands of the katātīb, which taught, besides the Qur'ān, the basic elements of reading and writing. The Ministry of Education set up schools in all regions of the Kingdom and established scholarships for students to study in Egypt and in Europe, from where they returned, as the nucleus of an educated class, to develop an awareness of the world outside and to stimulate an interest in public and cultural life. There are now seven universities in Saudi Arabia.

One very important factor was the contribution made by this class through such cultural channels as television, radio, newspapers and magazines. In addition, foreigners came for the first time to Saudi Arabia, to work for the government, as university professors, school teachers and doctors [61], and to work for foreign companies, such as Aramco -- which set up the first television channel in the fifties (Eastern Region). Saudi teachers engaged in the exchange of cultural and other ideas by going to teach in Yemen, Oman and various African countries. Saudis also, for the first time, began to travel abroad for varying purposes: trade, holidays, sports and conferences, as well as study.

This increased consciousness of the world has made the Saudi novelist, and his readers, sophisticated to a degree unimaginable fifty years ago. Since the seventies, different writers have associated themselves with different critical schools and experimented with different kinds of writing, under the influence of contact made when they studied abroad. They, and, as a consequence, their readers can understand the connections of their own problems with those of people in foreign countries, and can appreciate, even when a work is ostensibly set abroad, that the issues that it tackles are just as applicable to themselves as to those associated with them in the fictional narrative.

Lectures, Discussions, Exhibitions and Conferences, both inside and outside Saudi Arabia, play a great part in the intellectual life of the educated class. These began, in the thirties, with 'Ubayd Madani's private Literary Club and ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī's Literature Conferences. Aḥmad al-Subāʿī made an abortive attempt to establish a theatre in Makkah; no one could understand the point and, in any case, there were no actors. Until recently, the cultured flocked to such occasions as al-

Marbid in Basrah and the Baghdad Yearly Conference; they still attend the Aṣīlah Cultural Festival in Morocco. Within the Kingdom itself, there are many Occasions and Festivals, lectures given in the literary clubs and the Universities, and private events in the houses of the cultured. One notable festival is that of the King Faisal Prize, which is awarded to individuals or teams of researchers in, Medicine, literature, art and religion.

Another is the al-Jinādarīyyah Festival, which concentrates on literature and the Arab heritage. It is not confined to Saudis; artists from the whole world, Arab and non-Arab, gather to discuss the problems and issues that arise from their work. [62]

One should not claim too much for the present situation. The Saudi novel has not yet reached its peak, or even half-way to its peak. However, it has set its foot on the path of the Arabic novel in general, which, itself, has yet to achieve international quality, with the honourable exception of a handful of works. The main reason for its having taken this step is the presence of the educated class, who form its principal readers and critics. Until the eighties, the Saudi reader was still more interested in poetry than in prose fiction of any kind; he has now begun to read both novels and short stories. This, though, is still only the beginning of the road. The novel needs to have more exposure to the public, more attention paid to it in the media, in order to acquire the status that its dignity deserves. [63]

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CHAPTER THREE

PIONEERS

1. ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī – al-Taw'amān (The twins)

2. Aḥmad al-Subāʿī – Fikrah ("An idea")

3. Muḥammad ʿAlī Maghribī – al-Baʿth (Resurrection)

1. 'Abd al-Ouddus al-Ansarl (1906 – 83)

al-Taw'man "The Twins" 1930.

This was the first novel to be written in Saudi Arabia, in 1930 [1]. On its cover appear the words 'The first novel in the Ḥijāz', but in spite of this it can hardly be considered a novel, and, indeed, it is probable that al-Anṣārī did not really intend it as such. It is a synopsis of his educational; ideas, which he considered would be beneficial to the new state, now that it had been freed from Ottoman domination.

al-Anṣārī was a teacher of literature at the Madrasat al-ʿUlūm alSharʿiyyah, a journalist and a government employee in several capacities. He produced several books and a large quantity of poetry and articles; he also spoke and lectured a great deal. His aims were to aid those who had literary talents to realise these and to establish a national literature that would eventually attain the level attained by other Arab literatures in the post-colonial world. He was equally concerned to maintain Islamic values and to resist expanding European influences that endangered these, among them the propagation of novels that encouraged immoral behaviour. He regarded such novels as part of a sophisticated European propaganda: 'European propaganda has enjoyed wide circulation in various parts of the orient and especially in the Islamic Arab world. It has managed to affect a great number of youth as well as educated people, who, in the end, become victims of its ambitions and ideology [2].' His purpose in writing al-Taw'amān was to point out the disadvantages of foreign schools and cultural missions to young people without experience of the west.

Its plot, if that is the appropriate term, concerns twin boys born to the wife of an old man. One of these, Rashid, goes to the Arabic Islamic School, and the other, Fārid, to an unspecified 'western' school. Rashīd is successful and grows up as a useful member of the community, whereas Farīd adopts all the typical European vices, fails to return home and eventually dies in Paris. The work is little more than a tract in favour of preserving Islamic values, as contrasted with development along western, European lines. It is included here principally because al-Ansari called it a riwāyah, rather than anything else.

2. Ahmad al-Subai (1901 - 84)

Fikrah "Idea" 1947.

After this, nothing appeared that could be called a novel, until 1947, when Ahmad al-Suba'i published Fikrah [3]. This again is concerned with education and development, reflecting al-Suba'i's desire to build the life of his country in education and instruction , as the Europeans had already done. He says, in his introduction to Fikrah, addressing his two sons, Usamah and Zuhayr, the dedicates of the work: "In my story you will read some of the ideas that have preoccupied me throughout my life, and you find it an example of the models of which I have always dreamt but none of which I have realised. This is because there was in the circumstances of my formation and upbringing that which had not prepared me for them" [4].

The plot of Fikrah or Husna as it was originally called, is a simple, sentimental, melodramatic one. The eponymous heroine is a Bedouin girl without a family, brought up by an old man, who is the teacher of a village kuftab in the region of Ta'if. He has taught her comprehensively, language, poetry, mythology, history and much else. She has also travelled extensively, under the auspices of a friend of the old man, in Egypt, Italy and Turkey, before returning to the village. One dark, rainy night, she comes across Salim, a young business man from Makkah, who is lost on his way to Ta'if. She gives him food and shelter in her cave, where he stays for some time, learning from her all the things that she had been taught herself, and being overwhelmed by the novelty and audacity of her ideas. He falls in love with her, but she does not reciprocate his love, believing that love is nothing but what previous generations have

handed down as a traditional concept. He eventually returns to Makkah, and she goes back to her itinerant life in the mountains and valleys of Ta'if. Some time later, she is in Makkah for the Hajj, Salim comes across her again. This time, strangely enough, he recognises her as his long-lost sister, lost by her family on a summer excursion to Ta'if. Everyone, the family, Salim and Fikrah herself rejoice at this happy denouement.

One of the problems of al-Subā'ī's depiction of his two main characters is that, in wishing to redress the balance of the traditional male and female roles, he goes to the opposite extreme. Fikrah is a tough, self-reliant person, owing to her rural upbringing, whereas Salim is a somewhat effete product of urban life, indulged with luxury of all kinds, who nevertheless gives evidence of a certain noble humanity. he is, nevertheless, eclipsed by Fikrah, who emerges as a preacher of modernist values. Everything, in fact, is subordinated to Fikrah, in her role of evangelist.

The principal flaw in the work, as a novel, lies in the various improbabilities of the plot, the greatest of which is perhaps the fact that Fikrah's family have kept secret the loss of their daughter for so many years and have, apparently, done nothing to try to discover her whereabouts during the whole of this period. Others include the discrepancy between Fikrah's rural persona and the extent, both in space and time, of her travels; Sālim's return to Makkah, with no apparent intention of seeing her again; the lengthy lapses of the storyline into didacticism; and the naive romanticism of the ending, which is rapidly accomplished, rather in the manner of some of the works of Jurji Zaydan. In fact, there is, throughout the work, an uncomfortable conflict between realism, symbolism and romanticism. In spite of its shortcomings,

however, it has enjoyed a considerable measure of popularity and a certain critical esteem [5]. For its time, it may be thought a not inconsiderable achievement.

al-Subā'ī was a primary-school teacher and journalist, in which latter capacity he engaged in social criticism of various kinds. When in 1984, he was awarded the Saudi Literary prize, for his whole oeuvre, he said, in a television interview: 'At that time, I did not intend to write a novel; I wanted to propound my thoughts in a book in the form of a story, in order to present them clearly to readers [6]'. The work is a call for the provision of more extensive education, for girls as well as for boys.

These two works contributed, in a way, to the emergence of the novel in Saudi Arabia, with the styles in which they were written, with the social issues with which they dealt and with the technique of composition. It cannot, however, be said that the characters that appear in them are anything more than cardboard figures or that their settings are realistically represented. It is the third of the pioneers who finally placed real Saudi characters in authentic settings.

3. Muḥammad ʿAlī Maghribī (1900 -)

al-Baʿth "Resurrection" 1948.

Muḥammad ʿAlī Maghribī was the first Saudi writer to confront his audience with the novel genre proper and to present to its incomprehension the possibilities that it offered. His single effort in this genre, al-Ba'th [Resurrection] was published in 1948 [7], a year after that in which al-Subai's work appeared. He still found it necessary to state, in an afterword, that the characters were entirely fictitious, that the action was not based in any factual events, and that the story was intended to give encouragement and guidance to future generations of his countrymen [8]. The 'resurrection' of the title is for them like that of the 'sleepers' in the cave of the Qur'anic surah of that name and in Tawfiq al-Hakim's play 'Awdat al-ruh [9].

The plot of al-Ba'th is as follows. Its hero, Usamah al-Zahir, is a young man who is sent to India, to be treated for tuberculosis, which he has contracted as a result of his parents' divorce. The narrative begins with his boarding the ship for India at Jeddah. The scene of the leavetaking of the various passengers, and particularly of that of Usamah from his mother, is well portrayed, set against the description of the port and the sea, with the ship anchored in the offing and the small steamboats ferrying out to it. The passengers are of various nationalities and speak a variety of languages. Usamah has been provided with books by his father to keep him entertained during the voyage and to continue his Islamic education in an alien milieu.

Usamah's first, and only, meeting with the European passengers, in the dining-saloon, is disastrous. He does not know the proper etiquette and he is unable to engage in the conversation, while understanding enough English to realise that they are criticizing him in an offensive manner. He is, however, somewhat restored by meeting shortly afterwards, an old Indian Muslim, who invites him to a prayermeeting and shows him great respect as coming from the Hijaz. From this time onwards, he keeps very much to himself.

He goes ashore at Aden which he finds fascinatingly cosmopolitan. Here, and in nearby Shaykh 'Uthman, he is particularly struck by the sight of women going unveiled and by the free mixing of men and women. In Shaykh 'Uthman, he comes across women from Yemen, Persia, Nubia, and elsewhere, with strange dialects and free morals. He has never encountered prostitution before. He is invited to a party, where he is astonished to find more women present, as well as singing, dancing and other forms of frivolity. The author makes the point that it is the British occupation of the colony that has led to these excesses, and that they are actively encouraged by the colonial power, in order to distract the inhabitants from more serious issues.

In the course of his voyage, as he stops off at Mukalla and Zanzibar, and particularly when he finally reaches Bombay, Usamah is increasingly struck by the contrast in development between other countries and his own. In this, the author is expressing his ambitions for the future of Saudi Arabia. One incident is especially striking. Usamah's first encounter with trams. He is unable to comprehend the workings of these carriages that rattle along on two parallel metal tracks, with long rod-like protruberances on top connecting with a wire running in the air,

occasionally giving off sparks. These last could compare only with the blazing torches of those who escorted pilgrims on their way to 'Arafat and Mina. The fascination that such things arouse in him is reminiscent of the fascination aroused in everyone on Egypt by the technology accompanying the expedition of Napoleon.

Although the novelty that he experiences necessarily grows less as he moves from one city to the next, Usamah remains conscious of the great gulf that exists between any of them and his own country. He says to a companion, somewhat hyperbolically, on seeing one of the great boulevards of Bombay: 'If you were to place the whole population of the Hijaz, towns and villages alike, in one of this city's boulevards, they would not fill it. How is it possible to crowd the whole population of a nation into one boulevard?

His Indian companion replies: 'That is the difference between the rich and the poor, between the productive and the arid; our country is poor because it is arid, and because its amenities are still underdeveloped.' Such dialogue, and the presence of the companion, is actually somewhat deleterious to the novel; it would have been more effective if Usamah had been left alone to wonder and then to reflect in the significance of what he has seen. However, it does serve a purpose, if only a rather crude one; it affords the author scope for advancing his own ideas and ambitions for his own country. He longs for progress in every field, but this is to under the control of its own inhabitants. In particular, the issue of education must be tackled. To fight backwardness, illiteracy must be eradicated. In this, Maghribi was speaking of a field in which progress was already being made; school were being set up all over the country.

The story-line now resumes, with Usamah and his companions going to Karachi to consult a doctor, who recommends a special hospital in the countryside. Here, in idyllic surroundings, he falls in love with a beautiful Indian nurse, Kiti, and meets an old man with whom he has a long and interesting conversation about the possibilities of emigration to Makkah.

As he convalesces in hospital, Usamah frequently suffers anxiety about his feeling for Kiti, who is a convert to Christianity. This anxiety, however, is counterbalanced by the pleasure that he takes in her company and by the relief that he feels at the prospect of his complete recovery.

The author is concerned at the attempts of Christian missionaries to proselytize the poor and the sick, among whom had been Kiti and her mother. He considers that the Muslims should make every effort to win these converts for Islam instead. Usamah, accordingly, tries to make her reconsider and convert to Islam.

The love interest here is rather awkwardly juxtaposed with the 'educational' tone of the novel. The character of the hero is never properly developed in either direction. However, the strong, reforming side soon takes over again from the sentimental side, after leaving for Saudi Arabia abruptly, on hearing of his father's death.

While on a summer excursion to Ta'if shortly after this, he discovers a situation that he finds distasteful; the various trades in this area are monopolised by immigrant foreigners, who are able to fix their prices as they please. They justify this by claiming that, without them, the

natives would have none of their wares, being incapable of producing them for themselves.

He is also much taken with the quality of the Arabic spoken by the Bedouins of the area and considers that, if educated, they could have much to contribute to the development of the country. He contemplates instituting a scheme for their education; he returns to Jeddah intending to sell up his father's property to finance this. However, the Bedouin are soon lost sight of, for he encounters a girl, Bilqis, who reminds him of Kiti. Her father sets a high bride-price on her, and Usamah now proposes to divert his funds to this purpose. From this uncharacteristically naive behaviour he is saved by the higher bid of another suitor, but no more is heard of the education of the Bedouins.

Disappointed of his bride, he travels to Egypt, where he meets a leather merchant, who assists him to set up a firm for the manufacture of leather goods, using the sheep-skins from the sacrifice during the Hajj. This is seen as a contribution to the national economy, since they would otherwise go to waste. This project is extremely successful.

This happy ending is further heightened by the unexpected arrival of Kiti and her mother for the Hajj. Encouraged by the old Indian whom Usamah met in India, they have converted to Islam; as a consequence, Kiti has been sacked from the hospital. The old man has helped them to make the Hajj. Kiti has changed her name, strangely enough, to Bilqis.

The author, unusually, provides a conclusion, in which he himself addresses the reader, explaining the ideas of social reform and development that led him to write the work.

al-Ba'th does not really work as a novel. It is a cross between a sentimental tale and a tract, in which both sometimes lose their sense of direction and each is distinctly flawed by the other. Maghribi later stated that his aims in writing it had been to set out his ideals for the development of his country. He had not intended to write a novel as such [10]. There was a strong autobiographical element in the book; he was a successful business man and was active in furthering education. He had dreamt of Saudi Arabia's development and progress. 'And now, you see', he said, 'the dream has come true [11]'

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE NOVEL BETWEEN 1959 AND 1979

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF NARRATIVE ART

1959 – 79.

- The Period of transition.

- Direct Action.

- Translation.

- The appearance of artistic narrative.

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(1) Hamid Damanhuri,

- Thaman al-tadhiyah

"The price of Sacrafice" 1959

- Wa Marrat al-ayyam

"And the days Passed" 1963

(2) Ibrahim al-Nasir,

- Thuqb fi rida' al-layl

"A Hole in the Cloak of night" 1961

Safinat al-mawta

"The Ship of the dead" 1969.

'Adhra' al-manfa

"The Girl of exile" 1977.

(3) Hind Salih Ba Ghaffar,

-al-Bara'ah al-mafqudah

"Lost Innocence" 1972

(4) Ghalib Hamzah Abu al-Faraj,

– al-Shayatin al-humr

"The red devils" 1977

(5) 'Aishah Zahir Ahmad,

– Basmah min buhayrat al-dumu'

" A Smile From the Lake of Tears" 1979.

(6) Huda 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Rashid,

– Ghadan sa yakun al-Khamis

"Tomorrow Will be Thursday" 1979

(7) 'Abd Allah Sa'id Jum'an,

– al-Qisas

"Retaliation" 1979.

– Laylat 'urs Nadiyah

"Nadiyah's Wedding Night" 1990

The Period Of Transition.

The history of the Saudi novel falls into three stages: 1. between 1930 and 1948; 2. between 1959 and 1979; 3. from 1979 onwards.

As we have seen, the first stage consisted of the 'educational' novels of 'Abd al-Quddus al-Ansari, Ahmad al-Suba'i and Muhammad 'Ali Maghribi. The style in which these novels were written reflected the tastes of the readers and the objects aimed at by the writers. The Saudi public was in need of education, and the educated classes of the period could not be satisfied with what appeared to be merely a story. Such things were not suitable for educated men; they were more appropriate for women and children, as being similar to the unsophisticated tales told for amusement in the villages and encampments. [1]

However, between the first stage and the second, fictional writing came to be regarded largely as being for amusement, and only secondarily as educational. Authors were not persuaded by the critics that they should be offering their readers more substantial fare. For example, Ibrahim Hashim Filali says of the six stories that compose his volume Ma'a al-Shaytan [With Satan]: 'The art of fiction may not be so satisfied with these six stories as to include them in its sphere, but they will satisfy the reader'. [2]

Writers wrote for readers who had no concept of the novel as an art form and so gave them what they felt would please them. This did nothing to raise the level of literary appreciation among the public at large. Amin Salim Ruwayhi, writing in 1954, says: 'Let us appeal to the decision of the public, since it is the sole arbiter that can deliver the final decisive

judgement; the opinion of a small group that cannot experience wonder is of no importance'. [3]

Ruwayhi wrote several short stories, dealing with a number of social problems of his time. However, his work would have benefited from an injection of 'art', in order to stimulate his readers' intellectual forces and to wean them away from the concept of the narrator as omniscient, as he had appeared in the earlier novels.

These writers were aware of 'art', but were not interested in it. They were concerned, first to entertain, and secondly to educate, their readers. 'Art' could come later. Ahmad Muhammad Jamal says:

> We should like to apologize to our esteemed readers -- in advance – for the fictional artistry that they may miss in these stories that we tell concerning Sa'd artistry that they find in the stories of contemporary writers. We are not – thank God! -- one of those who dedicate themselves to the reading and writing of The Story, that is to say, by observing its rules, or what they conceive to be its rules, on which the Masters of the Art of the Story have agreed, or they conceive them to have agreed.
>
> In our view the story is rather a tale that has a beginning and an end, contains a comprehensible allegory and a tangible lesson. This is the object of the demands of the literary school that says that Art is for Life. The embellishment, exaggeration, prolixity and imaginative fabrication that are required by the literary school that says that Art is for Art are not natural to one who writes in order to bring about intelligible reforms. [4]

Ibrahim al-Nasir, whose successful novels, and short stories, belong to a later period, began his literary career in 1960, by publishing a

short story, al-Hadiyyah [The Gift], which is to be classified as firmly rooted in the kind of writing that we are discussing. It deals with the family system that prescribes that an elder sister must get married before a younger. A father finds himself in the predicament of having an elder daughter for whom no suitor presents himself, thus blocking the way for his younger daughter's marriage. His son suggests a wealthy old man, who is a friend of his and is looking for a wife, and both the father and the daughter agree. [5]

Perhaps the best-known of those writers who began in this period and then went on to write a novel, and further short stories, in a more mature style in the eighties is Hamzah Buqri. The short story that he published in 1955, Madha yasna'? [What is he doing?], about a poor man whose wife is dying of haemorrhea, is probably the best production of this transitional period. Buqri had studied in Cairo and knew English, which gave him access to world literature; however, this first story belongs definitely to this era. [6]

It was not until translation from other literatures into Arabic became more general and such translations made their way into Saudi Arabia by way of Egypt and Lebanon that Saudi writers began to adopt a more 'artistic' approach. Those who started to write in the seventies fell into three distinct categories: those who wrote one novel and then stopped, to devote themselves to literary scholarship, finding themselves unequal to competing within the new wave of writing; those who wrote at first in the old style but succeeded in adapting to the new; and those who produced 'artistic' work from the beginning. These last had mostly received a better education than the others, either within Saudi Arabia or abroad, they were better acquainted with world literature, either in the original or in

translation, and finally they had availed themselves of the improved opportunities for foreign travel.

Direct Action.

Translation.

As we have said, the novel is a new art form in Saudi Arabia; it came from Europe in the twentieth century, not directly but through Egypt and Lebanon, where many novels and collections of short stories were translated from English and French. [7]

Although a large number of these translations date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were more or less unknown in Saudi Arabia until after the Second World War. Saudi writers read them and imitated them in their writing. Access to translations of short stories was easier than to those of novels since the journals and newspapers that had started up found a ready market for the former, but both those who were to become novelists, and those who concentrated on the short story, modelled themselves on these in their writing. All of these writers were concerned to adapt western treatments of plot and character to their own environment.

Ibrahim al-Nasir says:

> The novel is a new genre in our literature ... it was unknown to the past generation, and I think that the Gulf states had no better fortune. Before the novel received its fair share of diffusion and propagation, it was inevitable that it would be outstripped by the short story, since the two are connected and follow the same direction. Neverthless, some of our attempts are not too bad. But we must not try to achieve brilliance too quickly, for the road ahead of us is long and

painful. So long as we know the beginning, we shall arrive at our objective one day. [8]

Activity in translation became more common in Saudi Arabia from the thirties onwards; writers such as Ahmad Rida Huhu, from Algeria, came to work in Saudi Arabia between the wars (he himself worked as a translator from French for the Post Office), and Muhammad 'Alim al-Afghani, who came from Afghanistan as a teacher and journalist. As more Saudis went abroad for their education, they also engaged in translation, the results of which were published in journals and newspapers.

'Abd al-Jalil As'ad translated (from originals that can be identified):

a. Molière's L'Avare [al-Bakhil] 1939 (directly from the French);
b. De Maupassant's La bête à maît' Belhomme [al-Ustadh Batlan wa al-qumash], 1949;
c. De Maupassant's Clair de lune ['Ala daw' al-qamar], 1954;
d. De Maupassant's La morte [Hal kana hulman?], 1961.

All these are said to have been translated from English translations of the French; the Arabic title of d., at any rate, follows the English: Was it a dream rather than the French.[9]

Ahmad Bu Shinaq translated a short story by an unnamed Turkish writer [Ah, min ha'ula' al-kibar], 1940. [10]

Muhammad 'Alim al-Afghani translated Anton Chekhov's - [La-Qad barahtuhu (?)], 1948, probably from an English translation of a French translation of the Russian. [11]

Hamzah Buqri translated:

a. Molière's L'amour médicin [Tabib al-gharam], 1954;

b. Anton Chekhov's - [al-Dars al-thamin], 1955. [12]

Muhammad 'Ali Qutub translated:

a. A Chinese story by A.D. Chung (?) [Uridu an atazawwaj Amrikiyyah], 1956;

b. An English story by Tollemache Powell (?) [Ila ghayr raj'ah], 1957;

Charles Roberts's The prey (?) [al -Farisah] 1960;

c. A Spanish story by Felipe Alfo (?) [al-Mutasawwilun], 1960;

d. Elaine Young's (?) [al-Malja' al-gharib], 1962,

e. Mark Brandle's (?) [al-Qatil], 1963. [13]

'Aziz Diya' translated:

a. Somerset Maugham's - [al-Hulm], 1957;

b. Somerset Maugham's - [al-Kanz], 1958;

c. Somerset Maugham's - [Haqa'iq al-hayat], 1961;

d. George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-four [Alf wa-tis'mi'ah wa-arba'ah wa-thamanin], 1984. [14]

'Umar Burhdn Idris translated Pushkin's -- [al-Tiflah] 1960. [15]

Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir 'Allaqi translated Elaine Partiss's (?) [Faqadtu basari], 1963. [16]

There were also a number of anonymous translations of unattributed works: 'an American story', 'an Indonesian story', etc. There is no point in listing these.

Literature in Saudi Arabia was stimulated by exposure to foreign literature; it assimilated what this had to teach in the way of characterization, plotting and structure. Saudi writers benefited also from their ability to travel; they could compare alien communities with their own and see how the former dealt with problems and situations that affected the latter. Finally, changes in Saudi Arabia made it easier for them to express their views in print. All was now set for a considerable artistic development in the Saudi novel.

The Appearance of 'Artistic' Narrative.

al-Suba'i's autobiographical work, Ayyami [My days] was more influential than his novel with later Saudi novelists. It displayed much more verisimilitude, it contained elements of comedy, and it made skilful use of himself as a character.

The 'educational' novel and the 'entertaining' novel had retreated into the background. Many of the issues that the former had addressed were no longer so relevant, and the process of constructing the Saudi nation was complete. Those Saudi writers who had been exposed to foreign literature were anxious to be taken seriously as artists. The Saudi novel was moving towards maturity.

Most scholars and critics agree that Hamid Damanhuri's Thaman al-tadhiyah [The price of sacrifice] is the first Saudi novel to incorporate

most, if not all, of the elements of the 'artistic' novel. It has been translated into a number of languages, in which reviews and studies of it have also appeared. [17] The story is presented in terms of internal conflict, between the hero's yearning for his country and his necessary exile for scientific study, between his love for his unsophisticated fiancee at home and his love for a girl student in Egypt who is educated and much more in tune with his way of thinking, between a belief in the utility of science, which will provide a better way of life and sensitivity to the traditions and values of an undeveloped community. A degree of compromise and sacrifice is needed to resolve these conflicts.

Hamid Damanhuri. (1922 - 1965)

Hamid Damanhuri, as we have mentioned, is considered the father of the 'artistic' novel in Saudi Arabia. He returned from Alexandria University in 1945 to take a post as a teacher in Madrasat al-Ba'athat, the school that prepared students to go to University in Egypt. Shortly afterwards, he moved on to teach in al-Madrasah al-Namudhajiyyah, the 'Model School', in al-Ta'if, then to the office of the deputy of King 'Abd al-'Aziz in Makkah, as an inspector, and finally to the post of Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Education. [18]

His novels, Thaman al-tadhiyah [The price of sacrifice], 1959, and Wa-marrat al-ayyam [And the days passed], 1963, reflect his life and study in Cairo and Alexandria Universities. He was greatly influenced by Egyptian writers, in particular Muhammad Husayn Haykal, whose novel, Zaynab, was published in 1919, and Najib Mahfuz. Mansur al-Hazimi sees a similarity between Thaman al-tadhiyah and Zaynab, and indeed the plots are very much alike; [19] Muhammad al-Shanti, on the other

hand, connects it with Mahfuz's trilogy al-Thulathiyyah, 1956, but can adduce no evidence for this, apart from the similarity of the names of the characters. [20]

Damanhuri's natural talent was supplemented by his university education in Egypt, his good knowledge of English, his wide reading, his discussions with scholars and critics, and the experience and maturity that he brought to his writing. [21] His first novel was not published until fifteen years after his graduation and his second three years later. He made a considerable impression on the world of Arabic letters, especially since the literary scene in Saudi Arabia was in such a poor condition at the time. He has been accorded the equivalent position in Saudi writing to that of Muhammad Husayn Haykal in Egyptian. [22]

Thaman al-tadhiyah.

The action of the novel shifts between Makkah and Cairo. Ahmad, the hero, is a student at Cairo University, in the Faculty of Medicine. Visiting a friend and class-mate, Mustafa Lutfi, the son of the famous lawyer, Lutfi Bey, he meets his sister, Fa'izah, a girl of sixteen, who is both beautiful and educated. He is attracted both by her beauty and by her education, the more so because he has few friends and only a few class-mate acquaintances in Cairo. This attraction, however, causes him great internal conflict, because he is engaged to his cousin, Fatimah, at home in Makkah. At secondary school he had had high ambitions of continuing his studies in Cairo, but his father at first refused, since he was the only son, who was required to carry on the family trading business. Ahmad fell ill with a fever when his wishes were thwarted, and his father finally agreed, holding a large farewell party for him, at which he arranged his

engagement to Fatimah, the only daughter of his uncle, 'Abd al-Rahim. Ahmad has spent six years in Egypt when he hears of his uncle's death. He decides that he must return to Makkah to console his father and Fatimah, to whom he feels a particular responsibility, now that she is an orphan. He takes his degree and leaves for Saudi Arabia to marry her. He gives up the beautiful, wealthy and educated Fa'izah, in favour of fulfilling his duty to his family – the price of his sacrifice.

Damanhuri returned from Egypt as one of the educated elite, to take his part in the building of the new country. As a result of his studies and his experience, he had accumulated many ideas for the development of it and its people.

The Hijazi environment is well portrayed in Damanhuri's writing: family life, Dujayrah superstitions, the concerns of the traders in the Suwayqah, shop rents, free trade, particularly the anxieties about supply caused by the Second World War; and, on the other hand, the developments that were occurring after the war, with their emphasis on education, so that Saudis were training as doctors, engineers, economists and so on, with the concomitant problems that they faced, such as that of finding the educated women that they met abroad during their studies a more attractive prospect for marriage than the uneducated Saudi women.

Wa-marrat al-ayyam

A poor man dies, while his wife is pregnant with her second son. She has to provide for her two children, which she does by dressmaking. She sacrifices everything for them, and her health deteriorates. Isma'il, the elder son decides to leave school to search for a job in order to help

the younger, Mansur, continue his studies. His friend Kamal, the son of a rich family, advises against this, but Isma'il does so and obtains a post in the Ministry of Finance, the Personnel Chairman of which had been a friend of his father. Here he encounters a mixture of employees, of varying intelligence and ability; some of them are negligent, but Isma'il performs his tasks conscientiously. He is promoted as a secretary to the Personnel Chairman, but he has higher ambitions than this.

One day he meets Nabil Tawfiq, a Lebanese trader living in Jeddah, who has come to the Ministry on a routine business visit. Nabil persuades him that business provides better opportunities than government employment; he leaves the Ministry and becomes Nabil's partner in his scrap-metal business, moving from Makkah to Jeddah. Nabil's daughter, Salwa, to whom he is attracted, encourages him in his successful business career for five years. He has also loved Kamal's sister, Samirah, since they were neighbours in Makkah; however, her father forces her to marry a rich old man, living in Riyadh.

Isma'il now sends his brother, Mansur, to Cairo University to study Administration, in order that he may return to help him in running the business; he regards this also as a kind of substitute for his own abandoned education. In addition he moves his mother from her small house in a narrow lane in Makkah to a large mansion, with several servants, in Jeddah, but she is unhappy with this arrangement, since she feels that she is too old to adapt to this style of life.

Nabil now returns to Beirut with his family, and Isma'il buys his share of the business. He does not seriously consider marrying Salwa, even though she is in love with him, but he still feels regrets for 'losing'

both of the women in his life, her and Samirah. He writes frequently to Salwa in Beirut, but she does not reply.

After Mansur's return from Cairo, with his degree, Isma'il moves the headquarters of his business to Riyadh, leaving Mansur in charge of the Jeddah office. The same day, he receives a letter from Nabil, informing him of Salwa's death. She had been ill for some time, and finding that no Lebanese doctor could help, Nabil had taken her to Europe for treatment. This, too, was in vain; her health gradually declined. Throughout her illness, she had refused to hear anything against Isma'il from her parents and, on her deathbed, had asked Nabil to tell him of her death.

From time to time, Isma'il sees in the building in which his new office is in Riyadh a small girl who reminds him of Samirah, playing in the corridors or hoping to be given sweets. One day he is waiting for Mansur to arrive from Jeddah. Mansur is delayed, and Isma'il is sitting sadly reminiscing, someone knocks on his door. It is Kamal, whom Isma'il has not seen for ten years. [23] Mansfir has met him, by chance, in Jeddah, and he has come to Riyadh to visit Ismd'il. In the course of their conversation, Isma'il mentions the small girl who reminded him of Samirah, and Kamal tells him that, until a year ago, Samirah had lived with her husband and her daughter in this very building. She is now divorced and living in Jeddah with Kamal and their mother. Kamal's father has died, after an illness; the family wealth has been expended on efforts to cure him, and Kamal has been forced to seek work in order to support them.

Mansur arrives and, in the course of conversation, suggests to Isma'il that it is high time that he got married. Isma'il says that it is now too late.

As a final twist to the plot, it turns out that the whole story is Isma'il's written autobiography, which Mansur has been reading aloud to his mother. Isma'il himself has driven off, to a destination unknown, after the meeting with Mansur and Kamal in the office.

In Wa-marrat al-ayyam Damanhuri provides a lively picture of life in Makkah and Jeddah in his descriptions and reported conversations, together with snatches of history and current events. All is reported with versimilitude: Jeddah as a more developed and modernised place than Makkah; the streets, gardens, traders and other inhabitants; the various quarters of Makkah, al-Shamiyyah, Hayy al-Bab, Shari' Ajyad, Zuqaq al-Basha; the small band that played in front of the al-Sharif 'Awn Palace and the audience listening to it. [24] Social mores are illustrated, in the marriage conventions, such as greedy fathers requiring extravagant brideprices for their daughters and selling them like animals, without consideration of the other qualities necessary in a son-in-law; in the kind of employment considered suitable for a respectable widow, such as that of a dress-maker. Foreigners coming to work in Saudi Arabia, making use of their knowledge and experience, are represented by Nabil, who is anxious to help as well as to exploit and introduces Isma'il to commercial practices, banking, etc., as well as confiding in him in more personal matters. [25]

None of the characters has a very large role in the story; even Isma'il, the hero, is principally the point round which the other characters

revolve. Each is well-drawn, however, and behaves consistently; for example, his mother is reluctant to move from her old home in Makkah to a mansion in Jeddah; and Isma'il himself takes himself off to Jeddah when refused by Samirah's father.

al-Damanhuri is less realistic in Wa-marrat al-ayyam than in Thaman al-tadhiyah, or perhaps less consequential; Isma'il completely forgets Samirah when he goes off to Jeddah and becomes preoccupied with business; later he leaves his second love, without any good reason; the novel ends in a totally arbitrary way. Damanhuri employs an simple and modern style and technique, a logical progression, copious dialogue and monologue. He allows his hero to discuss his attitudes and what happens to him, whether he agree with his hero's ideas or not, and he faces his hero with life's problems to be solved in the light of his ideas, without allowing the authorial personality to obtrude either on the hero or on the reader.

> Penetration" in presenting a story requires a greater knowledge of the hidden places of the human soul and an investigation of its secrets. Most Arab story-tellers, who devote their attention to description of the outside world, which is simple and straightforward, not going beyond observing visible phenomena and representing them, cannot do this. What they do is the opposite of the mental - the psychological story - of which James Joyce, the Irishman, and Henry James, the American, are among the leading practitioners.' [26]

al-Damanhuri has been called the 'slave of the novel' [27], on account of the time that he devoted to polishing and reworking. He has also been called 'similar to Najib Mahfuz'. [28] This last seems a bizarre overstatement. He represents an innovation in Saudi letters; if he had

lived, he might have gone on to produce more mature work, but to describe him in such hyperbolic terms on the strength of his two novels is totally inappropriate.

al-Damanhuri and Haykal

Hamid Damanhuri, while studying in Cairo, was concerned to give Saudi Arabia a literary culture of its own; to this end, he published Thaman al-tadhiyah, perhaps as homage to Haykal.

Muhammad Husayn Haykal went to France in 1911.[29] He studied French literature, met many novelists and critics, and then returned to Egypt with experiences that few Egyptian writers had then had. Damanhuri, as we have related, resided in Egypt between 1940 and 1945 studying Egyptian literature, and European literature, whether in the original or in translation. He met a number of writers, Taha Husayn, Najib Mahfuz and Haykal himself. [30] He too returned to Saudi Arabia with novel experiences.

Zaynab

There are two focal points in the plot of Haykal's Zaynab: the eponymous heroine and Hamid. He is a student in Cairo who returns to his parental home for the vacations; his perspective is seen very much as being Haykal's own. The protagonists meet briefly; she is a beautiful peasant girl working in the fields owned by Hamid's father. In fact, she is one of the first girls that he has ever met. He is attracted to her, but nothing emerges from this first meeting; in fact Zaynab is being courted by another peasant. When Hamid learns that his cousin 'Azizah, with whom

he has been pursuing an amatory correspondence, is to be married to someone else, and he despairs of finding a suitable partner for his pretensions in the country, he returns to Cairo, from where he writes a letter to his parents, full of ideas about society and its problems that are obviously Haykal's own. Eventually he thinks of Zaynab again, tells his parents that he would like to marry her; they approve of this, since she is related to the family. Her unfortunate swain is put off, Hamid returns from Cairo and marries her.

Thaman al-tadhiyah

There are three focal points in this work, Ahmad, the hero, Fatimah, his cousin, at home in Makkah, and Fa'izah, the sister of his Cairene fellow-student. Ahmad is engaged to his cousin before going to study in Cairo. While there, he is greatly attracted to the sister of his friend, who is educated and sophisticated, and in every respect different from Fatimah. While he is studying, his uncle in Makkah dies, and he decides that he bound to give up any aspirations to Fa'izah and return and honour his engagement to Fatimah.

Mansur al-Hazimi remarks that Thaman al-tadhiyah is very similar to Zaynab. There are indeed certain similarities in the plot, in the settings, in the authors' lively descriptions of natural phenomena and day-to-day life. Both incorporate an autobiographical. There is, however, in Thaman al-tadhiyah a conflict that is not present in Zaynab. al-Damanhuri's debt to Haykal is large but not overwhelming. [31]

-Ibrahim al-Nasir (1933 -) is another novelist writing in much the same vein. He too reflects the vicissitudes and contradictions of the period about which Damanhuri writes. He depicts the rise of the professional class and treats the various aspects of its influence on the rest of society. Character is submitted to scrutiny through examination of the lesser characters surrounding the protagonist. In Thuqb fi rida' al-layl [A hole in the cloak of night] [32] al-Nasir depicts a rural family leading a close-knit traditional life, into which conflict and contradiction are introduced by the reverberations of the voices of the city, to the powerful attractions and charms of which the eldest son falls prey. These contrasting elements are dealt with in a way that avoids didacticism and authorial intervention. al-Nasir's writing balances character and social environment and paints a picture rich in intimations of reality, despite a tendency to overstatement. [33]

al-Nasir began his literary life with short stories, such as al-Hadiyyah [The gift] 1960, and also articles in Saudi Journals, before turning to the novel. He published his second novel, Safinat al-mawta [The ship of the dead], reissued in 1989, under the title Safinat al-daya' [The ship of loss]. His object in this novel is to give his readers an idea of some aspects of what was happening in general in Saudi Arabia, in the sixties, during the development of the country, and to illustrate the changes that were taking place, in the markets, people's attitudes, jobs; the transference of the Ministries from Jeddah to Riyadh, the new capital; and the influx of foreign workers, from other parts of Saudi Arabia, and from the rest of the Arabic-speaking and Islamic world, to earn higher wages.

The events of the novel take place in Riyadh Central Hospital (this is his Ship of the Dead/Loss), and paint a clear picture of the whole artificial society and atmosphere that exists in such a place. Life is dead, while outside the hospital, all life is still operating, better in some quarters, worse in others. In al-Wazir Street, for example (now King Faysal Street), life is good and there is a Good class of customers, while in Hayy al-'abid [Slaves Quarter], there are poor, dirty, cheap markets with poor customers and low sales.

The hero, 'Isa, is a young man working as assistant manager in the Central Hospital. He is clever, and he wants to share in the development of his country but does not know how to do so. He reads widely, and his room-mate calls him 'The philosophy man', because he has several books in his room. His daily routine of going from his room to his office and from his office to his room, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., has got on his nerves. 'Abir is a beautiful girl, who works as a nurse in the hospital, and a good friend of 'isa. They understood one another from the time of their first meeting, and she agrees with him in many of his ideas. His friends tease him: 'You and 'Abir are going to end up married; she is in love with you.' [34] He has actually been in love with another beautiful girl, called Mufîdah, whom he had known well before he met 'Abir. However, she has preferred another man and married him, after which 'Isa has put her out of his mind; 'Abir is just a friend, who visits him from time to time.

On one visit of her, she finds him sunk in his thoughts; He imagines that she is his former love Mufidah, who he has not been able entirely to dismiss from his mind.

'Good evening,' She said.

'Who is that? 'Abir! where have you come from. Really, you are a

jinn; did you read my anxious thoughts?

She is just coming to discuss with his reading and his hobbies, and she asks him also about his poetry. He says that he has tried, but that his job now takes up all his time and prevents his thinking about poetry; also he now finds prose easier than poetry. He sometimes writes a short story and sometimes works on a novel, dealing with the positions of various elements of society. 'Isa enjoys high esteem among his colleagues, since he is educated and they are not. He and 'Abir constitute the fourth corner of the square of characters that compose the novel. The others are: Jamil Zahir, the complete opposite of 'Isa, a black-hearted, evil, uneducated man; Hamzah Hasan, a black man and a good friend of 'Isa; and Qindil Shannan, an ordinary hospital employee.

Nu'man 'Ata' Allah, the Personnel Chairman of the Hospital, is a good friend of 'Isa, who is his assistant; he sometimes asks his advice on various matters, because he trusts him more than any of the others working in the same department. On one occasion, he actually invites him to dinner to ask him for some personal advice. 'Ata' Allah's wife is in her twenties, while he is over fifty. He loves her, but she does not love him, because they have very different ideas. 'Isa has no advice to give. On another occasion, he again invites 'Isa to dinner to ask his advice, this time concerning what he can do in his retirement, now that the Director of the Hospital has agreed to his retiring. After dinner, while they are drinking mint tea, 'Ata' Allah has a heart attack; he is taken by the Emergency Doctor into Intensive Care but dies three hours later.

After 'Ata' Allah's death, 'Isa becomes Personnel Chairman. The cleaners in the hospital have been threatening to strike for more pay, and

'Isa sympathizes with them. He supports them against the hospital, which resents this. He is summoned to appear before the Committee of Management, questioned about his relations with the cleaners, and then sacked.

He is not worried about losing his job. He had been prepared to support the cleaners' claim for a further 10 riyals per month, in order to enable them to maintain their families. He decides to go to the east of Saudi Arabia to look for a job. There are many companies there, and he will find no difficulty in finding something. However, he is not happy at leaving 'Abir. He promises to come back to her when he has found a job.

He is collecting his luggage to go to the railway station, when 'Abir comes to him in tears. 'Isa is pleased that he will not be leaving her long in the 'Ship of the Dead'.

al-Nasir gives great importance to place in his works. This is something that he has in common with major novelists everywhere. Dickens is a prime example; readers are more engaged by a work in which they can identify locations, trace the route of a character's movements, etc. [35] al-Nasir provides us with a vital picture of the old hospital: the smells of drugs and other things that came from the clinics; the patients standing waiting to see their doctors. Many of these came from outside Riyadh, where they have been treating themselves, since there are no hospitals there, even small clinics. Riyadh Central Hospital is the primary place of the novel; the City of Riyadh is the secondary place, where there is building going on, and a vigorous life flourishing.

al-Nasir added a note at the end of the second edition of the work, with its changed title (the first edition had appeared in an extremely limited printing, on stencil):

> I completed this novel in 1383/1963, that is, more than a quarter of a century ago. It was not printed or distributed [then], for the reasons that I have already given [it was to have been published in Beirut, but the process was disrupted by war]. Some of my friends consider that it represents a stage that I have gone far beyond in my subsequent publications and have advised me not to publish it. I have replied that the critic -- any critic --, when studying the production of any writer, must take into consideration his mental development and the influence that he has undergone from what has recently emerged in the literary arena, both on the Arab and the International level. Another reason that has led me to reprint this novel, in spite of its change of title, is that several universities require their students to write about my earlier writings, and I have been embarrassed in explaining the absence of this novel from the libraries.

al-Nasir develops very considerably between his first and his second novel, particularly in its appearance in its second edition in 1989, with a new title. His language, his style and his treatment of his theme have all matured greatly. Between 1969 and 1972, no novel appeared that could be called a 'novel', whether 'artistic' or not.

In 1972, Hind Ba Ghaffar (1955 -) publiished a novel entitled al-Bara'ah al-mafqudah [Lost innocence]. This is a story of a girl from Cairo who is suspected of killing her friend. Although the authoress is Saudi, the

events of the novel take place in Egypt. There are a few, not many, such novels by Saudi novelists, the action of which takes place outside of Saudi Arabia, e.g. Ta'ir bi-la janah [Bird without a wing], by Sultan al-Qahtani, 1981, 'Afwan ya Adam [Sorry, Adam!], by Safiyyah 'Anbar, 1986, and al-Sanyurah [The lady], by 'Isam Khuqayr; all these authors have produced other works set in Saudi Arabia.

We now resume with the work of Ibrahim al-Nasir. In 1977 he published 'Adhra' al-manfa [the girl of exile], his third novel. This is a novel written round the attitude towards women. Eastern man carried his culture with him; this made him regard woman as separate pieces of creation, and not on his level; even whose who are educated regard women from their traditional machistic view.

'Adhra' al-manfa' is about two characters, Zahir and Buthaynah Hamzah. Zahir is a young man working with a private firm in the morning and as a journalist in the afternoon. He earns some distinction in the field of journalism; his editor, Hamzah, is greatly impressed with him and asks him to work with his daughter, Buthaynah, who has recently returned from High School in Beirut, editing the woman's section of his paper.

Buthaynah's father does not agree with her that she should return to Beirut to continue her studies; he wants her to come home, and he feels that she will have all that she wants, living and working in a community of Saudi girls. She is, at the same time, qualified for the job that she is doing, because journalism depends on talent and intelligence, and he believes that women have a part to play in journalism and its use for the community.

Zahir's mother does not agree with his working with a strange woman as editors of the woman's section of the magazine, but he eventually persuades her. During the period that they work on the journal, they fall in love and get married. Buthaynah, however, has spent almost six years as a student in Beirut, and, while there, has had a love affair. Wishing to be frank with Zahir, she tells him about it, while they are spending their honeymoon in Beirut. He is not pleased to know about this, he becomes suspicious of his wife, and after they return to Saudi Arabia, he divorces her.

al-Nasir develops his heroine into a strong, open-minded, educated and frank woman; the hero, simple, poor and semi-educated, is shown as have always had something of the opportunist about him. As a child, he befriended an old shopkeeper, Muslih Mustafa, with the purpose of getting him to give him free sweets. His marriage to Buthaynah he contrives more because she is the boss's daughter than because he is overwhelmingly in love.[36]

This novel depends upon dialogue, and monologue of the principal characters, to develop the characters and to display their motivation. [36] They work out the plot against the background of the various social questions that Saudi novelists have traditionally dealt with, women's problems, the gulf between rich and poor, and so on. In this work, in which 'artistic' elements and structure are more evident than in his earlier works, al-Nasir is paving the way for the appearance of such novelists as Hudd al-Rashid, Amal Shatd and 'Abd Allah Jifri.

al-Bara'ah al-mafqudah [Lost innocence] 1972, by Hind Salih Ba-Ghaffar. [37]

This is the story of a young woman, whose friend is killed in front of her. The murderer escapes and calls on the people of the quarter to come to arrest the girl; since she has no evidence of her innocence, she decides to run for it before the police arrive, making her way from place to place, keeping just ahead of the law. The action of the novel takes place in various parts of Egypt, in particular Cairo University. Ghurbah, the heroine, is a student at Cairo University, living with her parents. A close friend of hers, whose name is Shahrazad, invites her to sit with her, while her own parents and her brother are out visiting some friends; they will study together, until the return of her parents. She wants Ghurbah to come as soon as possible, as she is frightened of their neighbour's son, Muhi, who has several times tried to kiss her and declared his love for her. While Ghurbah is on her way, in a taxi, Shahrazad starts to prepare some food and tea. While Shahrazad is in the kitchen, Muhi comes in and tries to rape her. She takes up a knife to defend herself, but he gets hold of it and cuts her throat.

At this moment, Ghurbah enters the main gate of the house, to find her friend in a welter of blood. She pulls out the knife in an attempt to save her, but Shahrazad dies. Muhi stands on the garden wall and screams for the neighbours to come to arrest the murderess, who has killed his neighbour's daughter. People arrive, to find Ghurbah with Shahrazad's blood on her hands, and Ghurbah runs off, in a panic.

She escapes to Alexandria, where her uncle and aunt live; they are astonished when she tells them what has happened, and they let her stay with them. Meanwhile, the police have begun to search for her and arrest her parents. Her father is himself a policeman. After spending two days with her uncle and aunt, she decides to go off elsewhere, and she leaves

for Hulwan, to look for a job. She takes a room in an hotel and next day finds a job as cashier in a restaurant. She spends two weeks there, after which the proprietor invites her to a dinner à deux in another restaurant. He proposes marriage to her, and, when she refuses, attempts to blackmail her, having guessed who she is. While he goes to the police to inform against her, she leaves hurriedly for Aswan.

In Aswan, now calling herself Tawbah Mujib -- she takes a new name in each place -- she finds a job as a nurse, and, one day, the hospital manager asks her to move to the house of Kamal Basha to nurse the latter's blind son. When she meets the son, Burhan, she realizes that she must try to get him out of the depressed psychological state in which he is, having lost his sight as the result of a bad traffic accident. When he goes to the Eye Hospital for an operation, she accompanies him, as a private nurse; he begins to regain his sight, and soon falls in love with her. Meanwhile, the police are still on her trail. When Burhan returns home from hospital, the police have traced her to Aswan, and Burhan and his brother take her to the station to allow her to escape again, this time to Ra's al-Barr.

Having arrived in Ra's al-Barr, where she knows nobody, she is walking by the sea, when she comes across a family, father, mother, and child, drowning. She wades out into the deep water and succeeds in rescuing them. The father turns out to be the headmaster of the local school; on finding out that she has no one to stay with in Ra's al-Barr, he offers her a job as a teacher, which she accepts.

A student, Layla, who is living with her grandmother in Ra's al-Barr (her parents live in Cairo), becomes very much attached to Ghurbah, who

has now taken the name Sudfah. Her father, who happens to be one of the police officers on Ghurbah's case, comes up to Ra's al-Barr to visit his daughter, whom he catches sight of as she leaves the school with her teacher. He recognizes Ghurbah and has his gun out ready to arrest her, when his daughter, appreciating the situation, runs up to the roof of the school and threatens to throw herself off, unless he allows 'Sudfah' to escape and, moreover, gives her his car keys. Ghurbah reaches the railway station and takes a train to Ismailiyah.

When she arrives in Ismailiyah, she takes a manual job at a factory and changes her name, this time, to Fadwa. The son of the owner of the factory, Safwat, falls in love with her but receives no encouragement. The son of the other partner, 'Ali, visits the factory from Cairo; he too instantly falls in love with her and asks her to marry him, which she, as usual, refuses. To make up for this, he asks her to some and work in the Cairo Head Office. This annoys Safwat, 'Ali's cousin, who comes to remonstrate. The police once again catch up with Ghurbah, who, however, manages once more to evade them and takes a train to Mersa Matruh.

In Mersa Matruh, she is wandering the streets, when she comes across a house on fire. An old man is trapped, and his wife is trying to save him; Ghurbah lends a hands, and the old man is saved. He and his wife are on holiday from Cairo, where he is on the staff of the University. Ghurbah has now adopted the name Shukran, but the old man recognizes her, she tells them the facts of the case. They take pity on her, because she looks like their daughter Amal, now married and living in Beirut. The old man, Dr 'Abd al-Rahman, uses his skill in make-up to alter her

features to those of Amal; he and his wife then take her back with them to Cairo to continue her studies.

She goes back to the University, in the character of Amal; she meets her brothers and sister, who already know Amal and ask her about her holiday in MersaMatruh. She continues her studies until the President of the University asks her to take part in the University Play, as she (Amal) has in all previous productions. At first she refuses, but when he insists, she has no alternative. During the play, the police officer in charge of the case recognizes her, since the make-up artist has restored her own features. However, she once more escapes, with the help of Mulhim, a professor who has fallen in love with her and who knows the truth, and of her family, to whom she has also revealed her identity (with the exception of her father, the policeman). This time she makes for Assiut.

In Assiut, she takes a job as a servant to look after a family's handicapped mother. One day, in a pharmacy, to which she has been sent on an errand, she is recognized by a member of the staff, who calls the police. They come to arrest her, but, of course, she escapes to the house where she is employed, hurting herself slightly in the process. She is patched up by the family, whereupon she decides to leave for Damanhur, to work as a servant with a rich family. A young man of the family inevitably falls in love with her. One day, he entertains guests from Cairo; among them is Mulhim, whom she loves. He takes her to Cairo and tells her that he knows that Muhi (the real murderer) is living in Alexandria.

In Cairo, she stays with Mulhim's grandmother, until he, her brother and her sister Samirah can go to Alexandria to trap Muhi. Samirah is to

pay court to Muhi, as though intending marriage, and to send daily reports to Ghurbah, to inform her of their progress. Meanwhile, the police continue to display Ghurbah's picture in the press, and one day the postman discovers her identity and informs on her. For once, she is unable to escape; her father and another officer arrest her. She is put in the cells overnight, to appear in the General Court next morning. Meanwhile, in Alexandria, Samirah has persuaded Muhi to tell her the truth and has recorded his confession. Muhi is arrested and brought directly to the General Court in Cairo, to provide evidence of Ghurbah's innocence. After her release, Mulhim asks her father for her hand in marriage, which is duly given.

With al-Bara'ah al-mafqudah, we are at a very considerable distance from the 'artistic' novel; indeed, it is disputable if it can be called a novel at all. The author dedicated it to her mother as her first literary production and described it as 'the first fruits' [badhrahl] of her attempt to produce a novel. However, she has no very clear idea as to what constitutes a novel.

The plot is patently ludicrous. The heroine is able to come and go as she pleases, always one step ahead of the police, who, it would seem, are devoting a considerable force of manpower to their unavailing efforts to apprehend this desperate character. She takes on -- presumably untrained -- a variety of jobs, the most surprising of which is that of nurse. She changes her name at every stopping-place; no one ever questions this, or asks to see her documentation. She is, at least with assistance, as much a mistress of disguise as ever Sherlock Holmes was, or Sandy Arbuthnot or Hawkshawe 'the detective'. At the same time,

when not disguised, she is frequently recognized -- just before she manages to escape again.

The heroine has no discernible character; nor, for that matter, do any of the other figures that appear in the story. Their only function is to advance the action. Perhaps the most memorable trait of Ghurbah's is that of causing every man whom she meets to fall instantly and violently in love with her.

The incidents that make up the action are of entirely random occurrence and generally melodramatic in nature: rescuing people from drowning, rescuing people from a burning building; and where they are not entirely random, they are coincidental to the most improbable degree. In addition, there are a number of total implausibilities without which the action would come to a stop, such as the President of the University's insisting on Ghurbah/Amal's appearance in the play, and the presence of a Cairo police officer at a performance of this play. Perhaps, however, the least plausible occurrence is that without which the whole farrago of nonsense would never have begun -- Ghurbah's instant assumption that she will be convicted of Shahrazad's murder; if she had simply stayed where she was and denounced Muhi, a great deal of time and effort would have been saved.

One redeeming feature of the work is that the quality of the dialogue is good, if sometimes over-rhetorical. This, however, is hardly enough to compensate for its faults. One might perhaps say that it represented an attempt to write a novel in the maqamah genre, or that it was an adaptation of the picaresque work of the Spanish renaissance -- which is sometimes associated with the <u>maqamat</u>: a series of almost totally

unrelated adventures, or situations, into which the picaro hero is plunged one after the other. [38] Whether the author can be shown to have been seriously aware of either of these two literary genres is not known; it is far more probable that she wrote as she pleased, stringing together in her imagination the elements that she conceived necessary for an exciting story.

Basmah min buhayrat al-dumu' [A smile from the lakes of tears] 1979, by 'A'ishah Zahir Ahmad. [39]

The action of this novel takes place in Jeddah and Riyadh. It is the story of a girl whose father divorces her mother and takes her with him from Jeddah to Riyadh to live with him and his new wife. Her stepmother illtreats her, because she hated her mother, and her father also illtreats her. After her father's death she returns to Jeddah.

There are just the three principal characters, Afnan, the girl, Mahmud, her father and her stepmother.

Afnan's father divorces her mother and takes her to live with his second wife. After his death in the collapse of his old house, her stepmother tries to force her into marriage with an old man. Her mother and her half – brother have no idea what has become of her, until she manages to send a letter to the latter, Mazin, who sets off for Riyadh, prevents the marriag from taking place, and takes her back to Jeddah to live with her mother and himself.

The novel begins with a divorce and ends with the prevention of an unwilling marriage; there is no real plot. It is reminiscent of two of Jurji Zaydan's novels, Ghadat Karbala' [The girl of Kerbela] and Jihad al-muhibbin [The war of the lovers], in portraying a slice of life, without any structure or characterization. [40]

In 1961, Hilary Kilpatrick was able to ask, 'Does the Arabic novel exist'?[41] "The same question could still be asked in 1979, concerning 'novels' such as this.' It remains an undeveloped tale. The author is, it seems, unaware of world literature in general, and has no idea how to structure such a story so as to fulfil the requirements of a 'novel'. In spite of the fact that petroleum had by this time altered the style of many peoples' lives in Saudi Arabia, this is hardly reflected in this novel, any more than it is Tahir Sallam's Qabw al-afa'i [Vault of vipers] 1983 (to be discussed), in which the rather similar plot is concerned with two wives and a daughter.

Ghadan sa-yukûn al-Khamis [Tomorrow will be Thursday] 1979, by Huda al-Rashid. [42]

The background against which the action of this novel takes place is unspecified, except that it is an Arab country. The heroine, Nawal, is a journalist, who lives with her mother; her female colleagues are always suggesting that she should marry their brothers, but she refuses. She is an educated girl, with many ideas that she would like to introduce into her community in order to improve the life of women in developing countries. Her friend and colleague, Lamya, introduces her to Ahmad, who has just returned from America, with a doctorate in Management. In spite of a bad

experience that she has previously had with a man, she is attracted to him, and in fact falls in love with him; his ideas are very close to her own. She takes to seeing him every day, and they intend to become engaged. When her mother has suddenly to go into hospital, Ahmad asks if he may visit her; her mother welcomes him and is very pleased to be visited by him.

Ahmad's sisters come to visit him from their village; they have to make preparations for one of them to get married. Ahmad is much occupied with them while they are with him, since they have no experience of the city and need his assistance. In doing so, he finds himself reverting to the kind of behaviour that he remembers his father displaying towards his mother, when he was a child: treating his women-folk as ignorant children, who cannot be expected to do anything for themselves.

He then leaves for the village, in order to be present at his sister's marriage. This means that he is not at hand to help Nawal when her mother suddenly dies. He sends a telegram of condolence, but this is hardly enough; she needs his support during the crisis that she suffers at her mother's death. She is disappointed that, in spite of his western education, he has succumbed to the primitive values of his origins; his sophistication has turned out to be merely a veneer. When he eventually returns, she rejects him.

The newly-married sister comes with her husband to the city, where she takes readily to a new style of life. She is quite happy to go out alone, to shop and to take part in all the other activities that the city has to offer.

In spite of her lack of education, she is better able to adapt than her brother, who has spent a number of years in an open society.

This is a well-constructed novel, with subtle characterization and realistic dialogue. It received a favourable notice from Muhammad 'Alwan in al-Yamamah, as being a modern work, in the spirit of Hamid Damanhuri and Ibrahim al-Nasir' [43] they had sown the seed of the 'artistic' novel in the late fifties, but nothing really developed from this, until the appearance of this work, in the seventies. It revived the trend that had begun twenty years earlier, with the first exodus of the new generation to study abroad and to assimilate the varied experiences that this offered. It represented an expansion of the Saudi nahdah, during which many changes took place, in education and in cultural awareness, and the prospect of a new kind of life, on the lines of that of the developed countries, could be glimpsed.

The novel begins in hope and in fact ends in hope, despite the disappointment occasioned by the failure of the educated hero to free himself from the shackles of tradition. Many in the Arab world have been able to take advantage of the open door offered by the nahdah, but some have not.[44] Reliance upon one's own ideas is still something that can be difficult to attain.

This novel, and others that will be dealt with shortly, provide an 'artistic' treatment of the problems of the new generation and offer it aims for developing itself within the framework of Arabism. The title itself offers hope for the future: 'Tomorrow will be Thursday' (the traditional day for the marriage ceremony) – that is to say, if one chance has proved unavailing, another will come soon.

Abd Allah Jum'an (1939 - 1991)

'Abd Allah Sa'id Jum'an was known, in Saudi literary circles, as a novelist and short-story writer since 1957. He published three collection of short stories:

Bint al-wadi [The girl of the valley] Riyadh (Matabi' al-jaysh) 1969;

Rajul 'ala al-rasif [A man on the pavement] Ta'if (Nadi al-Ta'if al-adabi) 1977;

Tadhkirat 'ubur [Passport] Ta'if (Nadi al-Ta'if al-adabi) 1982.

In addition, he wrote a dramatized novel for Saudi Radio, Salma, broadcast 1980;

and a historical play for Saudi Television, Faris min al-janub [A horseman from the south], broadcast 1982.

al-Qisas [Retaliation] 1979 (novel) and laylat 'urs Nadiyah 1990 (novel). [45]

1. al-Qisas [Retaliation] 1979 [46]

The focus of this novel is a girl called Fiddah from the Bilad Zahran, in the south of Saudi Arabia. The action begins with a Graduation Ceremony at King Sa'ud University, in Riyadh, at which the students of the College of Agriculture are receiving their degrees. One of their number invites the rest to attend his wedding in a village in the Bilad Zahran called Fiddah.

At the wedding, one of the guests asks the reason for the name of the village. Is it so-called because there is silver there? A villager replies that, on the contrary, it has been named for one of the village girls. He then proceeds to tell the story.

Fiddah was born in the village and moved with her father to al-Ta'if after her mother's death. She studied in the Teacher Training Institute, but she did not like city life and was always begging her father to go back to the village. However, she actually married a friend of her father's and went back to the village with him, to become a teacher in the village primary school. Her father died, and her husband, a contemporary of her father's, also became ill and died.

As a widow, she lived with her aunt and the latter's two sons, Salih, a farmer, and Muhammad, a pilot in the Air Force, who had just returned from training in America; she received many proposals of marriage, but she refused them all, since she was the only educated member of the family, who wrote her aunt's letters to Muhammad and read her his replies. She was also in love with Muhammad and, indeed, her aunt wanted her to marry him. When next one of the villagers proposed

marriage to her, she consulted Muhammad, implying that she would rather marry him, but Muhammad did not take the hint and replied to his mother, wishing Fiddah all happiness in her married life with Ahmad, another teacher in the village primary school.

Fiddah married Ahmad and was happy with him; they had a son, Tariq. However, returning one day from a holiday in Jeddah, they had a car accident between al-Ta'if and Bilad Zahran, in which Ahmad was killed. She was a widow for the second time.

Once again, she received many proposals of marriage, all of which she rejected, in order to devote herself to Tariq, her teaching and her offering advice and assistance to the villagers. She continued in this way for some years.

Eventually, her farmer cousin, Salih, was involved in a dispute with a man from another village, whose sheep had eaten his crops. This man came next day and killed Salih.

Muhammad came home from Dammam, where he was based, to join with the rest of the clan in taking blood-revenge for Salih from the murderer. Fiddah, however, was against this course of action and made a passionate appeal to them to leave the matter in the hands of the authorities. The clan leader was persuaded that this was the right thing to do.

After this decision had been taken, Tariq, who was studying in Riyadh, at the College of Agriculture, also returned, to share in the family's grief. Fiddah noticed that he appeared to be much more grief-stricken

than anyone else, and he eventually revealed to her that he had two causes for sorrow: Salih's death and the fact that he was in love with the daughter of the murderer.

The murderer had been arrested, and Muhammad now told Fiddah that he loved her and asked her to marry him. She still loved him, but, having had unfortunate experiences with two husbands, she was reluctant to commit herself to a third marriage. Muhammad then returned to his Air Force Base, from where he shortly afterwards wrote to his family to tell them that he was about to go to Egypt, to participate with the Egyptian Air Force in an attack on Israel. In the event, he was killed on the very day on which Salih's murderer was condemned to death.

Salih's father came to al-Ta'if to carry out the sentence of execution; however, persuaded earlier by Muhammad, at Fiddah's instigation, he exercised clemency and forgave the murderer.

The scene now returns to the wedding in the village at the beginning of the novel. The guest who asked about the name of the village now asks what has happened to Tariq. It transpires that this is in fact Tariq's wedding; he has finished his studies and has come home to work as an agricultural engineer. The bride is the daughter of Salih's murderer, and a beautiful woman standing nearby is Fiddah.

The themes running through al-Qisas are the importance of education and the responsibility of the educated. Fiddah is an educated woman, teaching, assisting and advising her uneducated clansfolk. She is the one who turns them away from the taking of primitive blood-revenge to entrusting the execution of justice to the authorities, and, indirectly,

through Muhammad, she influences Salih's father in his renunciation of his right to revenge. Ahmad, her second husband, is a teacher. Muhammad, as an Air Force Pilot, assumes responsibility for the defence of his country. Tariq returns to his village to pass on to the villagers the methods that he has learnt in College. All of them take their responsibilities seriously, with no thought for the advancement of their own interests or careers. It is perhaps significant that it is only Salih the uneducated farmer, who falls victim to atavistic violence; even his father can be persuaded to act in a reasonable, civilized manner.

There are many criticisms that can be made of this novel. The action is the result, in a large degree, of coincidence, rather than developing logically from the natural responses and behaviour of the characters, who are, themselves, one-dimensional. They exist for a didactic purpose, rather than for the interest one might have in them for their own sake. There are a number of inconsistencies and loose ends. It might be said that the title itself exemplifies these defects: the 'retaliation' that is averted is symbolic of what the author wishes to say concerning the difference that he sees, or hopes to see, between two different generations during the transition that is taking place in Saudi Arabia. [47] In spite of this, however, and in spite of the fact that a considerable gulf exists between al-Qisas and what we think of as the truly modern novel, there are sufficient elements of artistry in the structure and narrative to differentiate it from most of the works of this period that we have discussed.

2. Laylat 'urs Nadiyah [Nadiyah's wedding night] 1990 [48]

This work concerns a poor man who becomes rich. Hamzah, the hero, is a government employee, with a wife and three children, two sons and one daughter (Nadiyah). He tries his hand at trade, at which he is successful, whereupon his conduct towards his wife changes dramatically. He begins to beat her, and eventually she dies, leaving behind her three children, Khalid, Hasan and Nadiyah. Khalid's hobby is music and Hasan's football. Khalid wishes to become a motor mechanic, but his father wants to bring him into his commercial world; when Khalid rejects this, Hamzah turns him out of the house. He goes to stay with his aunt, Umm Hanan, and enrols in the Car Section of the Technical Institute.

Hasan, who has been neglected by his father, who is always away on business, falls into the clutches of drug dealers – some of them actually work in their large house as servants, and others come in daily, as cleaners, gardeners, etc. He ends up in the mental hospital.

All of this passes in front of Hamzah's eyes, as he drives to the florists to buy some roses to present to Nadiyah on the occasion of her wedding. He remembers his former friends, particularly a fisherman who is always asking about him; Nadiyah has particularly asked that these friends should be invited to her wedding. He stops his luxurious car in a dirty little street in the old quarter to look for the house of his former friend. Having found it, he discusses many things concerning business with his friend, and he invites him to come to the wedding. He then goes to a restaurant in the quarter, where he finds a variety of people -- all of them poor, but all pleasant. On leaving, some money falls out of his pocket, and one of those in the restaurant picks it up and gives it back to him;

these people are not avaricious, like himself and his fellow business men. He drives his car away, absorbed in thought, and in doing so hits another. When its owner comes up to him, smiling, Hamzah tries to give him some money in compensation, but this is turned down.

Hamzah drives to the florists to buy his roses. As he is about to enter the shop, he hears someone call him. It is his former love, who wished to marry him, but, when he procrastinated, left him to marry someone else. Someone calls out to her, in turn; it is her daughter.

On his way home, he remembers that he has not visited his sister, Umm Hanan, for a long time, so he turns towards her house, but, in the process, thinks of his elder son, Khalid, who has also been long absent. He goes to the large repair workshop where Khalid works, and finds that he has succeeded in business. A reconciliation takes place between him and Khalid, and he asks him to come to his sister's wedding. He also asks him about his own marriage intentions, and Khalid tells him of his love for his cousin, Hanan. He promises him that he will immediately ask Hanan's parents for her hand in marriage to Khalid.

Hamzah leaves Khalid's workshop and goes to Hanan's parents, much to their surprise, since they have not seen him for so long. They welcome the reconciliation and gladly agree to Hanan's engagement to Khalid.

He drives homewards, in order to give Nadiyah her wedding gift. He is still preoccupied with his thoughts, this time about Hasan, who is still in the Mental Hospital. He has a sudden suspicion that one of his servants is a drug dealer and decides to tell the police, before going home. Still self-

absorbed, he is stopped by the police for driving on the wrong side of the road. In the police station, he meets a senior officer, who knows all about his servant's criminal activities and advises him to keep them secret until the police can move as planned against the drug ring.

He finally arrives home, to find Nadiyah waiting for him. The servants are busy preparing the house for the wedding ceremony, and there is a strong smell of incense. The flowers that he has bought for Nadiyah have wilted, from the long time that they have spent in his car. He is embarrassed about this, but Nadiyah thanks him and tells him that she will put them in water to revive them. In confusion, he asks her if she thinks that he can be revived like the flowers. She tells him that everyone can put himself back on the right path, leaving him with hope for putting his life and family circumstances back together, on the basis that love and friendship are more important than the accumulation of wealth.

After the wedding, Nadiyah goes to her husband's house, leaving a great void in Hamzah's large house. In his loneliness, he decides to change his way of life. He decides to give up drink and throws all that he has into the sea. Coming home, he goes to the mosque for the Faj'r prayer and, exalted by a renewed access of faith, seeks forgiveness for his former misdeeds.

There is a space of eleven years between the appearance of 'Abd Allah Sa'id Jum'an's two novels. The novelistic structure of his second shows a considerable improvement on that of his first; even so, he attempts to compress too many events into a small compass and thus somewhat diminishes the effect of each individually. The impression with which the reader is left is one of a breathless rushing from one thing to the

next. Either less action or a more leisurely narrative would have been advantageous. There is also present a rather cloying sense of preaching, as well as an accompanying sentimentality. Nevertheless, it is clear that, in the space between his two novels, Jum'an has applied himself to his craft and that he has the ability, even if this has not been altogether realized, to present a narrative in an 'artistic' framework. [49]

Ghalib Hamzah Abu al-Faraj (1931 -)

Abu al-Faraj published five 'novels' between 1977 and 1982:

1. al-Shayatin al-humr [The red devils] Cairo 1977;
2. Sanawat al-daya' [The years of loss] Tunis 1980;
3. Ghuraba bi-la watan [Strangers without a homeland] Beirut 1981;
4. Wa-ihtaraqat Bayrut [And Beiriut burned] Beirut 1982;
5. al-Masirah al-khadra' [The green march] Beirut 1982

We shall look briefly at three of these works here.

al-Shayatin al-humr is about the kidnapping of the petroleum ministers in Vienna in 1976 and their being taken to Algeria by a Mafia-like gang. The author is a journalist and presents his story in the form of newspaper reports about the events.

It is written as an adventure story and the author focuses more on the terrorist lifestyle than on giving the story an 'artistic' structure. He gives details, in the form of a daily report on the case, of the gang that carried out the kidnapping: how Carlos, the leader, went about planning the

enterprise; the other characters, the 'stranger', the driver, the leper, the 'sidekick" the blonde girl, and a whole gallery of subsidiary characters of various nationalities. He draws comparisons between what is portrayed in the book with the Palestinian problem, the Islamic movement and the difficulties caused for Israel by Saudi Arabia, the biggest exporter of petroleum. The progress of the hostages is followed through until their release in Algeria.

Ghuraba' bi-la watan centres on politicians from Arab, and other, countries, who are in exile in Cairo. There is no plot; the reasons for each one's being there are investigated, as are the conditions in which he now lives. Intermingled with these sketches are excursions on other topics, such as the Egyptian soldier in the war of 1973 and the relations of Israel with the Arab countries.

al-Masirah al-khadra' [The green march] deals with the relations between Morocco, Algeria, Spain and Mauritania in North Africa. It does so in very much the same way as in previous 'novels', mixing ficticous characters with real ones and using a combination of reportage, narrative and dialogue, Once again, the author causes his own political views to obtrude. His style of writing reflects the journalist that he in fact is.

Abu al-Faraj's writing has no significance for the development of the novel in Saudi Arabia. It has been included here as a curiosity within the general sphere of Saudi letters.

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49. See Mark Tyler, Contemporary writer of Saudi fiction.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NOVEL IN THE EIGHTIES

1980 – 1989

1. Muhammad 'Abduh Yamani,

   Fatah min Ha'il "Girl from Ha'il" 1980

2. Tahir 'Awad Sallam,

   al-Sunduq al-madfun "The buried Chest" 1980

   Fa-l tushriq min Jadid "Let It shine again" 1982.

   Qabw al-afa'i "Vault of Viper" 1983.

   'Awatif muhtariqah "Burning emotions" 1986.

3. Sultan Sa'd al-Qahtani,

   Za'ir al-masa "The evening visitor" 1980

   Ta'ir bi-la-Janah "A bird without wings" 1981

4. Amal Muhammad Shata,

   Ghadan ansa "Tomorrow I shall forget" 1980

   la 'Asha qalbi "Let my heart no longer live" 1989

5. 'Isam Khuqayr,

   al-Dawwamah "The Confusion" 1980

   al-Sinyurah "The Signora" 1980

   Zawjati wa ana "My wife and I" 1983.

6. Sayf al-Din 'Ashur,

   La taqul wada'an "Do not say goodbye" 1981.

7. Fu'ad Sadiq Mufti,

   Lahzat da'f "A moment of weakness" 1981.

   la, lam Ya'ud hulman "No, It is no longer a dream" 1986.

8. Fu'ad Abd al-Hamid Anqawi,

   la zill taht al-Jabal "There is no shade under the mountain" 1983

9. Hamzah M. Buqri,

   Saqifat al-Safa "The arcade of al-Safa" 1983.

10. Hasan Nasir al-Majrashi,

    al-Hubb al-Kabir "Great Love" 1983

11. Abd Allah Jifri,

Juz' min hulm "A Part of a dream" 1984.

12. 'Abd al-Aziz Mishri,

al-wasmiyyah "The rainy season" 1985.

al-Ghuyum wa manabit al-shajar, "Clouds and Planations of Trees" 1989

13. Safiyyah A. 'Anbar,

'Afwan ya Adam, "Sorry Adam" 1986.

14. 'Abd al-Aziz al-Saq'abi,

Ra'ihat al-fahm "The smell of charcoal" 1988.

15. Ibrahim al-Nasir,

Ghuyum al-Kharif "The autumn clouds" 1988.

16. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muhanna,

al-Khadimatan wa al-ustadh "The two servants and the teacher" 1988

Ghadat al-Kuwayt "Girl of Kuwait" 1990

17. 'Uthman al-Sawayni',

"Dumu' Nasik 1988.

al-Kanz al-Dhahabi "The Golden Treasure" 1988.

In the eighties, there were many social and economic changes, accompanied by changes in the way people thought about things. Many more writers emerged as a consequence of these changes; a new generation had new topics to treat, and they did so in a way different from their predecessors. At the same time, Ibrahim al-Nasir, from the sixties, continued to write and to develop as a novelist.

The new writers fall roughly into two groups, depending on their formative reading. The first group were heavily influenced by Jurji Zaydan and continue to write works that display this influence. A further influence, of the Zaydan school, is Muhammad Zari' 'Aqil, who wrote Amir al-hubb [The prince of love] 1960, and Bayn jilayn [Between two generations] 1981, in both of which he deliberates on historical events and employs real characters.

An example is Tahir 'Awad Sallam, whose work varies between straight historical narrative and romance loosely based on history. He published four works between 1980 and 1986. In these he shows some development in style, but he still relies heavily on Zaydan's method of depicting character and narrating events. Although he has more control of the balance and structure of the novel than many of those who preceded him, he still essentially uses the novel as a vehicle for the presentation of his own ideas.

Fu'ad 'Anqawi published his novel La zill taht al-jabal [There is no shade under the mountain] in 1983. It narrates the series of historical events that took place between 1330/1911 and 1370/1950, with the characters carried along by these events. The principal characters consist of a family, a weak father, and aggressive stepmother, and two

boys, one diligent and studious, the other wild and intractable. Most of the action takes place in Makkah.

The latest of this group is 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muhanna, who actually entitled one of his works Ghadat al-Kuwayt [The girl of Kuwait] 1990, in direct imitation of Zaydan's Ghadat Karbala' [The girl of Kerbela 1945.

There are other novelists, not indebted to Zaydan like those just mentioned, but still really belonging to this first group, in that they have not developed the kind of technique in their writing that characterizes those of the second group.

'Isam Khuqayr published three works between 1980 and 1983. He has a number of good ideas, but, in spite of his reading of French literature, he has been unable to develop these in an 'artistic' way. He lacks literary instinct.

Fu'ad Sadiq Mufti published two novels, Lahzat da'f [A moment of weakness] in 1981, and Lam ya'ud hulm [It was no longer a dream] in 1986. Neither displays much grasp of structure, although the narrative and characterization are both competent.

Muhammad 'Abduh Yamani published Fatah min Ha'il [A girl from Ha'il] in 1980. This is a work of ideas, based upon autobiographical material, with real people occurring as characters in it.

The second group derived their literary techniques from those of the majority of acclaimed modern novelists, both Arabic-speaking and international. Some Saudi novelists, for example Hamzah Buqri, Fu'ad

Sadiq Mufti and Huda al-Rashid, read western works in the original; others, such as Amal Shata, Sultan S. al-Qahtani, 'Abd Allah Jifri, 'Abd al-'Aziz Mishri and Safiyyah 'Anbar, relied on translations into Arabic. All of them were also influenced by other Arab novelists, such as Najib Mahfuz, al-Tayyib Salih, Yusuf Idris and Hanna Minah.

Sultan S. al-Qahtani has published two novels. The first, Za'ir al-masa' [The evening visitor] 1980, is influenced by the works of Muhammad 'Abd al-Halim 'Abd Allah, who was among the first Arab novelists that he read. [1] His second work, Ta'ir bi-la janah [A bird without wings] 1981, was influenced by al-Tayyib Salih's work, Mawsim al-hijrah ila al-shamal [Season of migration to the north] 1972.

Amal Shata's first novel, Ghadan ansa [Tomorrow I shall forget] 1980, was influenced by Tawfiq al-Hakim's novel, 'Usfur min al-sharq [A bird from the east]1938,' Her characterization, however, is stronger than that of her model; she gives deep consideration to her characters. She has also developed considerably as a novelist as she has matured. Her second novel, La 'Asha qalbi [let my heart not longer live] 1989, - displays a distinct stylistic development from the first.

Najib Mahfuz's influence appears clearly in the style and structure of the works of many Saudi novelists. His predilection for addressing his characters is evident in the work of 'Abd Allah Jifri, and also, but to a lesser extent, in the trilogy of 'Abd al-'Aziz Mishri (following the trilogy of Najib Mahfuz), of which only two parts have so far appeared, published in 1985 and 1988 respectively. These novels, al-Wasmiyyah [The rainy season] and al-Ghuyum wa-manabit al-shajar [The clouds and the tree plantations], are centred on a group of villages in southern Saudi Arabia,

just as Mahfuz's trilogy is centred on a small quarter of Cairo. Mishri has promised that the third novel will appear. [2]

These authors began their literary careers by following the style of approved works, either Arab or international. Most have subsequently developed their own literary techniques, although some have remained content to continue to imitate their original models. Others again developed no discernible style. [3]

Jurji Zaydan has continued to be a profound influence, stylistically, even upon authors whose subject-matter is very far removed from his. This shows in the depiction of character, the use of words [4] and in the author's use of autobiographical material. This last, of course, is prejudicial to the creation of an 'artistic' novel, since it is important that the characters and events should constitute a natural whole with the structure of the work.

The principal influence upon the literature of Saudi Arabia has been that of Egypt, with even western influences arriving through an Egyptian intermediary. Also, although the effect of the Egyptian media is now more wide-spread, this influence first made itself felt in the Hijaz, which is the closest region of Saudi Arabia to Egypt, with a more advanced culture than the other regions. In these circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of the Saudi practitioners of the novel have come from the Hijaz; most of the later ones have also studied in Egyptian universities, for example, Hamid Damanhuri, Muhammad 'Abduh Yamani, 'Isam Khuqayr, Amal Shata, Fu'ad 'Anqawi and Hamzah Buqri.

Educated Egyptians have been imported into Saudi Arabia (and other Arab countries) as teachers, doctors, professors and so on; [5] Egypt still maintains this role. Mansur al-Hazimi says: 'Egypt alone supported the Arab countries in former times and still currently has the ability to do so. The Egyptians are almost the guardians of culture.' [6]

Roger Allan says: 'Egypt was chosen to provide a model for the development of a novelistic tradition in the Arabic-speaking world, it will be recalled, because historical, geographical and cultural factors combined to make it the most chronologically advanced milieu during the period which we have been considering.' [7] He goes on; 'The chronology and local features were, needless to say, varied, but the basic sequence was the same -- Firstly: Translation or Arabisation; Secondly: Imitation or adaptation, and then Indigenous creation.' [8]

'Abd Allah Jifri is an outstanding example of those who appeared in the eighties, when Saudi Arabia offered a more favourable climate to writers; he began by imitating Egyptian writers, particularly in his use of the internal monologue and in his employment of Egyptian dialect. [9] This generation of writers started their creative life by treating their country's problems in fiction. They made themselves familiar with the universal genre of the novel. To begin with, they imitated other authors, but, later, they established their own individual styles. Once they had mastered the rudiments of their craft, they were willing to experiment; sometimes they followed convention, sometimes they defied it. Depending at first on the cultural traditions of those they imitated, they discovered their own sources, artistic, academic and social, on which they were able to draw. The obstacles that faced aspirant Saudi novelists have largely been set aside by these writers.

Novels of the eighties.

These will be considered according to the individual authors, rather than, as might seem more appropriate, according to the date of publication.

Muhammad 'Abduh Yamani. (1940 -)

Fatah min Ha'il [A girl from Ha'il] 1980. [10]

Muhammad 'Abduh Yamani (Minister of Information 1974-83) is an author who is anxious to promote the dissemination of culture. It was to this end that he published Fatah min Ha'l, which is a book aimed young people. He hoped, from his own experience of life, to offer them some guidance through the problems of life, particularly in the management of a dowry. In fact, this topic had been substantially explored by other earlier novelists, notably al-Damanhuri and Ibrahim al-Nasir. [11]

Yamani combines this issue with the topic of the youth who refuses to leave his family in the country in order to seek employment in the city. This work is largely autobiographical.

In the first part, he tells of his experiences as a lecturer at King Saud University during the crisis between Saudi Arabia and Egypt while Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir was in power. The Egyptian academics left, and the University was short-staffed. A group of educated people sought to supply this deficiency, among them the author himself. In this part, he speaks of himself in the first person, without naming himself. He gives the names and particulars of some of his colleagues and speaks of their

selflessness during a period in the academic life of the University that was ridden with crises. Among those he names are 'Abd al-Wahhab 'Abd al-Wasl', 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Khuwaytir, Nasir al-Manqur, Ahmad Zaki Yamani, Hisham Nazir, 'Alawi Darwish Kayyal, Hasan al-Mishari and 'Umar al-Faqih. These names are mentioned again, in the second part of the novel, when the Minister of Defence and Aviation offers the hero of this part a car.

Yusuf 'Izz al-Din, in Majallat ',alam al-kutub, says that it would have been sufficient for the names alone to be mentioned, without explanations of who they were, since they are all well known. He adds: 'Their inclusion in the narrative in this fashion has relatively undermined its artistry. It would have been better if the author had resorted to a personal diary form to record these matters, as he had previously done.' [12]

In part two, which has no apparent connection with part one, the hero, Hisham, from Makkah, is first of all serving as a soldier in Ha'il, in the north. Here he meets a girl, Hayya, with whom he falls in love. Having left the army and returned to Makkah, he becomes engaged to her, much against the will of his mother, who considers this method of choosing a wife unconventional, since this is her prerogative. He nevertheless marries Hayya. He then goes with her to America to study. He fails at first, but is encouraged to continue by her, and eventually obtains his Master's degree. At a late stage in the work, having returned to Saudi Arabia, he is on a plane, when one of the engines fails. He faces this situation with courage derived from his strong religious faith. By contrast, a fellow passenger, and friend, is reduced to panic precisely because he lacks the necessary degree of faith. As a reward for his courage, Hisham is presented with a car by the Minister of Defence.

The author describes this curious work as a 'novel'. There is virtually no plot, and it is really a vehicle for his views on a number of different subjects: the virtue of serving in the army, the problem of the young deserting the countryside for the city, religion, education. Actual events are included; issues are explored from all sides, with the author seeing them first from one character's point of view and then from another's. He draws conclusions for his readers, and offers them warnings and advice. Above all, he emphasizes the importance of religious faith and observation and quotes from the Qur'an at various points. The work is an amalgam of autobiography and opinions on social and religious matters, overlaid here and there with a thin veneer of fiction. [13]

Tahir 'Awad Sallam. (1924 --)

al-Sunduq al-madfun [The buried chest] 1980.[14]

This is the story of Salma, a girl from Jazan, who is raped by a farmer, Hassan, while fetching water from the well, and becomes pregnant. She begs him to marry her, but he refuses, since he is in love with his cousin Zaynab. Salma goes to her aunt, 'Afra', who tries to save the situation by consultation with her son, Hamdan, who is married to Fatimah, a good and beautiful woman. Hamdan and Fatimah agree that he should take Salma as his second wife, in order to save her from certain death. When Salma's baby, whom she names Jabir, is born, she persuades Hamdan to hand him over to his real father, Hassan; she then goes out and attempts suicide, by throwing herself off the side of a valley. Hamdan and Fatimah search for her, but in vain. Salma's attempted

suicide, however, has not succeeded; she is rescued from the valley by a passing traveller, who puts her on his camel and takes her back to his own family, to become his wife.

Hamdan takes the baby to Hassan, who tells him to take it to his mother, who knows nothing about her son's activities. When Hassan returns home, he feels guilty for a while, but soon persuades himself that what he has done is in the part and is irrelevant to the present. His mother dies a few days later, and he decides to sell his farm and bury the gold that he has bought with the proceeds in a room of his house, having first made a plan and description of the place, which he delivers to Salman, the local wise man, with whom and his wife, Khadra', he then leaves Jabir. He then kills himself, as he believes Salma has done, in order to expiate his sin.

Jabir grows up with Salman's two children, Hasan and Zahrah, under the name of Husayn, given him by Salman and his wife. When he is seven, he is told by the villagers that he is not Salman's son, but a foundling. He decides to leave the village and go elsewhere. He is picked up by some travellers, who give him to another family. This family, 'Abd Allah and Su'da, have two daughters, Layla and Sakinah, and they bring up Jabir/Husayn as their son, giving him his third name, Ghanim.

Layla, the elder daughter, gets married, and Sakinah falls in love with Ghanim. Hadi, the son of the tribal Sheikh, wants Sakinah as his wife, but she refuses; this annoys him, and he declares that anyone wishing to marry her must pay him 5000 riyals. Ghanim decides to go to the local big town, in order to try to amass this sum.

He finds work with Salih, a local trader, for seven months, after which Salih tells him to take some goods to sell in his own village. In the village of al-Shi'b, on his way to his own village, he finds a young man in prison for having killed a man who has tried to rape his sister. Ghanim and 'Isa, the Sheikh of this village, arrange to pay the diyah with the goods that Ghanim is carrying. This means that he has to return to Salih empty-handed. Salih, however, proves understanding and actually lends him the 5000 riyals to pay off Hadi, so that he can return with his family to the town and continue to work for him.

On the way back to his village, he stops at al-Shi'b to see the young man whom he had released from prison. He discovers, on visiting his family, that the young man is Hasan, the son of Salman and Khadra', his foster-parents. He takes them, and the sister, Zahrah, to see his family, 'Abd Allah and Su'da. It turns out that Su'da is actually Salma, Ghanim's real mother, and 'Abd Allah the traveller who rescued her. Salman now gives Ghanim the plan and description of the burial place of Hassan's chest, and Hasan and he go to try to recover it; they find it full of gold.

Jabir/Husayn/Ghanim takes everyone to the town, where he marries Jamilah, Salih's daughter, since Sakinah is his half-sister. Salma/Su'da, for unknown reasons, leaves 'Abd Allah and returns to live with her cousin Hamdan and his wife Fatimah.

This work is a mixture of wild romance, as far as the action is concerned, and realism, as far as the setting and the social milieu is concerned. In his introduction, the author states that everything is completely imaginary. He does, however, for some reason, include a

date: 'On an autumn night in 1350, Hassan knocked on Salman's door,' in order to give him his son. [15]

- Fa-l-tushriq min -jadid [Let it shine again!] 1982.[16]

The heroine of this work is Asma', a young woman, who, having lost her father, grows up with her stepfather Yahya, who has married her widowed mother 'Aliya. She dreams every night of marrying a man from the professional classes. Also part of the family is Salim, an orphaned nephew of Yahya, with whom he also grew up; he is studying at the Agricultural College in Riyadh. On graduation, he returns home, to find that Yahya has made preparations for him to marry Asma'; Salim refuses this, because he does not want Salma for a wife, having grown up to consider her as his sister. She, for her part, does not wish to marry Salim, since she has her own aspirations in the matter. Yahya is angry with Salim for refusing. He has hoped that he will be his right-hand man and his agricultural engineer on his huge spread of farms; in his anger, however, he tells him to go. Salim leaves for Jeddah to look for a job. Yahya decides to take revenge on Asma' as well, for her rejection of Salim, and to marry her to a poor man, with whom she will have a wretched life.

Qasim is yet another orphan, who works as foreman on Yahya's main farm. Yahya bribes him, with a loan of 15000 riyals for the bride-price, to ask for Asma's hand in marriage; he also manages to persuade Asma' and her mother to agree.

Once married, Asma' goes to live in Qasim's humble house, where there is one bedroom, a kitchen, and virtually no furniture. Yahya in

pursuit of his vendetta against Asma', persecutes Qasim, removing him from his position as foreman, giving him the most unpleasant jobs to do, and demanding repayment of the loan. 'Aliya, Asma's mother protests against this treatment, and eventually Yahya expels her from his house, to live with her daughter and son-in-law. He continues his persecution of Qasim, with the aid of Faraj, whom he has made foreman in his place.

Khadijah, the wife of a neighbour of Qasim's, helps her from the first day that she moves in. Faraj, of his own accord, suborns witnesses to tell Yahya that Qasim is stealing, so that Yahya sacks him and has him arrested. 'Aliya asks Yusuf, a friend of Salim's in the village, to write to Salim, to tell him about the situation. However, before he can do anything, Khadijah brings the witnesses before Mar'i, the Sheikh of the village, who establishes that they are lying. He tells them to go to Faraj and say that they will not, after all, give evidence in court. The case against Qasim collapses, and he is released.

Yahya, being driven to Abha by his chauffeur, Salman, on business, is involved in an accident, in which he suffers a broken leg and is taken to hospital. Faraj is persuaded by his wife, Layla, to cease his persecution of Qasim, whose forgiveness he asks and receives. Salman comes back to tell the family what has happened to Yahya, and how, lying in hospital, he has repented of his treatment of them all. They feel sorry for his and go to Abha to visit him. He weeps, gives all his property to Asma', 'Aliyam, and then dies.

The action of this work takes place in Sabiya, a region of Jazan. As in the author's other works, the story depends almost entirely on coincidence and arbitrary occurrences, and scarcely at all on the

development of the characters or any talent for artistic' writing. Such merit as it possesses reside, as in al-Sunduq al-madfun, in the dialogue, and in the descriptions of people, places and social life. [17]

'Awatif muhtariqah [burning emotions] 1986. [18]

This is the fourth, and most recent, work of the author. He was a primary school-teacher for a long time, and recorded conversations with his pupils and olleagues. This work is the record of an actual family, which he transformed into quasi-fictional form.

The principal character is Ahmad, a boy whose father is dead, and whose widowed mother struggles to bring him up properly, together with his sister, Zaynab, and his elder brother, Ja'far. The action, as usual in Sallam's works, takes place in the region of Jazan, this time particularly in the town of Samitah.

Ahmad finishes his primary schooling in Samitah and goes, by himself, to Jazan, for his secondary schooling, at the Mu'adh b. Jabal school, which, again, is an actual school. In Jazan, he lodges in a house opposite that of Mahmud's, the 'Umdah of Jazan, with one of whose daughters (Karimah) he falls in love. After one academic year, he goes home for his vacation, to stay with his mother, Aminah, with whom her sister, Maryam, is now living, having left the house of their brother, 'Abd Allah, who has just thrown his wife out. 'Abd Allah dislikes Aminah for having married 'Amir, from Abha, whom he always hated. When Ahmad returns to Jazan, Maryam decides to go with him, to look after him, since he is otherwise alone. When she finds out that he loves Karimah, she

approaches Kawthar, Karimah's sister, to try to persuade Mahmud's family to let him marry her.

'Abd Allah also wants Karimah for his wife and makes Mahmud a substantial loan as an inducement to him to agree to this. Karimah and her mother refuse this offer, and 'Abd Allah then decides to try to obtain her for his son, Tariq. Tariq, however, has meanwhile fallen in love with his cousin Zaynab, Ahmad's sister.

Tariq finishes secondary school and goes on to the University of Riyadh to study in the Faculty of Science. He writes frequently to Ahmad, to tell him about his studies and his feelings about his country and his family. In spite of Maryam's endeavours on Ahmad's behalf, Karimah is engaged to her cousin, Husayn, a friend and class-mate of Ahmad's. Ahmad is desolated by this calamity.

'Abd Allah becomes mentally disturbed, and his family decide that he should be put in the psychiatric hospital in al-Ta'if. Ahmad and Tariq take him there, and, on the way home to Jazan, call in at Abha to visit some of Ahmad's class-mates who live there. While there, they meet Hadi, a cousin of 'Amir, Ahmad's late father, who has helped to support the family from time to time, and who now introduces Ahmad to his various relatives. Ahmad seems not to have realised that this is where his father's family come from. Finally, Ahmad and Tariq return to Jazan, where Tariq marries Zaynab. For neither, however, is the ending of the work a particularly happy one. Ahmad is still shattered by the loss of Karimah; 'Abd Allah has lost control of his business ventures as a consequence of his mental failure, and all his wealth has been dissipated.

Tahir 'Awad Sallam shows some improvement in his technique in this work, but he still cannot be considered to have any real understanding of the modern novel. Essentially, the same faults, and the same merits, are evident here as in the three earlier works. The plots of the author's four novels follow very much the same pattern, particularly as far as the wicked are concerned. As we have seen, in al-Sunduq al-madfun, Hassan rapes Salma and refuses to marry her when she asks him to. The author disposes of this character by getting him to give all his wealth to his son by Salma and then killing himself. In the present work, Yahya hates his nephew for refusing to marry Asma, and throws his wife out of the house. He ends up handing over his wealth to them and dying. In Qabw al-afa'i [vault of vipers] 1983, [19] which will not be discussed, Safiyyah, a wealthy, greedy and selfish woman, ill-treats her stepson, Muhammad, and his nurse, Zahra, but, in the end, reforms herself and becomes generous towards him. In 'Awatif muhtariqah [burning emotions] 1986, 'Abd Allah dislikes his sister for marrying a man he hates, and he throws his wife out of the house. In the end, he loses both his wealth and his mind. [20]

Sultan Sa'd al-Qahtani. (1950 --)

Za'ir al-masa' [the evening visitor] 1980.[21]

This novel is a product of the seventies, during which Saudi Arabia experienced an age of materialism, in which fundamentals tended to be forgotten, in favour of wealth. It was the author's first work, written as an examination of social forces. He had no particular philosophy to expound; he was interested simply in the social phenomenon of people's obsession with material possessions. [22]

It is the story of Nurah, a young woman who grows up with her father, 'Abd Allah, the blacksmith of his village; she has lost her mother as a child, and she works as a shepherdess. Her father's craft is threatened, because modern industry had begun to compete with traditional crafts. Salih, a storekeeper in a nearby town, from whom 'Abd Allah regularly collects the family supplies, goes his rounds to try to collect payments still due from the villagers; he finds 'Abd Allah in bad financial straits, not having realised enough profit to pay back the current instalment of the loan that he has had from him. Salih offers to write off the debt if 'Abd Allah will agree to his marrying Nurah; he will also set him up in a grocery store, as a subsidiary of his own business. 'Abd Allah agrees and abandons his craft as a blacksmith. He persuades Nurah that this change of occupation will raise his status, and she is willing to comply, in order to help her father. However, 'Abd Allah, without experience in his new trade, fails, to the chagrin of Salih.

Salih's first wife finds out that he has married Nurah -- he has left her living with her father after the marriage -- and threatens to withdraw her support of his business, in which she is a partner, if he persists with this new marriage. Salih thus decides to divorce Nurah, who is pregnant with their child. Nurah is thus left alone and divorced, with her child, 'Abd Allah, whom she names after her father, who has died in the mean time; Salih has sacrificed her to his own commercial interests.

Nurah struggles to bring up her son and to provide him with everything that he requires for his education; eventually he becomes an eye doctor. One day, an old man who has lost his sight comes to him as a patient; 'Abd Allah treats him and wants to operate on him immediately. The patient agrees, and the operation is successfully carried out. 'Abd

Allah does not know who the patient is, and he is puzzled by the fact that, during his convalescence, no family or friends come to visit him in the hospital. He tells this story to Nurah, who guesses from his description of the old man that it is Salih. She has not told 'Abd Allah who his father is; she has told his that he is dead. She asks 'Abd Allah's permission to visit the patient, who is indeed Salih, and she quickly learns his story. He has divorced his wife, and her son, 'Abd al-Rahman, has been to America and returned to establish himself as a successful businessman. Nurah now tells 'Abd Allah her own story and that his patient, Salih, is his father.

'Abd al-Rahman believes that Salih is his father, but his mother tells him that his father was actually killed in a road accident, when he was a child. Salih took them both in and married the widowed mother; 'Abd al-Rahman is Salih's stepson. Salih goes to stay with 'Abd Allah, on leaving hospital. He is now reduced to poverty, since the original capital of his business had been provided by his wife, from her first husband.

The plot of this novel derives from the problems of the petroleum age, during which many people bursted dreams of becoming rich, as they saw others doing. Such problems greatly affected Saudi Arabia, and the author was one of the first to deal with these in fiction. As a first attempt on these lines, the work was criticized as being weak in its treatment, in that it did not succeed in bringing together the various threads of the story in a convincing way and achieving a satisfactory resolution in an artistic manner. However, it was thought to pave the way for further attempts to treat the same questions, if the author was able to control the warp and weft of his fictional formulation, such as the interplay between craftsmen and traders, and his manipulation of the characters that portray the ideas behind the story. [23]

Saudi society has changed greatly, as a result of the influx of wealth. The novel has two main strands: the changes that have thus been brought about; [24] and the problems still faced by women, even in the age of women's education. There is no actual compulsion for a woman to marry, but the influence of her family in persuading her that she should marry is still extremely strong.

This novel has been described as a mixture of epic and folk-tale. The characters are superficial; they are types: the dominating wife, the loyal mother, the oppressive rich man, the wronged woman, etc. [25] The author certainly drew on such types, which he observed, and attempted to give them a fictional life of their own. The result is very similar to other early attempts at the 'artistic' novel in Saudi Arabia, at the beginning of the eighties.

- Ta'ir bi-la janah [A bird without wings] 1981.[26]

This second work of the author's is a philosophical comparison of east and west and an examination of some of the concepts that they have developed together. [27] It is the story of an old man, Sa'id, who, as a young man leaves his home in Wadi Bana, in Yemen, to travel seeking employment as a servant in various countries; this was a common Yemeni practice. He begins by finding employment in hotel in Aden, in the days of the British Protectorate. The guests are mostly important British people, officials, ships' captains and experts in various fields. The policy of the hotel is to give important persons a personal servant during their stay, and Sa'id finds himself assigned to a ship's captain, Edward; Edward holds Sa'id in high regard and, when about to sail again, asks the hotel manager to allow him to take him with him as his steward. The manager advises

him to take the job, which all the hotel staff would like, and he immediately agrees. When he goes on board, to begin his duties, he finds that a member of the crew, Michael, who speaks Arabic, has been appointed interpreter between the captain and his new steward. The ship has not sailed very far, however, before they discover that Sa'id speaks English, which he has learnt from the hotel guests and one of his fellow-servants. Sa'id develops an amiable and instructive relationship with Captain Edward.

A few miles off Djibouti, on its way up the Red Sea, the ship breaks down. All the crew is sent home to Britain, except for Sa'id, who decides to try to find work in Djibouti until the ship is repaired, which, Edward has told him, will take almost a year. Failing to find employment there, he obtains a berth on another ship bound for England. He has Edward's address there, and he stays with him for several months, continuing to broaden his experience and his outlook, before returning to Djibouti, to look again for work. This time, with his experience and his knowledge of English, he manages to find employment in one of the hotels in the city.

The owner of the hotel is a Yemeni emigrant, and he takes Sa'id with him to visit his family in Addis Ababa. He has two sons and a daughter, with whom Sa'id immediately falls in love. He becomes very friendly with the family and stays several days with them. The elder of the two sons tells him that his mother has objected to his marrying his Italian fiancee and has prevented the marriage. In consequence of this portrayal of the mother as a hard woman, Sa'id doubts whether she will look kindly upon his proposal of marriage to her daughter. In fact, however, she is not a hard woman; she is always prepared to discuss his ideas with him

and to tell him about Ethiopian matters. Nonetheless, he does not broach the subject of marriage.

Sa'id has lost his parents as a child. His father died, and his mother deserted him and went off to marry again; no one knows if she is alive or dead. Because of the relationship that develops between Sa'id and the mother of thefamily of his new friends, both he and she begin to wonder; there seems to be some natural affinity between them. It emerges, of course, that she is, in fact his mother.

In spite of the family's wish for him to remain in Addis Ababa, Sa'id decides to return to Yemen. From there, he can set out again, to construct a new life for himself.

This work has been described as representing a higher stage of 'artistry' for its author: of displaying a development in 'artistic' writing from his first work. [28] The focal point is the young man from the Arabian peninsula who is seeking a better future. Yemen is taken as the starting point for his journeying, since it is easier for the Yemenis than for any other peoples of the area to leave their native land in this way. The two continents between which the action takes place, Europe and Africa, are two spheres of widely differing culture and tradition, with the latter providing a point of contact between east and west, the undeveloped and the developed. The treatment is deliberately simple in its narrative, with sufficient psychological insight to enable the reader to relate his own situation to that of the hero. Character and the development of character are given more prominence than in the author's first work; the denouement is still the melodramatic coup de théâtre that have found in other earlier Saudi works of fiction, but the overall impression given is that

we are now properly on the way towards the full achievement of the 'artistic' novel. [29]

- Amal Shata

Ghadan ansa [Tomorrow I shall forget] 1980. [30]

The critics are clear that this is an 'artistic' Saudi novel; [31] it conforms to the criteria of the modern novel in technique, structure, plot and characterization. A wealthy Saudi, 'Abd al-Majid, on one of his frequent trips to east Asia, marries the daughter of a poor family that he meets in Java. Although he is already married, with a son, he pretends to be single in order to contract this new marriage. He leaves his new wife, Tayma, behind in Java, where she gives birth to a daughter, whom she names Islam. When his daughter is two years old, he returns to Java to take her back with him to Saudi Arabia, still leaving his second wife behind in Java. He arrives back in Saudi Arabia to discover that both his first wife and his son are dead, killed in an accident between Makkah and Riyadh, where his son was to be admitted as a student.

His daughter grows up alone with him, and, when she asks him about her mother, he tells her: 'She was beautiful, and she died in east Asia, when she was with me on one of my trips.' One day, her mother, who has come to Makkah purposely to see her, arrives at her school. Islam is, not unnaturally, surprised, and Tayma tells her the story of how she has managed to get there; Islam does not know what to believe, but Tayma persuades her of the truth, with the help of the headmistress, Nawal, whom she has seen the day before. Islam eventually manages to

take her mother home to confront her father, who, after first denying that he knows her, at last admits that she is his ex-wife. He asks them to forgive him for his treatment of them, and Tayma, on his pleading with her to forget the past, says: 'You forget, and tomorrow I shall forget.' Although she is reluctant to stay with them, Islam persuades her to do so, to look after him, since his health is rapidly deteriorating.

Islam becomes engaged to her cousin, Hisham, whom she soon marries and leaves home. Tayma continues to look after 'Abd al-Majid, who would otherwise be completely alone, since even his servant, Mansur, has left him. He dies, and she returns home.

This novel is one of the most mature to have appeared in the eighties. As well as complying with the criteria for the modern novel, it comprises at the same time a simple narrative, such as makes it accessible to the majority of readers. In its treatment of the characters, such as 'Abd al-Majid, who, by his foolish pretence, sets in train the series of events that eventually destroy him, and Tayma, who is prepared to make great sacrifices, particularly in her Indonesian environment, to be reunited with her daughter, it avoids melodrama and sentimentality, two of the principal faults of much Saudi fiction. It presents, in a matter-of-fact manner the parallelism between 'Abd al-Majid, who loses his son, and Tayma, who loses her daughter; it does not point this by clumsily drawing the reader's attention to it. The minor figures are all convincingly drawn, such as Nawal, the headmistress, who has pressing problems of her own, and even Mansur, 'Abd al-Majid's servant, who deserts his master when he most needs him, considering that he has been insulted.

The plotting is taut, the dialogue is naturalistic; these are the elements that go to make up an 'artistic' work. Amal Shata is a medical doctor by profession; this has clearly given her an insight into the psychological make-up of her characters and has helped her to treat them dispassionately. She is highly educated and well-versed in western literature, and, above all, she has an indisputable talent for writing. [32]

La 'asha qalbi [Let my heart no longer live!] 1989. [33]

The action of this novel takes place in an institution called al-Ribat, a hospice for homeless women, who live in it on charity, in Makkah. They are of various ages, with one thing in common: they have nowhere else to go. The protagonist is an old woman called Barakah, who is the narrator. The other principal characters are Rahmah and Khadijah, two sisters, Hasinah, a young woman, who assists Barakah, and another resident, named Umm 'Amir. The work is almost exclusively about women; men are virtually unrepresented, except for Hatim Wahdan, in whose house Hasinah has worked as a servant, Ziyad, who marries Umm 'Amir, and Muti' al-Rahman, Wahdan's driver, who knows Hasinah, since she has once worked in the same house.

Barakah grew up with her mother, who for some thirty years worked as a washer of the bodies of the dead. After her mother's death, she had no resource, being an unmarried woman, other than to clean houses and wash clothes for low wages, and, finally, she has come to work, during the day, as a purveyor of Zamzam water for the pilgrims, returning to sleep at the Ribat at night, since she is unable to live alone.

Hasinah began as a servant in Wahdan Palace, which she left on the death of her employer, since the wife of his son, Hatim, did not wish her to remain; having no home, she went to the Ribat. Hatim's wife dies, and Hatim is left with an infant son, Muhannad. He asks Hasinah to return, in order to look after his motherless child, which she does. Hatim falls sick and has a doctor to treat him; his partner, a friend of his, conspires with the doctor to rob him of various documents. Hasinah discovers the conspiracy, when the doctor asks Hatim to sign some papers, having first given him some narcotic drugs. She contrives to abstract the important documents and hide them, whereupon she goes to Barakah to tell her what is going on. Barakah, who hates Hatim and his family, had advised her not to return to work for him, and is unsympathetic to Hasinah's present predicament, asking her what she had expected in such a house. Muti' al-Rahman, who has come to the Ribat to deliver some food, as a charitable donation from the Wahdan house, meets Hasinah and asks her to marry him; she refuses. Hasinah, accompanied reluctantly by Barakah, goes, next morning, to tell Hatim what has happened. The doctor and the partner are at the door. Hasinah wakes Hatim, to give him the details of the previous night's events, whereupon he ejects his partner and asks Hasinah to marry him; this proposal she accepts.

Umm 'Amir grew up in miserable circumstances. Her father was blind and ruled by his wife, who was strict with Umm 'Amir. Both her parents died when she was young, and she went as a servant to an elderly doctor who had a tuberculosis clinic. One day, a rich man from al-Ta'if came to the clinic. His wife was sick with tuberculosis, but he did not wish her to go into hospital and was therefore seeking a nurse to look after her at home. The doctor selected Umm 'Amir for this task. She

experienced her first taste of a life of luxury, working in a huge palace. The family had three sons, of whom, one, Ziyad, came frequently to sit with his mother, talking and joking with her. An agreeable and gentle man, he was attracted to Umm 'Amir, and on one occasion gave her money to buy clothes or whatever else she might require; she accepted the money, but the thought crossed her mind that it might be an inducement to get her to marry him.

Ziyad continued to pay her attention and did, indeed, eventually ask her to marry him. She accepted, and, in spite of Ziyad's family's objections, they were married. His family disowned him, and he and Umm 'Amir went to live in her father's cottage, where they eked out a wretched existence, until they decided to go to al-Madinah to find work. Umm 'Amir became pregnant and gave birth to a son, 'Amir. Ziyad found employment, as a setter of stationery, but he was constantly depressed and subdued; soon afterwards he was killed in a road accident.

Umm 'Amir's neighbour was kind to her and her child. She was a singing and dancing 'Artiste' and persuaded Umm 'Amir to do the same. She complied, in order to maintain herself and her son, but she was unhappy in this work. One day, she was very handsomely paid by a rich woman for the entertainment that she had provided, and she decided to leave al-Madinah for Jeddah, where she could begin another life, away from those who knew how she had earned her living. One of Ziyad's brothers discovered that they were living in Jeddah. He came to visit them from time to time; he asked her to marry him, but she refused. She felt that she was responsible for Ziyad's death, having stolen him from his family, and she did not wish to bring about a similar situation.

'Amir grows up and goes to Cairo, to study in the Faculty of Medicine; he sends a daily letter to his mother. In one letter, he tells her that he has recognized a Saudi family, resident in Cairo, while their daughter is studying in the same faculty as himself. He has asked this girl to marry him, and the family has agreed. Ziyad's brother, Nuri goes to Cairo, to take the wedding gifts for the bride. A complication now arises. When Umm 'Amir receives another letter from him, enclosing photographs of the wedding ceremony, which she has not attended, she recognizes the bride's mother as the rich woman, Suhaylah, who paid her a large sum for her singing and dancing. She is certain that, if Suhaylah discovers who 'Amir's mother is, even though she is now respectable, she will force the two to divorce. The truth must be concealed, and so she asks Nuri to tell 'Amir that she is dead. She then takes herself off to the Ribat, in Makkah.

Having become very ill, she tells her story to Barakah, who determines to find out 'Amir's address. She can think of only one person who can do this for her, Muti' al-Rahman, who is familiar with all the comings and goings of Makkah and Jeddah. He discovers that 'Amir has become a celebrated doctor in Jeddah. Barakah goes to Jeddah, where she is several times prevented from entering 'Amir's mansion by his doorman. However, she persists, and she is eventually successful. 'Amir and Nuri come with her to the Ribat, just in time to see Umm 'Amir before she dies.

The three stories that compose this novel have as their focal point the Ribat and the common necessity that has brought the three inmates together in it. It stands as a symbol for the helplessness of women in this society, once they find themselves on the outside of the rigid conventions

of society. The three women whose fortunes are followed are there for much the same reasons. They all come from comparatively humble, or at any rate, uncomfortable backgrounds.

Barakah has never married, and has never been in a position to do so; forced to maintain herself by menial work, she has no other recourse but to depend upon charity for the roof over her head. It is quite clear, however, from the resource that she shows in assisting the other two in their predicaments, that, given more favourable circumstances, she could have succeeded in making her way in the world and, perhaps, have carved out a proper career for herself. She is a victim of the society in which she lives.

We know nothing of Hasinah's origins. She enters the Ribat as the result of prejudice on the part of the wife of the son of her late employer; we are not told, but we may suspect that jealousy is involved. Her release comes as a matter of luck.

The wife dies, and Hasinah gradually becomes the mistress of the house to which she is invited back; finally, of course, she becomes the mistress in reality, with her marriage to Hatim. The fact that he is so quick to propose to her, prompted as this may be by her having done him a considerable favour, perhaps suggests that his late wife's jealousy was not misplaced. However, although her story has, we must suppose, a happy ending, this is due to good fortune, rather than the enterprise that she displays on learning about the conspiracy. Had circumstances been otherwise -- had, for instance, Hatim's wife not died so opportunely, she might have remained an inmate of the Ribat, performing the same kind of humble tasks as Barakah does.

Umm 'Amir's case seems, at first sight, to be very different, since she imposes upon herself the obligation to enter the Ribat. In fact, however, she too is, in a sense, the victim of circumstances and her society. Ziyad's family's rejection of her as a suitable wife for him leads to his death and her adoption of a disreputable profession. Her fears that this will prejudice her son's marriage and career cause her to renounce her prospects of a comfortable and respectable life and to commit herself to a squalid and miserable existence. It may be said that she brings her misfortune upon herself, through the exercise of an over-scrupulous conscience and sense of propriety; these themselves, however, are the products of the society in which she lives.

The three stories, then, may be equated with three different genres of fiction, with which Amal Shata is, no doubt, well acquainted: the 'realistic' tale -- Barakah's story; the 'romantic' tale -- Hasinah's story; and the 'moralistic' tale - Umm 'Amir's story. The combination of the three produces an unusual and satisfying work, given, of course, the author's undoubted talent for writing fiction, which we have already discussed, in the previous section.

'Isam Khuqayr (1927 --)

'Isam Khuqayr was born in Makkah. He studied in Makkah, took a B.Sc. in dentistry from Cairo University and did post-graduate work at London University. He has written humorous magazine articles, such as 'Fi al-layl lamma khali' [In the empty night], 'al-Sa'd wa'd' [Fortune is a promise] and 'Ba'd muntasaf al-layl' [After midnight], as well as the novels, also supposedly humorous, which will be discussed.

al-Dawwamah [Confusion] was published in 1980. [34] It deals with the social problem set out at the beginning, a problem of the seventies, that of the woman who has received an education, acquired good academic qualifications and now wishes to take her place in the Saudi community.

The plot is focused on two persons, the heroine, 'Afaf, and her husband, Mahmud. 'Afaf, a working woman, has two children, a boy and a girl. She plans to organize her life so as to accommodate both her job, her housework and her attention to her children and their education. She finds a nice, hard-working woman to combine the duties of a servant with looking after the children. Mahmud, however, does not want her to go out to work. He wants her to stay at home to care for the children; financial considerations do not apply. 'Afaf; she is torn between her husband's desires and her own desire to serve her country.

She gives up her job in the government offices, only to find that Mahmud has now changed his mind. He now wishes that she were associating with her former colleagues. This time, however, it is 'Afaf whose will prevails; she now insists on staying at home with the children, in spite of Mahmud's wishes and the fact she has engaged a very good servant/nanny. She has come to realize that her children need her more than she needs to work.

The author says in his introduction that he has read in a Saudi newspaper about a group of Saudi women with good degrees who are looking for jobs and are asking the government to give them employment. He wonders about their motives. Do they just want to use their degrees, or so they want to serve their country?

al-Sinyurah [The signora] 1980 [35], concerns Husayn, a young man studying music in Rome, who is in love with one of his classmates, a beautiful Italian girl, Marianna. Husayn is a devout man, a real Muslim, as the author calls him, and he has the approval and admiration of the girl's mother and father. They marry and spend their honeymoon in Spain, where Husayn propounds the civilisation of the Arabs to Marianna. He gives a number of recitals and lectures while they are there. Then they hurry off to Cairo, where he shows her the Pyramids and gives her a course in the history of Egypt. He gives further recitals and lectures here, as well.

On their return to Saudi Arabia, Husayn finds his family divided in their response to the marriage. His mother is perfectly happy about it, while his father is unhappy that his daughter-in-law is a non-Muslim. After she has given birth to her first child, a boy, she becomes a Muslim.

These plots do not sound very hunorous. Such humour as there is derives from the overwriting and exaggeration that the author employs. There are a number of improbable incidents in the course of the story of al-Sinyurah. For example, a Jewish woman journalist in Rome publishes an article condemning their marriage, as being between a Muslim and a Christian. Husayn brings a court case against her, which he wins. Another example is the fact that, both in Spain and in Egypt, they find the Saudi Ambassador and his staff waiting to receive them.

Some of his descriptions of characters are mildly grotesque and approach caricature. In Zawjati wa-ana [My wife and I] 1983 [36] (not discussed), Aminah, the wife, suggests, following the crash, in a forest, of the plane in which she and her husband are travelling, that they might

get out and push. She also rings him up to enquire if a fish, which he has left for her to prepare, requires to be ritually slaughtered.

However, Khuqayr's fiction is essentially serious. He deals with genuine social problems, and his didacticism is quite similar to that of the earliest Saudi novelists. He also breaks off his narrative to address his characters, to tell them his opinion of their behaviour and to give them instructions, rather in the manner of Thackeray.

These works are extremely difficult to categorize. They are hardly novels, in the sense in which we are using the word. They certainly do not meet the criteria that have been established for the 'artistic' novel. Their length makes them, at best, novellas. They are perhaps best classified, although this may seem to avoid the issue, under the French heading of 'contes'.

Sayf al-Din 'Ashur (1919 --)

La taqul wada'an [Do not say goodbye] 1981. [37]

The author of this novel studied English literature in the United States and was for a time editor of the cultural journal Qafilat al-zayt. He currently manages a translation agency. This work is the only one that he has published, and it treats the problem of a Saudi woman's being forced into marriage unwillingly, while being in love with someone else. In fact, this problem was already out-of-date by the seventies; the author, as he says in his introduction, is writing about a period a quarter of a century earlier. This is confirmed by the circumstance of the Ministry of Finance's

being located in Makkah, from where it was transferred to Riyadh in the sixties, as mentioned by Ibrahim al-Nasir in Safinat al-mawta 1969.

Much of the action is related through the internal monologues of the principal characters, in a kind of flash-back technique. For example, the mother and sister of the heroine, Zakiyyah, appear only in her reflections, and her brother, Mahmud's, work in the Ministry of Finance, his relationship with his superior, Tahir, and the meeting of Tahir and Muhsin in Wadi Mahram appear only in his own.

The novel concerns the family. The father dies, leaving his widow, 'Azizah, with two girls and one boy. They live in an old house in Makkah, part of which they rent out in the season of the Pilgrimage, as a source of income. Mahmud enters Government Service, as the family provider. His sisters, Zakiyyah and Su'da, attend the kuttab (the education of girls began in the early sixties).

The novel opens with anticipation of the marriage ceremony, that evening, of Huda, a friend of the family's. Zakiyyah and Su'da are looking over Huda's house, worrying that the rainy weather will spoil their enjoyment of the wedding, but anxious, at the same time, to share with their friend in her happiness. Meanwhile, Mahmud is engrossed in playing cards, which is his hobby, with his friend 'Izzat, who has refused to marry his cousin, chosen by his father, preferring to choose his bride himself, without his father's intervention.

After the wedding, Tahir, a complex character, who has proposed to a girl and been rejected, has turned against all women, since he does not wish to repeat his experience, takes advantage of his mother's

absence to visit his brother in Jeddah, in order to help Mahmud, whom he has appointed his assistant, in al-Ta'if, during the summer migration.

These preliminaries lead to the principal plot of the work, which begins with the encounter of Muhsin, a farmer, and Zakiyyah, in Wadi Mahram, near al-Ta'if. Muhsin, who is reading in the fields, in intervals of inspecting them, saves Zakiyyah from a wild dog, which attacks her while she is walking in the fields. She leaves behind a handkerchief, with her name written on it, from which Muhsin, who has fallen in love with her, learns who she is. The next day he is invited to dinner with Tahir, whom he already knows through Mahmud, for a friendly chat. Having learnt from his mother, who has also dined with the family, the relationship between Zakiyyah and Mahmud, Muhsin now decides to ask for Zakiyyah's hand in marriage, once she has left for al-Ta'if. It turns out, however, that she is engaged to Tahir. After the close of the summer season, the family moves back to Makkah, to prepare for the marriage ceremony.

Zakiyyah is greatly opposed to her marriage, which her family has arranged. Before the wedding, she becomes ill, and, afterwards, she spends only one day in her husband's house, before moving back to the family to have treatment. Tahir's mother is also dissatisfied with the marriage, since she has played no part in arranging it. She is not prepared to act as a go-between. Mahmud, however, discusses his sister's condition with Tahir, to see if a solution can be worked out. He receives a cool reception from Tahir, who says that he will divorce her, if she does not return home.

Mahmud gets a doctor to examine Zakiyyah; he advises him to arrange for psychiatric treatment for her outside Saudi Arabia. Mahmud has insufficient funds for her travel and treatment and proposes to sell the family house for this purpose; Zakiyyah rejects this and tells her family that she will not cohabit with Tahir, whom she hates. Tahir divorces her. When Muhsin, who has kept Zakiyyah's handkerchief as a love token, learns of her divorce, he wishes to marry her, but his mother, with whom he discusses the matter, objects to her son's marrying a divorced woman, since, traditionally, this brings disgrace to the family. Muhsin decides to defy tradition and marry her, anyway. He presents himself to Zakiyyah, who has been waiting for this declaration, and they marry.

This work, concerned as it is with justice for all, portrays the society of a previous generation, in which the first stirrings of revolt against an iniquitous system are to be discerned. Nowadays, it is illegal for women to be forced to marry men that they do not wish to marry. A number of writers have used this situation in their works, in spite of the new legislation, for example, 'A'ishah Zahir [38], Tahir 'Awad Sallam [39], Fu'ad 'Anqawi [40] and Sultan Sa'd al-Qahtani [41]. La taqul wada'an meets a number of the criteria for the 'artistic' novel, in its structure, the delineation of its characters (even if it is deficient in their development) and its plot. The lengthy internal monologues may be thought to detract from its quality; this device is a difficult one for the author, unless he can control it with complete confidence. The author must also be criticized for supplying and introduction, which reveals the outcome of the work. In spite of its undoubted merits, it can only be rated as second-class; the author fails to demonstrate full maturity as a writer.

Fu' ad Sadiq Mufti (1935 -).

1. Lahzat da'f [A moment of weakness] 1981 [42]

This is the story of Tariq, a young man sent to study as an undergraduate in America. He travels from Jeddah to London on his way to Los Angeles; he spends twenty-four hours in London, in order to acquaint himself for the first time with of the differences of East and West.

On his flight between London and Los Angeles, he meets a Mrs Clark, who is sitting near him. She talks with him about many subjects and invites him to stay with her and her daughter Kathy. He does so until Mrs Clark holds a party, at which she retires with a Mr Thalmann (?) to Tariq's own room, whereupon he decides to leave and to stay with his Saudi colleagues, Fahd and Hamad. Having eventually found accommodation of his own, he goes, at Christmas, with friends to Fahd's engagement party. Here he meets an American girl, Liza, also a student, with whom he dances, and whom he decides that he would like to marry. Encouraged by her, he smokes, drinks and is generally social. When they meet again, the next day in a restaurant, they agree to get married.

He returns to Saudi Arabia to visit his parents, without telling them of his marriage; back in Los Angeles, however, he finds that Liza is pregnant and decides that he must face his parents with this fact. He writes to them, and, although angry at first, they acquiesce in the situation. [43]

In the meantime, there is the question of Siham, his cousin. She has been his playmate since they were both children, and there has been

an understanding that. they would marry. He thinks about her, even after his marriage to Liza, but on his visit to his parents he does not talk to her about her situation, still less about his marriage, he is still keeping his options open, as far as she is concerned.

A boy, Sami, is born to Tariq and Liza. As a father, Tariq is happy and writes to his parents to inform them of the joyous event; however, his happiness is compromised by his feeling that his marriage to Liza is not a success. Her wishes do not coincide with his: she wants him to talk with her, to take her out, and so on, but his budget is meagre and his studies take up a lot of his time. Further, she has had to leave the university in order to look after her baby.

He makes sacrifices for the love of his wife and his baby, and also for his studies. Liza, however, wants to go out to dances and to meet her friends, but Tariq does not want her to do this. On one occasion, she goes out to a party, leaving the baby. She is away for a long time, and the baby becomes ill. Tariq feeds him and gives him something to reduce his temperature but himself becomes angry and nervous. When Liza returns, in the morning, he decides to divorce her. [44]

Tariq successfully completes his studies and returns with his son to Saudi Arabia. He is reunited with Siham, who still loves him, in spite of his infidelity to her. They marry, and she accepts Sami as though he were her son. After three years, however, Tariq's attitude to everyone, including Siham, changes. He has got into bad company and become a gambler. Siham is worried by Tariq's behaviour; he travels backwards and forwards about ten times a year either to Europe or to the Orient.

Still, she can do nothing about it. Tariq ends up in London, in Soho, from where he set out for Los Angeles fourteen years earlier. [45]

2. La, lam ya'ud hulman [No, it is no longer a dream] 1986 [46]

Mufti's second novel concerns one of the greatest problems that has faced Saudi society, that of women's education. This had actually been tackled in the sixties, when a start was made in the late sixties, and it is in this period that the novel is set. The question is still treated as the greatest problem facing women in Saudi Arabia. The novel approaches it from two angles: the general problem of women there, and the beginning of education for women in the Arabian peninsula in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular. It is written in a highly realistic manner.

This is the story of Huda, a girl growing up in a poor family. The younger sister of her mother, Su'ad, married before Su'ad, because she was more beautiful. Su'ad eventually agreed to marry Salih, an old man who looked after her father's store. She did so because she was wasting her youth serving her family for nothing, she also wished to challenge her family, in order to discover her own identity. She had three children by Salih, of whom Huda was the second. Her elder sister, Salwa, marries, but Huda insists on continuing her education. She studies with Fatimah, who inspires her with her encouragement. Fatimah is the daughter of a cultured man, who has paid particular attention to her education, being the head of the Cultural Literary Club and owing a large library of books on various subjects. She has established a primary school for the girls of the quarter; this is a private school, since the government schools have not yet been set up.

Huda completes her primary education and moves on, first to an intermediate school that has been established by the efforts of the people of the quarter and then to a secondary school that has been set up by the government. Throughout this period, she continues to love and admire Fatimah, and she accepts her advice to continue her education to university level. When Huda graduates from secondary school, there is no university for girls; her mother therefore decides to take her to Cairo to study at Cairo University. Her mother's brother, who does not believe in women's education, tries to prevent this. Huda, however, manages to persuade him that women should be educated, on the grounds that they form half of the community, which becomes paralysed if they remain uneducated. They go to Cairo, where Su'ad, who has had a small clothes factory for women at home and has therefore considerable experience in designing and making garments, opens another small factory, in order to pay for Huda and herself. Huda successfully completes her studies; while at university, she has been helping her mother in her work and designing some model gowns, to which she gives Arab female names, to sell to European visitors to Egypt. Huda becomes familiar with Italian models and moves on to Rome, to work there with a model company for some years. Both she and her mother still intend, however, to return to Jeddah, to exhibit fashions there. While in Rome, they encounter a rich woman from Jeddah, who frequently visits the city to buy clothes. She encourages them, and assists them, to set up a fashion house in Jeddah. Su'ad dies, and Huda continues her work with her patroness, Nawal, and her son, Ahmad, who is in his forties, still single and handsome. She is taken ill and put in hospital to rest for a few days; during this time she mostly dreams of Ahmad. She is advised by the doctor to take a short holiday, to give her some respite from the concerns of her business, so she goes to Geneva with her sister, Salwa, and the latter's husband and

children; she still thinks about Ahmad, with whom she now knows that she is in love. On her return to Jeddah, she consults Nawal about marrying Ahmad; both Nawal and Ahmad agree. They spend their honeymoon in France, where she decides to leave the business in the hands of her brother, Tal'at, in order to devote herself to being a wife to Ahmad.

Fu'ad Sadiq Mufti wrote his first novel, Lahzat da'f, in order to address the problems of students studying overseas. He begins with a realistic scenario and with a reasonable novelistic structure; once well into the novel, however, he rather loses his way, begins to discuss extraneous matters and vitiates the structure that he has hitherto maintained.

His second novel, La, lam ya'ud hulman, suffers from the same lack of development as the first. The character of the heroine, Huda, derives directly from that of her mother, in struggling for her independence. He begins with the problem of women's education; this theme is sustained until Huda's graduation from Cairo University. Thereafter, however, the work turns into a Romance, with the heroine enabled to overcome any of the obstacles that she may encounter.

It is really a work of propaganda for women's education, which then becomes the narrative of a series of events, the outcome of which is totally predictable. There is no artistry in it, and, in fact, it differs very little from Isam Khuqayr's al-Sinyurah in these respects. The title itself is misleading. One must assume that what is no longer a dream is the education of women; at first, this dream is realized, but subsequently the dream turns into a romantic one -- Huda's dream of marriage. After they are married, she refuses Ahmad's invitation to visit the fashion

house once again. She betrays her education; in order to become a wife, and thus turns any relevant plot on its head.

Fu'ad 'Abd al-Hamid 'Anqawi (1935 -)

La zill taht al-jabal [There is no shade under the mountain] 1983 [47].

This novel is set in the period 1330-70 (1910--50). This period covers three reigns, the last stage of the Ottoman Empire, the Hashimi reign and that of the Sa'udi dynasty, with the conflicts between these. However, 'Anqawi does not mention any of the political events, any more than he does the social changes that took place in the Makkan community during these forty years. The novel gives, as Ahmad al-Suba'i says in his introduction, a faithful an perceptive portrait of traditional Makkan life. [48]

Ahmad Yasin, a Makkan trader, has lost his wife, Huda, who leaves him with two children to bring up. His mother looks after them until she also dies, and Ahmad has to take the responsibility himself. Eventually, another merchant, Mahmud, invites him to visit him to discuss a possible marriage with his eldest daughter, Zakiyyah. Ahmad marries Zakiyyah; he is pleased to have the chance to find someone else to look after his now teen-aged sons, about whose development he is worried. Of the two sons, Sa'd, the wild one, is against the marriage, not wanting any other woman to take his mother's place, and soon leaves home; Khalid, the more studious, is indifferent, since he spends most of his time studying with his friend Hasan.

Other characters are Ahmad's sisters, who are entirely unhelpful throughout, and the servant Sarah, a slave woman, who has looked after

the children since their grandmother's death. Zakiyyah treats her badly and tells Ahmad to get rid of her. He ejects her from his house, causing Khalid also to leave home; he takes Sarah to live with him in the house of his friend Hasan.

Ahmad and Zakiyyah spend the summer in the region of al-Ta'if, together with many of the residents of Makkah and Jeddah. Ahmad has a friend resident in al-Ta'if, Na'im, a Syrian who trades in clothes and has a beautiful daughter, Nadiyah. When the summer comes to an end, and the Makkans and Jeddans return home, Ahmad finds himself thinking of Nadiyah, whom, incidentally, Zakiyyah thoroughly dislikes.

Ahmad then receives a letter from Na'im informing him that his wife has died, and that he intends to come to Makkah for the hajj together with Nadiyah, who requires consolation for her mother's death. He manages to persuade Zakiyyah to let them stay with them for the period of the hajj.

Finding himself more and more attracted by Nadiyah, Ahmad asks Na'im for her hand. In spite of his family's objections, he marries Nadiyah. He manages to persuade Khalid to acquiesce in this, but Sa'd remains firmly opposed. Zakiyyah herself is bought off by the gift of Ahmad's larger house, where she goes to live; Ahmad spends alternate nights with her and Nadiyah.

Khalid goes off to Europe to continue his studies. Sa'd goes to al-Madinah to live with a friend, but contracts a fever there and has to be brought back to Makkah by Ahmad for treatment. Zakiyyah reciprocates Sa'd's hatred but Nadiyah loves him, finding him her ideal of a man. Sa'd, however, dies of his fever, and the difference between Ahmad's two

wives now becomes quite plain to him: while Nadiyah weeps in grief, Zakiyyah makes herself up and laughs. Ahmid, on discovering her vanity and egotism, decides to divorce her on the spot and to send her back to her father. Khalid, meanwhile, is neglecting his education for self-indulgence with a western girl Suzi, forgetful of his love for 'Azzah, a neighbour's daughter, who also loves him. She is forced to marry a cousin, following the family tradition. Suzi is initiating Khalid into the pleasures of western life, but, one day, a letter arrives from his father. In this is the news of Sa'id's death and his father's divorce. Ahmad says that he is heart-broken and that he can no longer cope with life. He asks Khalid to come home as soon as possible, in order to look after the family business, because he feels like death. Khalid breaks off his studies and other activities and returns home.

Much of the book is taken up with the description of the traditions of the Makkan people, many of which still exist, their life, songs, marriage ceremonies, etc. We also encounter the characters of the quarters, the 'Umdah and the Naqib. Much of this local colour figures prominently in the author's short stories, and similar events to those, in this novel are recounted in these as well. [49]

'Anqawi wrote this novel, he says, as a record of his childhood in Makkah. [50] He studied first at Cairo University and then took a Higher Diploma in International Relations at London University. He worked as a journalist on al-Nadwah and Quraysh in the early sixties, and published the first sports periodical, al-Majallah al-riyadiyyah, between 1960 and 1964, when it was suppressed. He has travelled widely, acting as a columnist for the newspapers 'Ukaz and al-Riyad; he has taught and has filled the post of head of censorship. His final position was as a professor of Economics in King 'Abd al-'Aziz University. [51]

He mentions in his introduction to La zill taht al-jabal that he intends the work as an 'artistic' novel. However, both his plotting and his characterization are weak, and his technique shows signs of faltering, where for example, Ahmad's internal monologues turn into a kind of sermon. It cannot be called a particularly successful novel.

Hamzah Muhammad Buqri (1920 - 1983)

Saqifat al-Safa [The arcade of al-Safa] 1983 [52]

This is the story of the growing up of a young man, Muhaysin, until the death of his mother. He loses his father as a child; his mother marries again, but his stepfather also dies some time afterwards. His mother is left to bring him up, she is now twice widowed and does not want to marry yet again. She struggled to bring him up as a man, like his fellows.

The novel is essentially autobiographical; most of the events can be paralleled with events in Hamzah Buqri's own life. It is told as a first-person narrative - the first of its kind in Saudi fiction. it gives a vivid picture of Saudi (specifically Makkan), society half a century ago.

Chapter 1 concerns his relations with his stepfather, who nagged him with moral, social and practical injuctions. Muhaysin wishes that his stepfather may die:

> I often even wished that he would die and that I might stand by his grave carrying out his instructions, However, the goodness of infancy overcame me to such an extent that I wept much

after these thoughts, climbed up on him and patted his beard, in fear that what I had wished for him might come true.[53]

We are given an entertaining account of education at that period: first, in the Kuttab, in which teaching consists simply in the teacher beating the pupils. His mother finds out that he is learning nothing, or rather, that he is learning things that she knows to be wrong. She then sends him to other Katatib.

I know that this school that I was attending was not the first 'academy' in my life; two others had preceded it: a kuttab for girls to which I was sent to learn to distinguish the letters of the alphabet, from which I was transferred after a few months, when my mother asked me, "What have you learned so far?'

Then I told her that I had learned the surah 'Nothing on it', and she struck me on the chest in surprise ... how could I not have learned the surah 'al-Hamdu' yet'? When I was transferred to another kuttab for boys, I was able to learn 'al-Hamdu' and others, but I have never forgotten this surah 'Nothing on it', and I can still repeat, as I did sixty years ago, 'Alif - nothing on it; ba' - one below; ta' - two above'. [54]

The explanation of this anecdote is that this description of the letters of the alphabet constituted the first stage of the old Arab system of education, perpetuated by the Ottomans. The letter alif is unadorned; the letter ba' has one dot, below,-, the letter ta' has two dots, above. The author points the difference between this and the education on offer at the State School, which he attended after the kuttab; at the former, The

teaching was systematized, and there were a number of teachers, as well as a headmaster, while the kuttab consisted of one room and one teacher, teaching boys of varying age and development in the manner in which he himself had been taught.

After graduating from his last kuttab, Muhaysin attends the state school, al-Madrasah al-Fakhriyyah, which is the single state school to be established under the Ottoman Empire. There were three levels of education in this institution: three years pre-primary;; three years primary; three years advanced. Muhaysin has completed the requirements for the first at the kuttab, so he goes directly into the second. When he graduates from the third, he becomes a member of its staff. His mother is very happy and gives a large party in celebration.

Muhaysin's debut as a teacher is greatly assisted by his neighbour, the pharmacist, 'Umar, an educated man. He forms the main point round which Muhaysin's cultural formation revolves, since he advises him on his reading and makes his own library available to him. 'Umar has two children, Jamil and Jamilah, and he asks Muhaysin to give his son private lessons in Arabic. Muhaysin agrees, on condition that 'Umar gives him, in return, lessons in English. This surprises 'Umar, who expects that Muhaysin will require a monetary recompense, rather than one in kind. He agrees to provide him with English lessons.

Jamilah, 'Umari's daughter, does not go to kuttab; however, she attends the private lessons that Muhaysin gives Jamil, who objects to her being in the presence of a strange man. In spite of her not attending kuttab, Jamilah soon turns out to be better at her lessons than Jamil.

Muhaysin's employer, the headmaster of al-Madrasah al-Fakhriyyah, hints to him that he would favour his marriage to his daughter, Aminah, and eventually invites him to his house to meet her face to face. They meet at dinner, but Muhaysin is in love with Jamilah. His mother wishes him to marry Aminah, and he has to answer a lot of questions from her on the subject of Aminah after the dinner party. His obvious lack of enthusiasm for marrying Aminah causes the headmaster to announce to him two weeks later, that she is engaged to someone else.

When Muhaysin is thirty, his mother dies of cancer. He is lonely, and there is no one to whom he can turn except for 'Umar, his neiphbour and English teacher. In a desperate state, he goes to stay with 'Umar for some days; 'Umar supports him and encourages him to return to his teaching. Muhaysin recovers and goes back to his pupils, but remains living in 'Umar's house.

'Umar recognizes Muhaysin's problem of loneliness and has a solution to it; he talks to him about marriage, and he agrees that this is what he requires. Since Jamilah is now of marriageable age, 'Umar asks Muhaysin to marry her; they marry, and Jamilah produces a son. 'Umar wishes the boy to be called 'Umar, but Muhaysin insists on calling him by his own name. The reason for this is that he has read a book translated from English, in which the hero, the hero's father and the hero's grandfather are all called John. 'Umar looks at him and says to himself: 'al-junun funun [madness is art]'

The author's intention in writing this novel is as much to give an idea of what life in Makkah was like in a now historical period than to tell a story. To this end, we are given a large amount of incidental local colour

concerning characters that are not essential to the narrative, the problems faced by women, the life of slaves, the state of education, popular beliefs and superstitions, and, in general, various facets of people's lives.

As an example of this local colour, we shall take Asma', the sooth-sayer friend and confidante of Muhaysin's mother. The author will have nothing to do with such beliefs, but his mother trusts her implicitly. As a child, he is given a demonstration by Asma' of a supernatural occurrence between Makkah and al-Madinah -- the drumming of the martyrs of Badr; he subsequently learns that this phenomenon is caused by the shifting of' the desert sands.

This novel is generally considered to be one of the best to have been produced in Saudi Arabia to date. Its plot and structure, its characterization and dialogue, in addition to the social and individual perceptions with which it is crammed, all contribute to making it a very significant work of literature. Only one or two other Saudi novels can be said to approach it in quality. It is perhaps true to say that it is not a novel in the true sense, in that it combines with the story much of the author himself, his memories and his experiences, which do not constitute an essential part of the narrative. He mingles drama and comedy and carries the reader along with him all the way. [55]

Nasir Hasan al-Majrashi (1954 -)

al-Hubb al-Kabir [A great love] 1983 [56]

This work owes little to the influence of authors like al-Damanhuri and al-Nasir' who had changed the direction of the Saudi novel in the late

fifties and early sixties with the modern "artistic" writings. At the period when it appeared there were no such contemporary influence to be felt. If any influence is evident, it is that of the Egyptian Cinema.

Otherwise, one may perhaps say that it displays also that of the folk-tale, modified to some degree by the folk-epic such as Sirat Antar and al-Zir Salim. The author seems to have had no acquaintance with the modern concept of the "novel".

The story concerns a young man, Sa'id, from a region of al-Ta'if. His father is a farmer and he himslef growing up with a love of the land, also becomes a farmer. After his father's death, he studies at the University as a talib muntasib (affiliated or part-time student) in order to continue to cultivate his land, on which his rivals, Sa'ud and his son, have designs.

He falls in love with Sa'ud's daughter, Layla; Sa'ud asks him for part of his land as a bride-price. He rejects this condition and so apparently renounces his love.

Sa'ud now despatches his employee, Dhahban to set fire to his land in revenge for this rejection. He, his son and Dhahban are arrested and jailed for this outrage, but the locals effect a mediation between the two sides, so that Sa'ud and his son are released, on condition that Sa'ud agrees to Sa'id's marrying Layla without requiring the formerly stipulated bride-price. Dhahban remains in jail.

The plot and narrative of so-called novel and its similar [57] come from the kind of story told round the fire at night in rural communities and

from popular folk-romance, with its implausibilities such as Layla's visiting Sa'id and weeping. The characters are one dimensional and no psychological development in them is evident.[58]

'Abd Allah Jifri (1921-)

Juz' min hulm [A part of a dream] 1984 [59]

This novel is set in Jeddah, Paris and London, It deals with a large problem in Saudi Arabia -- a problem that is increasing among the uneducated rich -- that of divorce.

Su'ad, the heroine, has been married to her cousin, Husayn, a business-man, but is now divorced. One of the reasons for the divorce was that, on his business trips, Husayn was constantly tied up with meetings and conferences and consequently in no position to do what Su'ad wanted, that is to take her out in London and Paris. She, unlike, Husayn, is educated, and she discusses history, literature and fashion with her friends. She is also a heavy smoker, and her brother, who dislikes smoking, suspects that this may have been the principal reasons for the divorce. In fact, she has had to pester Husayn for some six months to divorce her, which he finally agrees to do after she promises to pay him half a million riyals.

While in Paris, accompanying Husayn on one of his business trips, she is befriended by Rashid, another business-man. Back in Jeddah, after her divorce, Rashid declares his love for her and asks him to marry her. She is hesitant at first, being afraid of entering upon another

marriage so similar to her first. She asks the advice of her brother, mother and friends, but none of them is particularly interested in giving it, since they believe that she is tough and self-willed, and that she can take care of herself. Eventually, she makes up her mind and marries Rashid.

The work is less of a novel than an examination of the question of divorce in Saudi Arabia in the 'Petroleum Age'. particularly between the wealthy and uneducated. The burden of the author's message is that the wealthy do not care about the future; they merely seek enjoyment, with gold, new cars and travel to Europe, America and the Far East, where they have plenty of money and opportunities.

The plot and the development of character here. are minimal. The work is more of a contribution to a debate. [60] Other authors have managed to address such problems without losing sight of the novelistic form, and with some attempt at the realistic portrayal of character, for example, Huda al-Rashid, in Ghadan sa-yakun al-khamis, and Ibrahim al-Nasir, in 'Adhra al-manfa; 'Abd Allah Jifris work is distinctly inferior. However, in 1990, he published a second novel, Zaman yaliq bi-na [A time that suits us], which shows a marked improvement on his first. [61]

'Abd al-'Aziz Mishri (1954 --)

'Abd al-'Aziz Mishri has been well-known in Saudi Arabia as a short-story writer and journalist since 1976, when he published a collection of' short stories entitled Asfar al-Sarawi [Travels of the Sarawi (merchant who travels by night)]. He has published further collections of short stories: Bawh al-sanabil [The confession of the ears of grain] 1978;

al-Zuhur tabhath 'an aniyyah [The flowers are looking for a vase] 1978, and Mawt 'ala al-ma [Death on the water] 1979.

As regards novel-writing, Mishri began in 1985, with the first book in his trilogy, al-Wasmiyyah [The rainy season] followed in 1989 by al-Ghuyum wa-mandbit al-shajar [Clouds and plantations of trees]. All his stories have similar themes; the Saudi countryside. Mishri is the first author to do this, writing in an 'artistic' genre.

1. al-Wasmiyyah [The rainy season] 1985 [62]

This novel depicts the southern Saudi villages, which depend upon the rainy season for agriculture. The rain comes to them from the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea; there are no other sources of water.

The novel begins with the villagers talking about the rainy season which is late this year. Their conversation is about the traditional occupations for this time of year, such as preparing the ground for the rains. [63]

The author portrays in detail what is preoccupying their minds. Hamidah's grown-up daughter, who is ready for marriage, must stay at home, as tradition demands, while her suitors pay daily visits. Eventually, one of the hill villagers claims her as his bride. Mishri indicates indirectly that he disapproves of this old-fashioned tradition of courtship.

There is no real plot to this book. It consists of a series of vignettes of the various characters in the village, depicting their lives in this southern

village over two generations and their relationship with their environment. Ahmad 'Atiyyah says:

> 'We find this attachment to Saudi nature and the concentrated poetic expression of its relationship with the Arabs in the villages of Saudi Arabia, its deserts, mountains and valleys in al-Wasmiyyah his first novel, which gives its title and devotes its subject to this natural phenomenon, that encompasses all the seasons of the year, from the rainy season to the harvest.' '[64]

An example of the characters depicted is the Palestinian who repairs kerosene cookers. He travels from village to village, earning his living from this and other odd jobs. Mishri introduces this character as a mouthpiece for the Palestinian problem. Abu Salih, one of the villagers, was in Jerusalem in 1948, working as a labourer. He tells Sha'ban, the Palestinian, that, from his accent, he, reckons that he, comes either from Ramleh or from Ramallah. Sha'ban,says that, in fact, he comes from Jerusalem. This leads the group of villagers who are chatting to ask questions of Abu Salih, who recounts his experiences of the 1948 war. He explains the events to them; they knew about the crisis from radio broadcasts but did not really understand what was going on.

The novel is a collection of accounts of past events, beginning in the forties, when Saudi Arabia began to develop and to establish schools. For instance, the villagers were initially afraid of new machines, such as the water pump. One of their children had a fatal accident with it, because he did not understand how to use it.

Again, they feel that they must learn about other modern developments, such as the motor car. In order for cars to come to the village, they need a road, and so they decide to make one through the mountains. They actually complete a surfaced road, and they invite a motorist to the village to inspect their handiwork. The young villagers are greatly impressed by the. driver and hope to emulate him one day.

The work is a sensitive, unsensational chronicle of the recent history of a remote community, as seen through the eyes of its members. It is written in an attractive, modern style, with plenty of humour, in spite of the rigours of life. It is a considerable work of art.

2. al-Ghuyum wa-manabit al-shajar [Clouds and plantations of trees] [65]

In this, the second book of his trilogy, Mishri pursues the theme, of the first, the impact of the outside world upon a most traditional community in southern Saudi Arabia. In the first book, such things as radio and schools were being introduced. New technology had begun to make its impact. Imported wheat from Canada makes its appearance. The villagers realise that changes are necessary if they are to have the same standard of living as those, both in other parts of Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

In the second book, the first villager migrates to Makkah to work as a taxi driver during the winter, returning home in the summer. This is Ahmad, one of the principal characters of the book.

A second villager also migrates. Hamdan, a young man, leaves the countryside to work in the city, in order to help his father and his family. His father expresses concern that the towns are bringing about changes in the traditional rural way of life. One side of this life is vividly depicted by Mishri the inadequate health service, superstition, ignorance and the problems of depending for transport on donkeys and camels.

Ahmad's education begins in the village school. The teachers are not an inspiring collection. For example, the mathematics teacher requires the pupils to memorize mathematical principles without any explanation of their application. Ahmad wants to understand what he is being taught, but gets no satisfaction from his teachers. If he asks questions outside the actual lesson-periods, they simply respond by hitting him.

The older people are still in charge, leading the new generation; they regard their experience as a guide both for themselves and for the young people, including the school pupils. They expect them to defer to them, without discussion, whether they are right or wrong. Ahmad's grandfather is the master of the house, and controls the destiny of everyone within it. No one can question his decision and in spite of his lack of education, he considers himself to know everything.

As well as the teachers, the school servitor is constantly hitting the pupils, since he regards his primary role as being their instructor in good behaviour. When asked by the principal to desist, he replies- 'Let me teach them to behave themselves.'

The older generation has as yet no trust in education. It regards the new technology with dread, while the younger generation looks to the future with more hopeful feelings. The death of Halimah, the wife of one of the villagers, Matar, symbolizes the end for the older generation; Matar's own leg operation symbolizes their inadequacy. In former times, the villagers had no means of obtaining information about the outside world, until the radio was introduced; now television has come. The older generation was hard-working, while the younger generation is selfish and lazy. An Indian now works in the *coffee*-shop, where formerly there were only villagers working. The author uses this as an example of what happened in the seventies and early eighties, when foreign workers came to occupy all types of employment, while Saudis drove about in their new cars.

In everything there is a conflict between the older generation and the younger, The younger generation will prevail, it is educated and the older is not.

Mishri is the first Saudi author to focus on the countryside, just as Muhammad 'Abd al-Halim 'Abd Allah was the first Egyptian to do so.[66] This is an indication of the Egyptian influence on Saudi writers, and in fact on Arab writers everywhere. [67]

Mishri records, in artistic form, what has been happening to Saudi village life. based on his own (mostly childhood) memories.

'Abid Khazindar says:

'I really did not intend to harm any of the writers of short stories or novels in Saudi Arabia. I do not wish to belittle

their efforts. For I concede that I have not read all of the novels and short stories that the young have produced. The only thing that I said about al-Wasmiyyah was that it introduced a universally new novelistic style. It may be that 'Abd al-'Aziz Mishri was aware of this new style in his writing or it may not. For he sketched for us the ultimate form of the novel in the world in devising a new technique that is not based on extended causal narrative. This is known as 'collage.' in the modern novel.' [68]

Safiyyah 'Anbar

'Afwan ya Adam [Sorry, Adam] 1986 [69]

This novel concerns a young woman, Safa, who is in a spiritual void. She is in a city centre, looking for a tape in a music shop. She enters and asks about a tape of Umm Kulthum, whereupon the assistant tells her about a musician of whom she has never heard and persuades her to buy one of his tapes. He also shows her the photograph of this musician, Basim, which he keeps in his pocket, and mentions that he is also a writer. He further lets her have some musical journals in which some of the young man's articles appear. Having read these she writes a letter to Basim, as a reader, and he, in return, sends her one of his books.

For two years Safa continues to read Basim's articles, until, one day, her family decide to visit the country in which he lives. She has his telephone number, calls him and tells him the date of their arrival. They arrange a rendezvous, meet and talk. After this first meeting, they meet

every day at his home, and he soon declares his love for her. She reciprocates his love. He has to abroad on business and promise to visit her in her own country.

Safa and her family return home to await Basim's visit. He duly arrives for a few days' stay and then has to return to his own country. Safa becomes ill and is sent by her doctor to hospital, where she has to be put in intensive care. From here she send a message to Basim, informing him of her condition. On leaving the hospital and returning home, she receives a letter from Basim, hoping that his visit has not provoked her illness. He says that he intends to spend a week in a European country, in order to rest, and he encloses a ticket for Safa to come to stay with him in a hotel there. After some hesitation, she decides to go, and they spend an enjoyable week in the hotel, after which each goes back home. Basim promises to visit Safa again.

Safa and her family have just returned from a holiday in another country, when, on her calling Basim to tell him about the trip, he persuades her to take a further holiday, with him, in the very country from which she has just returned. They do this, for a few days, after which they both again return to their respective countries. Safa's father falls ill and has to go to hospital. She has to look after her brothers, since her mother is too taken up with her husband in hospital. During this time, Basim comes to see Safa, but she is too busy to contact him, he promises, however, to pay another visit. When her father leaves hospital, the family receive a number of visitors. This happens just at the time of Basim's next visit, but Safa is, once again, unable to see him. He returns home, having decided that he is no longer in love with her, in spite of the fact that she has not changed her mind about him.

Safa now becomes principal secretary to '.Adil, a company director, who falls In love with her and asks her to marry him, taking her with him on a business trip to Paris. She is still in love with Basim, but she hesitates between this and her inclination to accede to Adil's suit.

It is now Basim's turn to go into hosptial. On his release, he comes once again to visit Safa, in order to apologise to her and renew his offer of marriage, which she refuses.

Muhammad 'abd al-Mun'im Khafaji says of this work:

> The story of 'Afwan ya Adam is very similar to the old Udhri desert stories, those of Layla al-Amiriyyah and al-Manjnun, Lubna and Qays, Layla al-Akhyaliyyah and Tawbah al-Khafaji, and Fawz and al--Abbas b. al-Ahnaf.

He adds that this story is that of the author herself and her husband, 'Abd al-Aziz al-Turki. [70]

Although the certain aspects of this work display some craftsmanship: the structure, the characterization and the dialogue, the final impression that remains is that of a story written for a woman's magazine. No doubt. this is partly deliberate. The author is writinig for a female audience and couching her feminist ideas in this frame is probably the easiest way to reach a female audience in the Arab world. It is difficult to imagine its making much impression on what she calls 'the eastern man, who accepts only to be the al-Rashid of his time.'[71]

'Abd al-'Aziz al-Saq'abi

Ra'ihat al-fahm [The smell of charcoal] 1988 [72]

'Abd al-Aziz al-Saq'abi is best known to Saudi readers as a short story writer, having published his collected stories under the title La layluki layli wa-la anti ana [Your night is not my night, and you are not I] 1983.

This novel displayed al-Saq'abi to his readers as a modern and creative writer, although the critics insist that his technique as a novelist remains the same as his technique as a story writer. [73]

Sa'id, the hero, is a motherless young man who sets out in life, with high ambitions to establish an identify and to construct a future for himself. His father marries again and his sister also marries, so he leaves his village in order to make, his career as a playwright; in this he is unsuccessful, in spite of his best efforts.

Sa'id falls in love with Layla, a nurse in the town hospital, but she suddenly disappears. He returns to the village, depressed by his lack of success in two respects. He decides to marry Huda, a village girl whom he has known for a long time. Just before his return, his aunt, Sukun, is suddenly killed. This tragic event stirs up in his memories of his childhood, being nursed by Sukun, along with his sister, after his mother had died at his birth. He discovers, however, that she has murdered by his uncle, who has only recently married her. His uncle, realising that Sa'id has discovered his guilt, first stops his marriage to Huda, who is related to him, and their drives Sa'id out of the village, with death-threats. Sa'id leaves once again for the town, this time to work as cashier for the owner of a

wood-working business. Layla, in the meantime, despite her residual love for Sa'id, has married a doctor with whom she has worked in the hospital. Sa'id marries 'Afaf, a singer whom he met during his first stay in the town. Quite soon, as it appears, he buys the wood-working business and runs it himself.

The author's intention in this work, to combine the techniques of the short story and of the novel, cannot be said to be wholly successful. The character of the hero is reasonably rounded, aid there is sufficient sense of place and social background to satisfy, for example for Evans's criteria [74]. The other characters, however, are virtually stock figures: Sukun, the abused eastern woman, Sa'id's uncle, the villain of melodrama, Layla, the indecisive, liberated woman. They are important, and interesting, only in so far as they affect what happens to Sa'id himself. The dialogue is well-handled, but the. plot, such as it is, is somewhat contrived.

Ibrahim al-Nasir

Ghuyum al-kharif [The Autumn clouds] 1988 [75]

I have already mentioned that al-Nasir is one of the first novelists in Saudi Arabia who can be described as an 'artistic' novelist. He has been using this art form since the early sixties, writing both novels and short stories during the period. He was studying in Iraq during the time when freedom of thought was on the rise and novel-writing was first pioneered.

He published his first novel in 1961, under the title Thuqb fi rida' al-layl, his second, Safinat al-mawta in 1969 and his third, 'Adhra' al-manfa in 1977.

Ghuyum al-kharif is the fourth novel, published in 1988. Like al-Nasir's other novels, it is 'realistic', in that all the details of the plot are true to life. The social problems of the 'petroleum period' of the 1970s are embodied in the characters, particularly in that of the hero, Muhaysin, an uneducated man who has become wealthy as an estate agent.

Muhaysin longs for social prominence, but he is illiterate. After the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, a number of foreign companies were blacklisted. Muhaysin, in absolute ignorance of this, goes to Greece, to try to obtain the agency for one of these in Saudi Arabia. In doing so, he loses a lot of money, and he returns to Saudi Arabia to take up his former profession as an estate agent.

As usual, al-Nasir does not specify dates; however, the period and the place assume great importance in the novel, since the story is essentially linked to the events of the period. This external realism is the result of his historical and political awareness and lends credence to his novelistic technique. There is a general critical aggreement that he is one of the Saudi novelists who has matured into an 'artistic' writer. [76]

Ghuyum al-kharif is one of five novels published during the 1980s that demonstrate their authors' literary maturity. The others are: Amal Shata, Ghadan ansa; Hamzah Buqri, Saqifat al-safa; 'Abd al-'Aziz Mishri, al-Wasmiyyah and al-Ghuyum wa-mandbit al-shajar. All of these are dealt with elsewhere in this thesis.

al-Nasir's literary maturity, however, did not appear from nowhere. It was the product of a long period of effort, in which he read widely and imitated what he read, supported by a high degree of natural talent. The novel begins with a description of the hero as an auctioneer who has become wealthy through the real estate business. He is described as a heavy smoker, with a coarse, unnatural voice. This serves as an introduction to the author's main subject, the accumulation of wealth by the uneducated, one of the problems of the 'petroleum period'. He has the ability to combine comedy and tragedy in his characters and in his narrative. He exhibits the changing social situation of the 1970s to us in the story of one man, a real estate dealer in Riyadh. From being a poor man, uneducated, with an old house in the poor quarter and only a small office as his agency, he becomes rich, and moves to the wealthy quarter, where he builds a large house.

The events of the novel take place in Greece, where Muhaysin has gone on business, in company with a friend of his, Salman, who is on holiday. The Greek background has no particular relevance to the plot; it is, in reality, just somewhere abroad. While there he goes for a short excursion to an island, in order to enjoy himself for a while. The other passengers mostly Westerners. He listens to some of the views that they express in their conversation, but he is mostly distracted by his reminiscences of a beautiful girl whom he once loved. He has plenty of money, but he does not have an real idea as to how to use it. He contrives to enjoy himself, but he does both in a boorish and unsophisticated way, which attracts the criticism and derision of his colleagues. On his return, Salman, who also regards Muhaysin's behaviour as regrettable, urges him to modernize his methods of doing business.

Muhaysin can see no point in this: 'The old and the new methods are the same underneath. The differences are purely cosmetic.' [77]

The confused state that Muhaysin is in is depicted in a number of ways. Basically, it is a conflict of generations. First of all, the contrast is pointed between him and his younger friend, Salman, who has studied in America. Being still young, and knowing, about modern business practice, Salman cares about his future, while Muhaysin is careless of this, having, as he sees it, plenty of money, a big house and a wife and children.

The question of wife and children is another source of confusion. Muhaysin's friend, Susan, who lives in Athens and acts as an agent for him there, telephones him and wants to come to see him. He has been thinking of marrying, her and staying in Greece, but he is, of course, already married. If he were to marry Susan, he would lose his wife and children, on the other hand, there is the attraction of enhancing his future life by marrying a young, educated wife, to make up for his past life, married to an uneducated woman. There is, incidentally, no suggestion that Susan is at all interested in marrying him.

The difference between 'educated' and 'uneducated' is central to al-Nasir's theme. The educated, during this period, tended to be poor, and the uneducated rich; the latter devoted their lives to the acquisition of wealth, while the latter were more concerned with their intellectual betterment. [78]

The situation round which al-Nasir's principal theme revolves is one that was common in Saudi Arabia in the mid-1970s, with the rise to

wealth of the lower middle class. When Muhaysin is in Greece, arranging a contract, he remembers his former unfortunate experience, when he engaged In business In association with a Lebanese migrant to Saudi Arabia. Many such people came, from other parts of the Arab world and from the Far East, to Saudi Arabia at that time, in order to profit from their mercantile skills. They were trusted by the nouveau-rich Saudis, and many of them lost heavily as a result. Precisely this had happened to Muhaysin.

However, Muhaysin had reverted to his real estate business and had managed to amass another fortune. It is with this that he conducts his business in Greece, namely, to arrange to become general agent in the Gulf States for the soft drink Fanta. Since he remembers his earlier disaster, it is surprising that he does not make wider enquiries concerning his projected agency, and particularly that he does not consult the Commercial Attache at the Saudi Embassy. It is equally surprising that Salman does not give him the one piece of information that would save him, of which Salman must be aware. Fanta is one of the products that was blacklisted after the Israeli war of 1967. So Muhaysin loses his money again and is refused compensation by the Government, Once more he becomes a real estate dealer in Saudi Arabia.

al-Nasir has a sub-theme, connected again with the advent of foreigners in Saudi Arabia. These, however, are not the business men, out for easy pickings; they are the menial labour force, brought in as servant, drivers and unskilled Labourers.

Before the mid-1970s, ordinary households in Saudi Arabia had no servants, nor were there non-Saudi workers of any kind in great numbers. Now, most ordinary households have one or more.

The theme here concerns the impact of this horde of immigrants from comparatively open societies upon a conservative, essentially closed community. Muhaysin's wife is concerned by the free manner in which her servant associates with the street-cleaners, providing them with meals and chatting to them for long periods in a language that she does not understand. Muhaysin, for his part, begins to doubt the wisdom of leaving his foreign driver in the house with his wife when he is away.

The existence of the social problems that al-Nasir treats in this book is clear to everyone. A number of writers have attempted to deal with them, but none has been able to do so with the skill and artistry of al-Nasir. An example of this is provided by the work that we shall discuss next, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muhanna's al-Khadimatan wa-al-Ustadh (1988).

'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muhanna (1950-)

al-Khadimatan wa-al-ustadh [The two servants and the teacher] 1988 [79]

The author tells us, in his introduction, that the events in this book have actually taken place, though not all necessarily to the same people. He adds: 'There are several houses similar to that of 'Abdullah in Riyadh with the same problems, [80] The events depicted are very precisely

dated to within September 4,1971 and April 4, 1985. He has recorded them from life in Riyadh.

The story concerns Hisham, the only son of 'Abdullah, a businessman living in Riyadh. Hisham is a history graduate, working as a history teacher in one of the middle schools of Riyadh, and living in his father's, house. The two servants of the title are (1) Bathaya, from Thailand, who loves Hisham, but is not loved by him in return. He cancels her contract, but she returns to Riyadh to service in another house, in order to see Hisham again; (2) Bihar, from Sri Lanka, who has just arrived in Saudi Arabia, to work in 'Abdullah's house, She is beautiful, brilliant and educated, and she helps Hisham with his private library and with translation into Arabic (!).

Bihar is working in Saudi Arabia in order to set herself up with those things that she could never hope to have by remaining in Sri Lanka -- a house, good clothes, gold, jewelry, and so on. She pays especial attention to Hisham, in order to coax further presents out of him.

Hisham is still single and looking for an educated girl to be his wife. He finds in Bihar many of the qualities that he is looking for, but, in contemplating marriage with her, he faces the difficulties that many of his generation face, these of the community and tradition; his family unanimously oppose such a match -- his father, his mother, a recently retired social worker, and his sister Ghadah, a student. To them, marriage with a servant, who is, by definition, of a lower social class, is out of the question.

Ghadah marries Sa'd, a recent engineering graduate, who becomes a partner of 'Abdullah's, in one of the latter's factories. 'Abdullah soon leaves his business in Sa'd's hands and takes his wife abroad, to Spain, for a few months. Bihar finds herself mistress of the household. Hisham is in a spiritual void, which only Bihar can fill for him. He decides to marry her, in spite of his family's objections. Bihar takes a vacation to return briefly to Sri Lanka, ostensibly in order to tell her family about her marriage. She is in fact already engaged, to Bernardo, in Sri Lanka, and, while she is there, she married him. She buys a house and some farmland for her father with the money that she has gained in Saudi Arabia.

After two weeks, she returns to Riyadh, for her second wedding, to Hisham, who is anxiously waiting for her. The ceremony takes place in the presence of a few friends.

Bihar has now become a Muslim, and she is mistress of the household almost in her own right. She gives money to Bathaya and to Yaha, the servant of a neighbour and friend of Hisham's, Salim, who has played a part in arranging the marriage.

Bihar's real husband, Bernardo, is still in Sri Lanka. He is a driver, and 'Abdullah's establishment is in need of a driver, now that their former Pakistani driver has left to work with Sa'd. He is aware of the conspiracy, and Bihar does not want him in the house, in case he tells Hisham; Hisham, however, is blindly in love with Bihar and reposes complete confidence in her.

At any rate, Bernardo comes, as arranged by Bihar, to work as a driver. 'Abdullah and his wife return from Spain, to find Hisham married to Bihar, but there is now no point in their maintaining their objection. 'Abdullah is establishing a new office in Jeddah, and he and his wife go off to stay there. Bihar asks Hisham to allow her to visit her family for a short time; when he agrees, she persuades him to let her have several copies of a letter to the Re-entry Visa Office and a quantity of signed cheques. She and Bernardo buy two tickets and obtain visas, on Hisham's signature.

Bernardo drives Bihar to the airport; they put the car in the airport car park and take a plane to Bahrain, on their way to Sri Lanka. When Bernardo is late in returning, Hisham begins to have doubts about him, He and Salim, his neighbour, go to the airport, find the car in the car park, and ask about the driver. The airport officials tell them that he has left for Sri Lanka, via Bahrain. Hisham collapses and has to be taken to hospital, where he remains for about a month.

As has been mentioned, a number of Saudi novelists deal with the problem of foreign immigration into Saudi Arabia, with varying success, from the 'artistic' point of view.[80] This novel is al-Muhanna's first; he asserts that the story is taken from real life, and that it could happen in any Saudi household, since the problem is universal. The structure of the novel is weak, and the characters remain underdeveloped, even when there is scope for them to develop. In fact, a number of his characters are entirely superfluous. Bernardo, for example, plays no useful role in the plot; nor does, Yaha. In addition, the actions of some of his characters are unreal and unconvincing. 'Abdullah makes no real attempt to prevent Hisham's marriage; his wife might as well not appear at all. Bihar has a

free hand in everything that she does; the other characters are directed by her like puppets, without putting up even a token resistance. Even if we can believe in Hisham's being so besotted as to allow her to manipulate him without question, the behaviour of Ghadah, who is aware of the conspiracy, without lifting a finger to avert the danger that threatens the family, is scarcely credible. In short, instead of providing psychological insights into human behaviour, and instead of working out a true, dramatic structure for his plot, the author presents us with cardboard figures performing a kind of morality play. The tension, such as it is, is not exactly heightened by his use of chapter headings that reveal in advance the direction that the story is about to take.

al-Muhanna has published a second work, which he also designates a 'novel'. This is Ghadat al-Kuwayt [The girl of Kuwait] 1990. It is, in reality, a kind of 'faction" being a record, as seen through the eyes of a fictional family, of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 -- a documentary account, in fact, with all the events, dates and places painstakingly listed. It does for the invasion of Kuwait what Ghalib Hamzah Abu al-Faraj's works have done for other world events for the benefit of Saudi readers. [81]

Ghadat al-Kuwayt features a Kuwaiti family, the father of which worked as a fisherman before the period of the exploitation of petroleum resources. His daughter, Durrah, has been studying as an undergraduate at Kuwait University; she has been engaged for a long time, to Humud, studying as a postgraduate in Britain and America.

The author takes us through the history of Kuwait since 1920, introduces us to the al-Sabah family as rulers of Kuwait, and documents

the support that Kuwait has given to various other Arab Countries, including Iraq during the Iran/Iraq war.

The invasion takes place. Durrah and Humud get married; owing to adverse circumstances, it is a modest affair, Many Kuwaitis left Kuwait, for Saudi Arabia, the other Gulf States and Europe, seeking political asylum, but this family decides to stay, as a gesture against the occupation by Iraqi troops. The latter part of the work depicts Kuwait as an occupied country, between the invasion and the liberation, at the end of the Gulf War. It comprises largely reportage of the various events, and descriptions of Kuwait refugees travelling across the desert to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.

The author relies for his plot entirely upon factual events. He does not set up fictional situations, to which he can then apply an 'artistic' treatment, producing an original piece of work, with proper plot and character development, There is no objections of course, to the use of actual events as a background to fiction, provided that the practitioners have acquired the necessary novelitic skills to exploit them in this way. [82] Too many contemporary Saudi writers, however, are content to offer as fiction this kind of half-baked semi-documentary material.

'Uthman Salih al-Suwayni' (1940-)

1. Dumu' Nasik [Girl's name] 1988 [83]

This is the first work of al-Suwayni', who obtained his Ph.D. degree from al-Azhar, in literature and criticism, in 1983.

The heroine of the work is Dumu', a girl who was born a few days before her father's death. Her mother, Sabirah, married Nasik, a farmer, in miserable circumstances. Sabirah's tribe refused consent to her marriage with a member of Nasik's tribe, as one of the tribal traditions. Her father, however, was a brave man and defied the tradition;he advised Sabirah and Nasik to leave the village and to go to some place where they would be safe from the tribal gangs, who would try to seek them out and kill them. So Nasik removed with his wife to an isolated place, where he had a humble farm with a small well for drinking and irrigation.. Here they spent many years, farming their land and living off it. For a long time, Sabirah had no children, but one day she felt sick and knew that she was pregnant. In spite of his illness, Nasik was happy about this; Sabirah gave birth to a daughter, for whom Nasik suggested the name Dumu' [Tears], shortly after which he died, leaving Sabirah alone with the child in the deserted valley.

In these circumstances, lonely, hungry, dreary and ill, Sabirah one day sees someone coming towards her. At first, she is afraid, but when he comes close and speaks to her, she believes him to be trustworthy. This man, Mughamir, has left his village to wander about; he is lost in the desert, thirsty and tired. Sabirah gives him some water to quench his thirst, Mughamir asks her questions, which, at first, she is reluctant to answer. However, when she does finally tell him how she is situated, he invites her to accompany him back to his village and his family, rather than stay in this deserted place, and she agrees. They leave for Mughamir's village, he carrying the baby and she following behind. Eventually, they meet Muwaffaq, one of the inhabitants of Mughamir's village, riding on his donkey. Mughamir asks him to put the sick woman and her child on his donkey, and they make their way to the village. Muwaffaq asks Mughamir

why he went off wandering, although a wealthy man. Mughamir answers that he wants to see the life of the poor at first hand. When they reach the village, they put Sabirah and her daughter in one of Mughamir's houses, to be under the care of the villagers, Mughamir calls a doctor for her, and the kindly villagers supply her with food and money.

She spends a considerable time In Mughamir's house, with him looking after her, while Dumu' is put in the girls' school. Meanwhile, Mughamir's wife, Ghayur, conceives a jealousy for Sabirah. Eventually, an agreement is reached with the doctor, whereby Ghayur agrees to leave Sabirah alone and to put it about that she has an infectious disease; Sabirah is transferred to the General Isolation Hospital, and Dumu' is left alone and no longer able to stay in the school.

Muqim, Mughamir's son by his first wife, now dead, finds Dumu' in difficulties and takes her into the house. Ghayur, however, does not want the girl there and tells Muqim to leave; he sets off for the town to look for work, Dumu' then sets off to look for Muqim. While she is wandering in the streets of the town, she meets wealthy man, Ihsan, who asks her about herself. When she explains, he offers her a job in his house as a servant, which she accepts. Ihsan's son, 'Adi, a ne'er-do-well, is attracted to her, but she remains constant to Muqim. One day, while she is in the Post Office, in order to send a letter to her mother in the Hospital, she asks a young man to help her; this turns out to be Muqim. While they are walking in the street, a gang fight breaks out. Muqim intervenes and is arrested. Dumu' returns to Ihsan's house, where 'Adi finds her with a strange man's handkerchief (Muqim's) and hits her.

She leaves Ihsan's house, to go to work for a wealthy widow, Fattanah, as nursemaid to her son, 'Adi. However, she soon rises to the position of Private Secretary. 'Adi, meanwhile, has not given up his designs on her, and has been searching for her everywhere. Having discovered her whereabouts, he sends an old woman to Fattanah's house, to ask her to let Dumu' collect some antiques that are designed as a gift for Fattanah; Dumu realises that this is a trap, and refuses. Next, 'Adi comes himself, to be presented by the same old woman as a suitor to Fattanah; Dumu' sees him and again realises that this is another device to ensnare her. She leaves Fattanah's house, to go to work as a servant in an engineering office, the owner of which turns out to be Muqim, whom she has not seen since a brief meeting, at the railway station, after his release, when he was about to proceed abroad to study. He has since completed his study, returned, and established his engineering business.

In the office, Dumu' sees a blonde woman sitting with Muqim. She asks a secretary who it is and is told that it is Muqim's wife, Rose. Muqim has married her, an engineering class-mate, while abroad. On receiving this intelligence, Dumu' collapses in a swoon. She has to spend several days in hospital before returning to work as a servant for Muqim, who does not recognize her, and his wife, in their house.

Muqim had sent Dumu' a letter at Ihsan's house, after she had left. When it was returned to him, marked 'Not known at this address', he forgot about her and decided to marry Rose.

Dumu' now receives a letter from Nadiya, a nurse who intercepted her letter to her mother in hospital, since Sabirah had died at the moment of its arrival; she tells her about her mother's death.

Dumu' still loves Muqim, in spite of the fact that he is married to Rose. Rose and Muqim quarrel, about Muqim's business methods; one of his buildings has collapsed, owing to the use of substandard materials. Muqim is arrested and jailed, and no member of his family comes to visit or to help him. However, Dumu' brings him food and procures a lawyer, Muslih, who arranges for Rose to receive her share of the business, on condition that she leave the country. Muqim's problems, however, are not over, since there is also compensation to be paid for the collapsed building.

Dumu' goes to the hospital to sell a kidney, since a rich man with kidney failure has advertised for one. With the money she receives, she arranges for the lawyer to have Muqim released. On leaving hospital, she goes to Muqim's office, where, instead of showing gratitude, he hits her and throws her out; she goes back to the hospital, When, a few days later, he goes through her things, preparatory to throwing them away, he finds the letter to her mother and realises who she is. He immediately sets out for the hospital, but on arrival he discovers that she is dead. The people gathered in the ward include Muslih, the lawyer, and the wealthy man to whom Dumu' sold her kidney, who turns out to be Mughamir, Muqim's father.

Although this novel is supposedly set in Saudi Arabia, it has no specific background, and, indeed, incorporates many features that are impossible for that setting. The author states that the action takes place after 1358/1937 [84], but this too is irrelevant; for instance, the girls' school that Dumu' attends could not have existed before 1960, and hospitals are also a comparatively recent innovation. It has not been practicable to illustrate the point in the synopsis, but the work harks back

to the 'preaching' type of 'novel' that we encountered in earlier stages of the development of fiction in Saudi Arabia, the author criticizes the state of health care, the attitude of Government employees, the laxity that permits the introduction of wives from abroad, and, indeed, the practice of students' going to study abroad.

It is, in other ways, too, a very old-fashioned work. The style is archaic, and there are many inherent implausibilities of plot and many points left unexplained. It is reminiscent of the kind of fiction that the author may have read in his youth, and it is surprising to find such a distinguished literary critic indulging in this kind of sentimental rubbish,

2. al-Kanz al-dhahabi [The golden treasurer] 1988 [85]

This second work of 'Uthman al-Suwayni' is really a long story, rather than a novel. It concerns a young man, Faris, the son of Sanat, the Shaykh of a clan. When his father dies, and Faris inherits his position, he fritters away the wealth that his father had amassed and becomes hated by the people of the clan. He asks his mother for money to spend on pleasurable pursuits; she tells him that she has none, Going through his father's effects after his death, he finds a box containing his father's instructions for finding a treasure buried on the Green Mountain. Most of Faris's friends have deserted him, with the dissipation of his wealth. He sets out with the four that remain, Nahar, Layl, Sayf and Dahr, together with a camel that they have bought, to search for the treasure. During the journey, Faris comes to believe that his friends have conspired to kill him, so he slips away from them. Sayf goes to look for him, loses his way, and becomes the prey of wild beasts, The other three find his body next morning. They decide to return home, taking Sayf's head to his family.

They in turn lose their way, they hear dogs barking and hurry to find help. In the meantime, however, Dahr is bitten in the foot by a snake and dies. The remaining two find the people for whom they were making and are directed by them to their home.

Meanwhile, Faris has been captured by a tribe, on suspicion of being, a brigand. He is held as a slave by the Shaykh, until one day some robbers attack the tribe and drive off their herds. Attempts to recover them prove fruitless, until Faris makes the attempt, succeeding single-handed. The Shaykh's daughter, Mus'idah, falls in love with him.

Faris escapes from the tribe and continues his quest for the treasurer. Again he is captured by another tribe, who condemn him to death as a robber, but he is released by Mus'idah, who has followed him, and who takes his place in confinement. When the tribesmen discover the substitution, they cut off her hand and her foot. Her brother, who afterwards becomes Shaykh, arrives to save her, but too late.

Discovering that, during his adventures, he has lost the documents that contain the details for finding the treasure, Faris decides to return to Mus'idah's tribe, in order to win her for his bride. Her brother, however, will not countenance her marriage to an ex-slave, and rejects his proposal.

His own tribesmen are looking for him, to ask him to be their Shaykh. His mother has died and his sister has married someone from outside the tribe. He himself has been passed over, during his long absence, for the shaykhdom, but his substitute is proving unsatisfactory.

However, he declines the position, in his dejection at losing his love. He leaves his tribesmen, in order to wander in the desert.

In his wanderings, he one day meets a man who tells him that he has found a treasure on the Green Mountain, but Faris is no longer interested, since he has lost everything that he desired. He sets off to wander once more.

This is simply an (intermittently) moral adventure story, with no plot and no characterization. The two works that we have examined were published by al-Suwayni' in the same year as two collections of short stories, for which he displays considerably more talent.

The number of works of fiction (not counting short stories) published in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s totals 43. There are various factors behind this increase in production, notably the spread of education and the improvement of facilities for printing and publishing. In spite of the fact that they are all called 'novels', not all of these works of fiction are actually novels, when judged against the criteria for the modern form of this genre. Only twenty-five can really be regarded as Such; the rest are long stories, like some of those that we have discussed here. Those that fall into this latter category are: the works of Hamzah Ghalib Abu al-Faraj between 1977 and 1990; the three works of 'Abd al-Rahman Zayd al-Suwayda between 1983 and 1987; Tahir 'Awad Sallam's al-Sunduq al-madfun (discussed in this chapter); Muhammad 'Abduh Yamani's Fatah min Ha'il (discussed in this chapter); 'Umar Tahir Zayla's, al-Qushur [Trivialities] 1983; 'Uthman Salih al-Suwayni's al-Kanz al-dhahabi (discussed in this chapter)-, Muhammad Zari' 'Aqil' Bayn jilayn [Between two generations] 1981; 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muhanna's Ghadat al-Kuwayt

(discussed in this chapter). There are, in all, eighteen such long stories counted among the 43 works.

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CONCLUSION

This is the first academic study of the novel in Saudi Arabia, where this genre first emerged in 1930 and subsequently developed only with the appearance of Hamid Damanhuri's Thaman al-tadhiyah in 1959. Since that date, the novel in Saudi Arabia has increasingly assumed a more modern form, under the influence of Damanhuri, Ibrahim al-Nasir and others to be mentioned shortly, in particular the writers of the eighties; it must be admitted, however, that a number of very weak novels were published both during the seventies and the eighties.

Most of these 'modern' novelists studied outside Saudi Arabia, from the forties onwards, in Egypt or Iraq, where they came in contact with cultural influences of Britain and France and read novels either in the original languages or in Arabic translations, as well as novels published in Arabic in Egypt and the Lebanon. The novels subsequently written by those who returned from study abroad, although they all reflected the influence of the modern 'artistic' novel from abroad, were naturally not all of the highest quality. In fact, they can be divided into what we may call 'mature' novels, produced by those who possessed genuine talent for the genre and who developed this over several attempts; in this group we may place such writers as Hamid Damanhuri, Ibrahim al-Nasir, Huda al-Rashid, Amal Shata, Hamzah Buqri and 'Abd al-'Aziz Mishri. The other group, which we may call 'immature' novels, can be further divided into two sub-groups; the novels that fall into the first of these sub-groups are the work of such writers as 'Abd Allah Sa'id Jum'an, Sultan S. al-Qahtani and 'Abd Allah Jifri. These writers have the potential, as yet unrealized, to develop their creative powers within an 'artistic' framework. The second sub-group consists of the works of those who remain wedded to the style of the fifties, naive, sentimental and melodramatic

works. Those of them who have published more than one work evince no sign of development.
Those who belong to this sub-group are:

Muhammad Zari' 'Aqil, who published three works between 1960 and 1981. These are long stories, modelled on Jurji Zaydan.

Tahir 'Awad Sallam, who published four works between 1980 and 1986. Two of these are novels and two are long stories.
'Isam Khuqayr, who published three works between 1980 and 1983. The first is a novel, or what passes for a novel, and the other two are long stories.

Fu'ad Sadiq Mufti, who published two works between 1981 and 1986, both novels, written to a very similar formula.

'Abd al-'Aziz al-Muhanna, who published two works, which he called novels, between 1988 and 1990. The first has insufficient structure to be a true novel; the second is a kind of historical narrative.

'Uthman al-Suwayni', who published two works in 1988. One may just be called a novel; the other has no real structure or plot.

Ghalib Abu al-Faraj, who published ten works between 1978 and 1990. He called these novels, but, in fact, they are long stories, most of which consist of treatments of factual events.

'Abd al-Rahman Zayd al-Suwayda, who published three works between 1982 and 1985.

These again are long stories, influenced by Jurji Zaydan.

A further sub-group consists of those who have published only one work each. Apart from saying that there is little sign of any artistry in these, it is difficult to characterize them as a whole. The members of this group consist of Hind Ba Ghaffar (published 1972) 'A'ishah Zahir Ahmad (1979), Muhammad 'Abduh Yamani (1980). Sayf al-Din 'Ashur (1981), Nasir al-Majrashi (1983), Fu'ad 'Anqawi Safiyyah 'Anbar (1986), 'Abd al-Karim al-Khatib (1987), and 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Saq'abi (1988).

In this study, I have attempted to define the novel in Saudi Arabia, in terms of the international criteria that are usually applied to it. I have also attempted to differentiate between the novel and other genres of fiction that are closely allied to it, which are also often designated riwayah.

The future for the novel in Saudi Arabia is promising, provided that it attracts more critical interest; a greater reading public is now available, brought into being by a number of factors, education, journalism, publishing, and so on. In addition, writers are following particular trends, for example, Romanticism and Realism, particularly those which result from their reading, as well those that stem from their own culture, and women are, for the first time, finding a role for themselves in novel-writing.

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