The Farhat J. Ziadeh
Distinguished Lecture
in Arab and Islamic Studies
2004

Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilization
University of Washington, Seattle
Dear friends and colleagues;

We are very pleased to provide you with a copy of the 2004 Farhat J. Ziadeh Distinguished Lecture in Arab and Islamic Studies: “Naguib Mahfouz: A Retrospective,” delivered by Prof. Roger Allen of the University of Pennsylvania on May 8, 2004.

The Farhat J. Ziadeh Distinguished Lectureship is dedicated to the promotion and celebration of excellence in the field of Arab and Islamic studies and was formally endowed in 2001. Fahat Ziadeh is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilization at the University of Washington. Few scholars have been so definitive in their impact on generations of students and colleagues in the field of Arab and Islamic studies. Born in Ramallah, Palestine, in 1917, Professor Ziadeh received his B.A. from the American University of Beirut in 1937 and his LL.B from the University of London in 1940. He was admitted to Lincoln’s Inn, London, and became a Barrister-at-Law in 1946. In the last years of the British Mandate, he served as a Magistrate for the Government of Palestine before eventually moving with his family to the United States. He was appointed Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Princeton where he taught until 1966, at which time he moved to the University of Washington. The Ziadeh Lectureship is a fitting tribute to his seminal contributions to the building of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Washington as well as his impact on the field nationally and internationally.

The Ziadeh Endowment and the advancement of Arab and Islamic Studies that it fosters are made possible by contributions from a host of colleagues, students, and friends, as well as the exemplary generosity and commitment the Ziadeh family. To all of you who have been among these supporters, we want to extend once again our warmest thanks for your continuing participation in helping make this lectureship series possible.

You may also find an electronic copy of Professor Allen's lecture on our departmental web site: [http://depts.washington.edu/nelc/](http://depts.washington.edu/nelc/), as well as other information about the Department and its programs and events, online newsletters, and contact information.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Williams
Chair, Near Eastern Languages & Civilization
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization
University of Washington, Seattle

The Inaugural Farhat J. Ziadeh Distinguished Lecture
in Arab and Islamic Studies

May 8, 2004

NAGUIB MAHFOUZ: A RETROSPECTIVE

Professor Roger Allen
Professor of Arabic Language and Literature,
Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies,
University of Pennsylvania.
Roger Allen

Roger Allen obtained his doctoral degree in modern Arabic literature from Oxford University in 1968; he was the first student to obtain a doctorate in this field at Oxford. He wrote his dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. M.M. Badawi, on the early modern Egyptian prose writer, Muhammad al-Muwaylihi (now republished in a second edition as *A Period of Time*, Reading, England: Garnet Press, 1992). Professor Allen has retained a life-long interest in the writings of the Al-Muwaylihi family, and in 1998 he was asked by Professors Sabry Hafez and Gaber Asfour to prepare an edition of the complete works of Muhammad al-Muwaylihi (now published [2002]), and later of the complete works of Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi, published by Al-Maglis al-A’la li-al-Thaqafah (Supreme Council for Culture) in Cairo.

Professor Allen emigrated to the United States in 1968 and joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. The professorial position in Arabic and Comparative Literature that he holds at Penn is actually the oldest professorial post in Arabic (as a separate language in its own right) in the United States, dating back to 1788. At the university he has taught many generations of students, now including some of the most distinguished members of the younger generation of specialists in Arabic literature. He has also been very involved in the improvement of methods of teaching the Arabic language in American universities and colleges; he has written a textbook (*Let's Learn Arabic*, 1986-88) and conducted many workshops in the USA, Europe, and the Arab world on language teaching.

In addition to Arabic pedagogy, Professor Allen’s research has included major contributions in the field of Arabic Literature, including, among others: his seminal study on the *Arabic Novel* (Syracuse University Press, 1982); an anthology of critical writings, *Modern Arabic Literature*, Library of Literary Criticism Series (New York: Ungar Publishing Company, 1985), editorship of the volume on *The Post-Classical Period* in the *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*; his *The Arabic Literary Heritage* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) and dozens of articles on Arabic literature.

Roger Allen has also produced a number of translations of modern Arabic narrative, including Nobel laureate Najib Mahfuz’s *Mirrors* (1977) and *Autumn Quail* (1985), Jabra Ibrahim Jabra’s *The Ship* (1985, with Adnan Haydar), ‘Abd al-rahman Munif’s *Endings* (1988), and collections of short stories by Najib Mahfuz and Yusuf Idris. Allen’s translation of a collection of short stories by Mahfouz—*God’s World* (1973), was mentioned by the Nobel Committee in their citation in 1988, and Professor Allen was centrally involved in the nomination process itself (see the article “Arabic Literature and the Nobel Prize,” in *World Literature Today*—“A Nobel Symposium”, Winter 1988).
ENCOUNTERING MAHFOUZ

My topic tonight is Naguib Mahfouz, a retrospective. Naguib Bey is now in his 93rd year, having been born on the 10th December 1911 and registered on the 11th (a fact unearthed by Raymond Stock, a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania who is currently writing Mahfouz's biography and completing a study of his Pharaonic works). My own relationship with the Mahfouz that I know and love now dates back some 35 years, and I would like to use this occasion to indulge in a certain amount of personal reminiscence, not least in order to provide a written record of what may—once more in retrospect—be of some more enduring interest.

I first met Naguib Mahfouz in 1967. I was taken to his office by Magdi Wahba, then Undersecretary of State for Culture, Professor of English at Cairo University, and Secretary-Treasurer of the worldwide Samuel Johnson Society. Magdi was one of the three great Englishmen-Egyptians of his era, the other two being M.M. Badawi, my own beloved supervisor, and Mahmoud Manzalaoui. I was escorted into a room in the mansion at the head of Shari‘ Ma‘had Swiri in Zamalek, then the headquarters of the cinema censorship office for which Mahfouz was serving as a disarmingly effective arbiter. The room was shuttered, and at first it was difficult to make out the smiling personage that greeted me. With apologies, Mahfouz explained that he has an eye condition which is intolerant of bright light. With typical humor he went on to note that it was very fortunate that the daylight hours were spent as a cultural bureaucrat, because, with that out of the way, he could devote

1 Let me begin by acknowledging that it is a great honor to have been asked to deliver this, the second Farhat J. Ziadeh Distinguished Lecture. Farhat is one of the foundational figures in Arabic studies in the United States. I myself am now sufficiently aged to recall that, having learned Arabic at Oxford through the pages of Thatcher's Arabic Grammar, with sentences such as "the lame girl is in the yellow room," and "the shaikh's daughter has flashing eyes" (watch out for the dual there, folks!), I was a member of that generation of learners of Arabic for whom the sheer relevance of the book that was universally known as Ziadeh and Winder was positively shocking. Then there is, of course, the illustrious career of Farhat, the scholar of Islamic law and its practitioners. And beyond that, there lie the administrative roles, not least of which, in my experience, was the period he spent as Executive Director of the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad (CASA), during which the finances of that organization positively flourished under his tutelage. Farhat is, if you will allow me to use a very British category, the living personification of a scholar and a gentleman. At this point I am also reminded of the sage words of my esteemed and now lamented colleague at the University of Pennsylvania, George Makdisi, who pointed out to me that scholars are truly blessed when they can count on the support and love of a life-companion. The work then becomes something akin to a "team-effort." So, that acknowledged, let us also salute his wife Su`ad and the Ziadeh team.

2 Surrendering to the inevitable, I am transliterating my subject’s name as “Naguib Mahfouz” rather than using the preferred Library of Congress version, Najib Mahfuz.
the hours between 4 and 6 to writing. Whence comes the disarming truth that, until his retirement in 1970, everything that Mahfouz wrote was conceived, organized, and penned in what was essentially his "spare time." I have just used the word "organized," and that verb accurately describes the way in which this great author has arranged his daily life and his writing career. In another little nugget he informed me that the writing of the renowned Trilogy of novels had taken him five years to plan and execute; the process had been so long that he had kept files on individual characters in order to ensure that, whenever he came back to them, their predominant features would be the same. He asked me what I was doing in Cairo, and I told him that my research was on Muhammad al-Muwaylihi's early narrative work, Hadith 'Isha ibn Hisham, of which I was preparing an edition and translation. Learning that I was a translator, he immediately asked me what I thought of Trevor Le Gassick's recently published translation of Zuqaq al-Midaqq (Midaq Alley, originally published in Beirut in 1966). I should note here that, while this publication date makes it the first published text of Mahfouz in English, Philip Stewart's version of Awlad haratina (1959, 1967 in book form; now republished in full as Children of Gebelawi) antedates it, having been submitted as an Oxford thesis in 1962. In answer to Mahfouz's leading question I replied that Midaq Alley read very well in English, to which he replied that, while he agreed, he wished that some of the more authentic aspects of the language of the original had been retained (to be fair to my colleague, Trevor, I have to acknowledge here that, when this novel was republished in a new edition, he did restore a good deal of such detail to the translated text). At this point I suggested that I too would like to translate some of Mahfouz's works into English, and he readily agreed. I still retain the list that we drew up at the time along with his signature: it included, at my specific request, a generous selection of short-stories and the novel, Al-Summan wa-al-Kharif. I was, of course, asked why I selected that novel from among many others, and I replied that I was fascinated by the way it treated the Egyptian revolution itself and its aftermath.

By 1973 those translations had been completed. And while it took till 1985 to see Autumn Quail in print (AUC Press), the anthology of short stories which I had prepared with an Egyptian colleague, 'Akif Abadir, appeared in 1973 as God's World, that being the title of one of the stories that it contained. When this anthology was cited in the Nobel Award announcement in 1988, this title turned out to be problematic, in that virtually every Egyptian critic, ignoring the cited publication date (1973), assumed that it referred to Mahfouz's Arabic collection, Dunya Allah (1963) rather than our English collection which was culled from a number of short-story collections all the way up to 1970. I sent Mahfouz a copy of this collection in 1973, and yet another letter from him informs me that it arrived on his birthday.

I have already alluded to the Nobel Prize announcement which was released on October 13th, 1988, immediately transforming Mahfouz's relatively quiet life, not to mention that of several Western specialists on his works. As might be expected, there is a history behind these bald facts. A large amount of speculation and rumor, most especially in Egypt itself, has focused on the nomination process and on who was responsible for Mahfouz's nomination. Most of this repertoire of comment shows little or no awareness of the nomination process involved. In the immediate aftermath of the announcement, there was, of course,
considerable rejoicing that Egyptian and Arabic literature had been acknowledged in such an international fashion, but there was also a good deal of contumely, led in part by those who, like Yusuf Idris, another great Egyptian writer of narratives, challenged Mahfouz’s “worthiness” (jadarah) while overlooking the inevitably central role of translation in the Nobel selection process—a point I was able to “discuss” with Idris at the Marbid Festival in Baghdad later that same year, and those who disapproved of Mahfouz’s positive posture towards the Camp David Accords with Israel, even stretching to the point of suggesting that the nomination had come from those Israeli scholars who had, in Mahfouz’s own words, written the best studies of his works.

So, here is the story as I know it. In 1984 my colleague and friend, the distinguished Palestinian poet and critic, Salma Jayyusi, was invited to organize and participate in a conference on Arabic poetry to be held in Stockholm. Her host was Sigrid Kahle, the wife of John Kahle who had spent several years as Swedish Ambassador in Tunisia. In a further linkage, John’s father was Paul Kahle, the Oxford-resident Swedish Arabist who had been editing the manuscripts of the plays of the Egyptian oculist-playwright, Ibn Daniyal (d. 1311). Kahle’s incomplete edition of these plays was finished and published by M.M. Badawi and Derek Hopwood in 1992. Sigrid Kahle was and is an enthusiastic student and translator into Swedish of the poetry of Adunis. During the conference Dr. Jayyusi was taken to the Nobel Library, where she noted and drew attention to the virtual absence of Arabic literature from its shelves. It was perhaps not surprising therefore that in 1986 Dr. Jayyusi received a request from the Nobel Committee to write a report on the current state of contemporary Arabic literature; the focus in that confidential report was on two writers, Adunis and Naguib Mahfouz, and I contributed to the latter section. In the same year (1986), the journal World Literature Today was similarly asked to prepare a second “Nobel Symposium” in which recent winners of the prize were to be compared and contrasted with other writers in different world literary traditions who had, at least thus far, not won the prize. I wrote the article on Arabic Literature for that special issue in the summer of 1987 and again discussed the relative merits of Adunis and Mahfouz, suggesting reasons—largely connected with the availability of translated texts—as to why the latter was the more plausible candidate. As part of this special issue of the journal devoted to the Nobel Prize and other cultural traditions, this article was also sent to Stockholm following its publication in Oklahoma in February 1988. What occurred subsequent to that is, of course, confidential and unknown to me, but I can add a brief footnote to the above details. In 1991 a Scandinavian scholar, Kjell Espmark, published a study under the title, The Nobel Prize in Literature: a study of the criteria behind the choices. Coming to Mahfouz’s selection process, he refers specifically to my World Literature Today article, and in the following terms:

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Finally there was Roger Allen’s examination, “Arabic Literature and the Nobel Prize,” an essay that turned out to be prophetic. His short list contained only two names, Mahfouz and Adonis—as we have seen, the very two Arabic candidates who were being considered—and his argument concluded with a plea for the former.

I cannot help but suppress a wry smile as Espmark concludes his comments by saying that “this reads like a justification several months in advance...”

October 13th 1994 was thus the anniversary of Mahfouz’s Nobel Award, and that date was selected for a vicious attack on him outside his apartment. Were it not for the fact that the Police Hospital is directly opposite his home, he would almost certainly not have survived. This too was a life-altering event, although not of the kind that anyone would have wished. In the first place, the Egyptian authorities now insisted on protecting their most precious cultural asset, something he had always steadfastly refused. Beyond that however, he literally lost the ability to write for himself, except with the utmost difficulty and using his other hand. Since that fateful day, his “writings” have in fact been dictations. The primary recipient of those “pensees” and witticisms, both of which remain hallmarks of his conversation, is the prominent playwright, Muhammad Salmawi, who every Saturday goes to Mahfouz’s apartment, discusses a wide variety of events with him, and then publishes “Mahfouz’s thoughts” in an edition of Al-Ahram the following week. Many of these segments have been translated by Salmawi himself and are published as *Naguib Mahfouz at Sidi Gaber: Reflections of a Nobel Laureate 1994-2001.* The very title is a fine example of Mahfouz’s current world view and, one might add, his sardonic sense of humor. Seeing life as a journey—in this case by train—he draws attention to the fact that, as a suburb of his beloved Alexandria, Sidi Gaber is almost at the end of the line but not quite.

**NAGUIB MAHFOUZ AND LITERARY HISTORY**

Let me now turn to a consideration of some of the issues that seem to me to arise when one indulges in a retrospective on Mahfouz’s achievements. A retrospective implies, of course, an exercise in literary history. In a series of recent articles, I have been exploiting my 35-year career in order to re-examine the history of the study of modern Arabic narrative genres, believing most strongly that, in spite of the natural conservatism implicit in the literary-historical enterprise, literary history itself has its own history, and, most especially in the case of literary traditions such as that of Arabic, it is a history that is in need of constant rewriting. It is in the placement of the development of fiction into the larger picture of what is generally termed in Arabic “al-nahdah” (renaissance) that the problem needs, I believe, to be addressed.

Within this particular context, that of the Arabic novel and its development, the question that faces the literary historian in the early years of the 21st century is: what

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1 Espmark, pg. 158.
3 See, for example, Roger Allen. “Literary history and the Arabic novel.” *World Literature Today*, Vol. 75 no. 2 (Spring 2001): 205-13. Incidentally, the issue (devoted to Contemporary Arabic Literature) has a splendid picture of Mahfouz on its cover.
exactly is the "history" that is being recorded, and which major parameters are to be applied. Among such parameters that seem to me to be less useful is what I would term the principle of "one model of the renaissance (nahdah) fits all." It is, of course, convenient for the history of the Egyptian Arabic novel that the one model consistently applied in this context has been that of Egypt itself. Thus, the process of "renaissance" has involved a pre-modern (pre-1800?) period of almost unmitigated gloom (usually subsumed under the derogatory term, "decadence" [inhitah]), then an abrupt encounter with Western culture in the form of Napoleon's invasion, the beginnings of a transfer of "influence" (particularly through the process of translation), followed by a varying lengthy development of different genres—novel, short story, and drama, for example—within the context of each Arab society and region, all within the framework of a tense relationship of "influence" stemming from Western cultures. I have deliberately exaggerated the terms of reference of such an approach here, but there is, needless to say, a good deal of evidence (and in both Arabic and Western languages) to support such a portrait of this version of literary history. However, at this juncture I would like to stress two points. The first is that, as I have already noted, this view is very one-sided, in that it totally ignores the contribution of the pre-modern tradition of Arabic narrative. It is in this very context that the award of the Nobel Prize and the subsequent focus on particular pre-1967 works of Naguib Mahfouz is, in my opinion, less helpful for literary-historical purposes. The one-sided idea that the novel is an "imported" genre in the Arab world, with no reference to the other part of the picture—the role of pre-modern Arabic narrative genres—is confirmed by the linkage of the Trilogy and its author to earlier European models (Mahfouz, we learn, is "the Dickens of Cairo", etc.). The second point I would like to make is that, as critics in the different regions of the Arab world begin the process of exploring their own local narrative heritages, it becomes clearer than ever that the "one model of the nahdah" only succeeds in suppressing the manifold elements of particularity which are the anticipated consequence of the cultural and linguistic diversity of a region as vast as that of the Arab world and its individual nations. Just to give a few examples: the countries of the Arab Gulf region where fictional genres have now begun to appear with some frequency have been able to refer not only to the Western heritage of fiction in developing the narrative models that will best suit their purposes, but also to the works of Naguib Mahfouz himself and all the other Arab novelists who have been participants in the process of bringing the Arabic novel to its current stage of maturity. Morocco provides an example of another type of difference, in that, quite apart from the different patterns of colonial influence represented by French educational policies in the Maghrib region as a whole, Morocco itself was not subject to Ottoman suzerainty; thus the attitude of contemporary intellectuals to the continuities of their cultural tradition and thus to the relationship between pre-modern and modern narrative genres and styles is quite different from that of other regions.


In such a revised, variegated, and regionally particularized literary-historical context, what then is the status and role of Mahfouz's great Trilogy? Within a more generalized frame of reference, many critics have responded to that question, and from a variety of different viewpoints. I do not wish to summarize such a huge library of works here, but merely
to suggest that we can view it from within two separate chronological perspectives. Seen within its own time-frame, that of the pre-1967 period (the June war, known in Arabic as "al-naksah" [the setback], being long since acknowledged as a watershed in modern Arab thought), the work can be seen as providing Egyptians with a valuable account of a nation and its people during a crucial period of confrontation and transition. In Egyptian and Arab-world terms the timing of the Trilogy was perfect (in spite of the often quoted details about the difficulties that Mahfouz encountered in getting such a huge work published). From a post-revolutionary perspective Egyptians could look back on the anterior period and discover a lovingly precise record (in both the Trilogy and the novels of the 1940s) of exactly what it was that they had been struggling to escape. Each volume is named after a meet where the members of different generations from a single family, that of 'Abd al-Jawwad (Gawwad in Cairene dialect), live. The daily existences, the trials and tribulations, the generational squabbles of the individuals who make up this family, all become emblematic of an entire period of 20th century Egyptian life, spanning a period between about 1916 and 1944. The level of Mahfuz's interest in and research on this period is aptly reflected in the highly successful way in which he manages to capture historical moments, social trends, and intellectual movements within a broad canvas that his readers soon recognized as being totally authentic.

The dates of publication of what were to become the three volumes of the Trilogy, 1956 and 1957, were part of a new and very different era in the life of Egypt—the Czech arms deal, the Suez invasion, the Aswan High Dam, the Bandung Conference, and, in Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir, a new leader for the Arab world. Indeed the following year (1958) was to witness the creation of the United Arab Republic, which, in spite of the issues that led to its demise in 1961, was the clearest possible expression of aspirations for Arab unity. In this transformed context the Trilogy became not only the record of what had been achieved, but also the clearest possible example of the novel genre fulfilling its generic purpose as a reflector and advocate of change. Like few other works in modern Arabic literature, it has long since come to be generally recognized as a "classic," pure and simple. Another such work, I would suggest, is Badr Shakir al-Sayyab's poem, "Unshudat al-Matat". In both cases, the literary work transcends local concerns of time and place to become something more archetypal and universal.

From a 21st century perspective and most especially following the Nobel Award in 1988, the Trilogy, much praised in the Nobel citation, also becomes a capstone gesture. A prolonged process of translation, adaptation, imitation, and domestication that begins with the earliest examples of modern Arabic narrative in the 19th century is crowned by a work that provides incontrovertible proof that the novel genre is not merely an effective tool for effecting social change—that had already been abundantly demonstrated elsewhere and earlier—but that it was now also firmly ensconced in the modern tradition of Arabic letters. The lengthy training period, one might say, was at an end, and the genre could now begin to fulfill its role as an agent of not only social but also generic change.

It is precisely in this context that the true extent of Mahfouz's own esthetic sensitivity becomes so obvious, in that he seems to have been among the very first to appreciate that the profound political and social transformations he was witnessing in the immediate af-
termath of the Egyptian revolution of 1952 were such as to render his great experiment in social-realism through the novels of the 1940s and early '50s no longer the most effective literary vehicle for his fictional genius. In a word, the Trilogy of novels, for all their detailed account of a society over a 30-year period and their devotion to the continuing development of various aspects of novel-writing technique, was very much a transitional work within the total framework of Mahfouz's oeuvre. Whence, if you will, the "problem" associated with the attention afforded the work in the Nobel citation some 30 years later in 1988 and the subsequent association of these three novels with Arabic novelistic modernity in the eyes of Western literary critics and readers who had access to its pages through the newly issued and much celebrated translations such as those published in English by Doubleday (and supervised by Jacqueline Onassis in person).  

Was the celebration of Mahfouz in the aftermath of the Nobel award in 1988 as the "Dickens of Cairo" (or was it the Balzac or Flaubert?) intended as a genuine compliment to the Egyptian Nobel Laureate, or was it rather to be construed as something akin to a pat on the head to an Arab author who had managed to replicate a European family saga-novel in Arabic? More to the point within the context of the Arabic novel itself, by the year 1988—some 20 years after the June War—had not a younger generation of Arab novelists inspired by Mahfouz's example, and indeed Naguib Mahfouz himself, taken the Arabic novel in many new and different directions? 

THE 1960s

The work through which Mahfouz demonstrated his realization that a change of direction was inevitable was also the one that has caused him the most grief ever since, namely Awlad hanatifatna (available in two translated versions: Philip Stewart's Children of Gebelawi [mentioned above], and Peter Theroux's Children of the Alley [Cairo: Doubleday, 1996]). Making use of the prophetic figures of Adam (Adham), Moses (Jabal), Jesus (Rifa'ah), and Muhammad (Qasim), Mahfouz traces the history of Man's relationship with monotheistic faith through to the modern period represented by the fifth figure of 'Arafah, the Arabic equivalent of "scientia" or science. The sequence of faith-systems is placed within the allegorical context of the "'arâb" (quarter), within which the proclivity to violence—so regrettably a central part of the role of religious belief in the history of mankind (as contemporary events illustrate with devastating clarity)—is symbolized by the looming presence of the "'alâ'awat" or thug gangs who habitually terrorize the inhabitants of "the quarter." Beyond and outside all this resides the figure of Jabalawi (Gebelawi), who ejects Adham from his house forever and then watches in despair as his descendants abuse and misuse the waqf (endowment) that he has consigned to them. In the final section of the narrative, 'Arafah, possessed of a remarkable destructive substance, goes to Jabalawi's house outside the quarter and kills him.

An Egyptian reading public, already thoroughly inured through the games of censor-

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ship to "read between the lines," was not slow to realize the implications of what Mahfouz was saying in this work. Here was the now celebrated—at least in Arabic-world terms—novelist and personification of social-realism turning his attention, and in a thoroughly allegorical fashion, to a new topic. The problem with this scenario, of course, is that the topic was not actually a "new" one for Mahfouz, but rather it required a much greater familiarity with the writer’s earlier career in order to discover the extent of his interest in the relationship between modernity, religious belief, philosophy, and the development of a just society in a post-independence Arab nation. Such subtleties were however buried in a vociferous protest from Al-Azhar while publication of the episodes in the newspaper, Al-Ahram, was still in progress. It is, no doubt, a telling sign of the changing balance of influence and power inside Egypt between 1959 and now that the editor-in-chief of the newspaper, Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal, whose editorials were widely regarded as being the mouthpiece of President ’Abd al-Nasir himself, stood by Mahfouz and steadfastly refused to stop publication. With publication complete, a compromise was reached: the work would never be published in book-form in Egypt. That stipulation has been honored to the letter ever since, although a doctored edition of the text was published in Beirut in 1967. 

Nor unfortunately does the story end there.

Following the award of the Nobel Prize to Mahfouz in 1988, what should have been Mahfouz’s big moment on the world stage was substantially compromised by what has since come to be regarded as a major confrontation of cultural values. A group of Shi’i citizens of the English city of Bradford became outraged at the contents of a recently published novel: Satanic Verses by Salman Rushdie, a British author of Indian extraction. Ignoring its clearly fictional identity and its fatally sophisticated reader-expectations, they sent a copy of the text first to the Pakistan of Benazir Bhutto, whence it made its way to Iran. The then Supreme ruler of Iran, Imam Khomeini, informed of the contents of the novel, issued his famous fatwa condemning Rushdie to death. Here is not the place to go into the particulars of this tragic situation in detail, but it is important to note that the implications for Mahfouz turned out to be considerable. Firstly, as the recent Nobel prize-winner and a now prominent non-Western litterateur, he was asked for his views and stated that he firmly believed in the principles of freedom of expression. That was before he himself had had a chance to read parts of Rushdie’s work for himself; he later declared his dislike of the work. He was speaking of what was for him a matter of principle, but that was sufficient to have an Egyptian popular preacher, one ’Umar Abd al-Rahman, pronounce a death-sentence on Mahfouz himself, it being suggested that Rushdie would never have penned Satanic Verses had Mahfouz not “led the way” with Awlad haratina. 

It was this tragic sequence of events—one that grotesquely illustrates the differing definitions (or lack thereof) for fiction and its major principle of irony across the great divide of cultural and religious traditions—that led to the attempt on Mahfouz’s life in 1994. All this controversy aside, it is important to note that Awlad haratina is also a pivotal work in

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10 It is important to note that this 1967 edition of the work is not entirely complete. For details, see Philip Stewart, “Awlad haratina: A Tale of Two texts,” Arabic and Middle Eastern Literatures Vol. 4 no. 1 (Jan. 2001): 37-42.

11 ’Umar Abd al-Rahman was first imprisoned by the Egyptian authorities, then exiled to the Sudan, whence he made his way to the United States. He was implicated in the first attack on the World Trade Center in New York and is now serving a prison-sentence.
any comprehensive survey of Mahfouz's oeuvre. Admittedly it may not sit terribly well in a
literary-historical framework that insists on linking his works to earlier trends in European
fiction, but within a broader and less culturally hegemonic perspective this allegorical novel
may be seen as looking both backwards to Mahfouz's earlier concerns as a graduate student
in philosophy and forward to a whole series of later works that invoke the "harah" in an
quest for linkages between the sacred and secular.

The 1960s emerge in retrospect as one of the darkest eras in modern Egyptian history.
Beginning with the break-up of the United Arab Republic with Syria and the imprisonment
of large numbers of leftist intellectuals, the dominance of the Arab Socialist Union as the
sole political entity and the omnipresent activities of the secret police (I was in Cairo in
1966 and can vouch for the latter) created an atmosphere of suspicion, fear and resentment,
all of which produced a widespread sense of alienation. The mood is perfectly captured in a
whole series of novels that Mahfouz wrote during this period. From a critical perspective I
would suggest that it is among these novels that we find Mahfouz's finest exercises in fiction.
The first of them, Al-Liss wa-al-Kilab (1961; The Thief and the Dogs, 1984) clearly dem­
onstrates that Mahfouz is now the total master of those fictional techniques—particularly
regarding the function of dialogue and interior monologue—that are not fully controlled
in the texts of the Trilogy; this novel would be my personal selection as his finest novel. By
the time of Thartharah Fawq al-Nil (1966; Adrift on the Nile, 1993) and Miramar (1967;
Miramar, 1978) Mahfouz's frustration has reached it peak. Indeed the extent of that anger
was well realized by 'Abd al-Hakim 'Amir, the President's right-hand man, who, having
read Thartharah Fawq al-Nil with its sense of almost total negativity towards the achieve­
ments of the Egyptian revolution, insisted that Mahfouz should be imprisoned. It took the
personal intervention of the Minister of Culture, Tharwar 'Ukashah, to prevent Mahfouz
from joining the vast majority of his novelist-colleagues in prison.

AFTER 1967

Earlier I described the June War of 1967 as a major watershed in every aspect of modern
Arab life. Unlike the aftermath of the 1952 revolution in Egypt when Mahfouz paused for
several years before committing himself to paper, the months immediately following June
for example, a group of people standing under a shelter in the pouring rain witness a series
of remarkable events but remain motionless. When they are questioned by a policeman, he
shoots them all dead. A number of these stories appeared in the Egyptian press between
1967 and 1970. It was in the latter year that Mahfouz admitted to me over the telephone
that in such uncertain times, he had resorted to a maximally symbolic mode as a means
of putting painful truths into literary form, but that he was finding it difficult to emerge
from such a modality and pursue new generic and stylistic directions. He told me to look
out for a new series that was about to appear. He had been working with an Alexandrian
friend, the painter Sayf Wanli, on a series of vignettes about Egyptians. The pieces, along
with Wanli's illustrations, could not be published in usual venues because of the need for
color, so they would be appearing in an unusual place, the television journal, Al-Idha'ah

The story is translated as "Under the bus-shelter" in Naguib Mahfouz, God's World. Minneapolis:
Thus began the appearance of Al-Manaya (1972; Mirrors, 1999), and I owe a great debt to the Egyptian publisher, Sherif Borei, who, having purchased Wani’s portraits, was anxious to see Mahfouz’s original vision published in book form and allowed me to revise my English translation for that purpose. I can clearly recall the way in which Louis ‘Awad, the great Egyptian critic and a long-time friend of mine, upbraided me for translating this work, and I can understand why. Here Mahfouz, to cite the title of John Osborne’s famous play, was “looking back in anger.” Several of the vignettes are thinly disguised portraits of prominent Egyptian figures, one of them almost certainly ’Awad himself. Whatever else one may wish to say about this interesting work, it is certainly the case that Mahfouz had found a way to “liberate” himself from the symbolic straitjacket in which he thought himself to be constricted.

With the death of President ‘Abd al-Nasir in 1970, Anwar al-Sadat, his deputy, had come to power and almost immediately began a systematic attack on the literary sector in Egypt. Prominent magazines were closed down, membership of closely monitored unions was required, and for a short period several prominent writers, including Mahfouz himself, Yusuf Idris, Tawfiq al-Hakim, and Louis ‘Awad, were banned from writing. This was also a period during which the censorship authorities discovered that there were obscene passages in Alf Laylah wa-Laylah and that Ibn al-’Arabi’s highly allegorical musings were not a little controversial. Both were banned for a while, until the scale of the international embarrassment (not to mention the presence of both texts in most of the major library collections of the world) made such local attempts at ego-stroking unenforceable. Mahfouz’s barely suppressed fury at the results of Sadat’s policy of “infitah” (economic opening up), which led to an even wider economic split between Egypt’s classes than had been the case before, finds its most forthright expression in Yawm Qutla al-Za‘im (1985; The Day the Leader Was Killed, 1989), but, as is the case with the sequence of novels penned during the 1960s to which I referred above, the building resentment is palpable in most of the novels of the 1970s. Incidentally, it would appear that both Al-Karnak (1974), which deals with the torture of students and leftists during the 1960s, and Al-Hubb Tahta al-Matar (1973), which depicts the atmosphere in Cairo during the “phony war” that preceded the 1973 “’ubur” (crossing of the Suez Canal), were heavily censored before their publication and that substantial parts of the original text are missing from currently available versions.

I have to admit that Mahfouz’s anger during this particular period does not translate into a set of works that, in critical terms, will stand the test of time. Indeed many of the novels of this much troubled period leading up to Sadat’s assassination have already come to be regarded as records of their time but not major contributions to Mahfouz’s overall achievement. That said, there are two narratives that emerge as exceptions to this pattern. The first is Hikayat hatatina (1975; Fountain and Tomb, 1988), which was originally billed as a collection of short stories but which, like Al-Manaya, seems to defy generic categorization or, perhaps more accurately, does not fit conveniently into the genres identified as fictional within the Western literary tradition. Therein, of course, lies its interest in the literary-historical context that I sketched out earlier in this presentation. Once again the “hatat” (quarter) is invoked in the title—deliberately, one must assume—to create a contemporary allegory concerning the tension between a life of devotion and the demands of modern society. The hatat is also central to the work that Mahfouz regards as his own
personal favorite, *Malhamat al-Harajish* (1976; *The Harajish*, 1994, a narrative that he wryly names after the nickname by which his circle of closest friends is known).\(^{13}\) Replicating the multi-generational structure of *Awlad baratiina* of many years earlier, Mahfouz explores the fate of many generations of a single family as they eke out a living and exert their authority in different ways in a “quarter” that remains undefined in terms of place and time. The absence of such specificities lends the work a mythic quality, as moral values and social norms are invoked and challenged by successive generations of the descendants of ‘Ashur al-Naji.

In considering the placement of this work in Mahfouz’s career as a novelist, we need to begin by noting, as we have above, that Mahfouz has always been conscious of the need to continually develop his technique and style; both *Al-Maraya* and *Hikayat haratiina* provide evidence of that. At the same time however, Mahfouz was also conscious of the emergence of a younger generation of writers, with life-experiences and aspirations very different from his own. One such is Jamal al-Ghitani who has expressed unequivocally the extent to which his own career as a writer has been inspired by Mahfouz and his writings (in a television special on Mahfouz, Al-Ghitani declares that he memorized whole passages of the *Trilogy* by heart). During these very same 1970s al-Ghitani had been working on a revolutionary new novel which was eventually to appear in print in 1974, namely *Al-Zayni Barakat* (1974; *Zayni Barakat*, 1985). The revolutionary quality to which I have just referred lies in the extent to which the author makes use not merely of history as a source of commentary on present-day realities (in this case, the secret police) but also of actual texts from the heritage of Arabic narrative. Bearing in mind the close friendship between these two great writers, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that, after Mahfouz had served as the great pioneer of Arabic fiction for so many years, he began to appreciate the new directions in which the younger generation that owed so much to him were taking Arabic fiction, and embarked on some experiments of his own. *Malhamat al-Harajish* may be considered one such example, and we will now consider some others from the more recent period.

**THE 1980s AND BEYOND**

The assassination of Anwar al-Sadat in 1981 brought Husni Mubarak to the Presidency of Egypt and, in spite of the continuation of certain policies—both national and international—that had characterized the Sadat era, the strident tone that had characterized intellectual and cultural life in Egypt seems to have been somewhat tempered. By now Mahfouz was entering the 7th decade of his life, but he continued to publish a whole stream of fictional works. Following his previous patterns, some of these works picked up on themes and techniques that he had employed earlier. *Al-Baqi min al-Zaman Sa’ah* (1982) for example, is another family saga that, as it were, updates the *Trilogy* to the year 1979, albeit in a concentrated format that continues to reflect the more allusive style that he has adopted since the novels of the 1960s. One of the most accomplished of the works from this period is *Hadith al-Sabah wa-al-Masa’* (1987), which, at least on the surface, appears to replicate the model of *Al-Maraya* in being structured around an alphabetical

listing of "characters." What emerges however is a typical piece of Mahfouz planning: a
carefully wrought narrative in which the histories of three separate Egyptian families are
interwoven over the lengthy period that goes all the way back to Napoleon's invasion of the
country in 1798.

These and other novels of this period may be considered as continuations of one par-
ticular strand in Mahfouz's lengthy career. In the context of generic change and the role of
the younger generation in fostering such experimentation, there are other Mahfouz titles
that immediately attract our attention. Two among them bring the heritage of the past
immediately to the would-be reader's attention: Layali Alif Laylah (1982; Arabian Nights
and Days, 1995) and Rihlat Ibn Fattumah (1983; The Journey of Ibn Fattouma, 1992). In
the case of the former, the narrative begins, as is the case with Tawfiq al-Hakim's renowned
early play, Shabnaa'ad (1934), after the 1001 nights are over. Mahfouz cleverly utilizes tales
culled from the world's most renowned collection of popular narrative and interweaves them,
along with their principal characters, into an episodic novel that does not merely indulge in a
modern version of the fantastic (even though there are some genies present in the novel) but
rather serves to illustrate the realities of political power and power-making and the role of
corruption in that process. As with the fictions of Al-Ghitani and others, so with Mahfouz:
the lessons of the past, and especially those of the narrative past, provide reflections of an
awareness of human foibles that are eminently adaptable to modern fiction in its ongoing
quest for modes whereby to criticize present social and political realities. Rihlat Ibn Fattumah
invokes the tradition of travel literature from the Arabic heritage, and most notably that
of Ibn Battutah. The impetus for many, if not most, Arab travelers in earlier centuries was
of course the pilgrimage to Mecca, an obligation that frequently required journeys across
vast distances. Ibn Battutah, the renowned traveler from Tangier was one such pilgrim
who, having reached Mecca, decided to continue his journey to China, perhaps heeding
the words of the Hadith: "attubu al-ilm wa-law fi al-Sin" (Seek Knowledge though it be in
China). Mahfouz's Ibn Fattumah, beginning in an Islamic homeland whose principles cause
him some doubts sets out on a journey which turns out to be a lifetime. Passing through
a series of different societies in which the varying relationship between belief and social
norms is a constant source of investigation and debate—paganism, feudalism, capitalism,
and socialism, our traveler—having started his visits in a pagan land called " Mashriq" (the
East, sunrise) eventually reaches the land of "Ghurub" (sunset). The wars between the lands
he has previously visited, the political debates in which he has engaged, and indeed the
wives he has married, are all left behind as he arrives in a land where there is no authority
structure and the only purpose is to prepare oneself for the journey to the land of "jubal";
and here, of course, we hear an echo of that allegorical figure outside the walls in Awlad
baratina of many years earlier. What a wonderful and allegorically perfect ending to this
novel (a chapter entitled "Bida'ya" [(Beginning)] just as Ibn Fattumah's manuscript come
to an end just as the caravan is turning towards the final target of the journey of a lifetime.
In a brief afterword on this novel and its place in Mahfouz's output, I must say that, when
we bear in mind the future that was aroused by the publication of Awlad baratina many
decades earlier and its revival at the time of the Nobel award, I am struck that more has not

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Whence the title of Tim Mackintosh-Smith's wonderful recreation of Ibn Battutah's journeys,
been said about Mahfouz's remarks on Islamic practices in this novel. Just to cite a single example, at one point Ibn Fattumah is discussing Islam with the shaykh of Al-Halba, the capitalist society. When Ibn Fattumah suggests that the kinds of freedom advocated in the Islam of Halba are contrary to Islamic practice, the shaykh retorts: "If our Prophet—May God bless and preserve Him!—were to be resurrected today, he would totally reject this aspect of your version of Islam." To be sure, it is a character in a work of fiction who is speaking, but the accumulation of this and other comments suggests that the allegorical mode is once again fulfilling its primary generic purpose.

While both the above mentioned works clearly participate in the broader movement to explore completely new directions in Arabic novel writing, there is an additional work that seems in many ways to encapsulate earlier trends in Mahfouz's career as a writer while providing yet further evidence of his desire, as it were, both to explore new fictional avenues and to "come full circle." The work in question is Asda'a al-Sirah al-Dhatiyah (1994; Echoes of an Autobiography, 1997). The title here is something of a tease, in that those many people who may have been hoping to find in its pages anything remotely approaching an orthodox autobiography will have been disappointed. Consisting of over 200 short, paragraph-long segments, the work does certainly contain some wistful reminiscences of earlier days, a tone which is also characteristic of another late work of fiction, Qushtumur (1988 [the name of a café]) in which fond memories of youthful days in the then leafy suburb of Al-'Abbasiyyah are recorded. The narrative voice in Asda'a al-sirah al-dhatiyah is that of an old person looking back over a lifetime:

These old photographs bring together members of my family; others are of friends from the old days. I looked at both sets till I was flooded in memories. All the faces look bright and serene, a picture of life; there's not the slightest sign of what lies hidden beyond. And now they've all gone; not one of them is left. Who can say whether the happiness was real or just a fanciful dream.

While this aspect of nostalgia links this work to others of its period and, at an earlier stage, to descriptions in Hikayat haratina to which we have referred above, it becomes yet more individualized at about the half-way point in the succession of sections, when the narrator introduces the reader to the succession of thoughts by Shaykh 'Abd Rabbih al-Ta'i'h, a name that, needless to say, is full of potential symbolic significance: the servant of his Lord, the wanderer in the wilderness. With the arrival of this figure in the narrative, the presence of traditional hikmah (aphoristic sayings) so prevalent in pre-modern Arabic literature and especially in the language of Sufi discourse becomes an overriding factor:

Shaykh 'Abd Rabbih al-Ta'ih said: The only thing more stupid than a stupid believer is a stupid infidel.

Shaykh 'Abd Rabbih al-Ta'ih said: The present is like a light that flickers between two shadows.

Shaykh 'Abd Rabbih al-Ta'ih said: The most powerful people of all are those who forgive. 20

How far these terse spiritual maxims seem from the language of the Trilogy. And yet this curious and utterly original blend of modern fragmented narrative and thoroughly traditional aphoristic discourse emerges as perhaps the most poignant of capstones to a trend in Mahfouz's thought that Western scholars have tended to downplay in their desire to link the Arabic novel with its Western analogues. The title of Mattityahu Peled's study, Religion My Own, published in the early 1980s had already pointed in the right direction, but a selection of the works published since that time seems to confirm its centrality to the author's ongoing concerns. The interest can already be seen in some of the early essays of a graduate student at Cairo University, but then the urgent needs of an Egyptian society beset by World War II and its aftermath presented an urgent list of agenda that Mahfouz's series of novels endeavored to address. In this context, Awlad haratina of 1959 is not some outlying work but merely one in a succession of fictions that, for all their wonderful variety in terms of structure and technique, address themselves to the burning issues connected to the role of religion in a modern society as it seeks for an identity and political structure of its own: thus, the masterly short-story, "Za'balawi" of the early 1960s, the strong Sufi overlay of many of the novels of the 1960s, and then, more obviously, the focus of Hikayat haratina, Riblat ibn Fattumah, and Aida al-Sirah al-Dhatiyah from the later years. I might add, incidentally, that a similar tracking process could also be used with the Pharaonic theme, another constant in Mahfouz's output that has tended to be downplayed in assessments of his overall achievement. After all, Mahfouz's first published book was a translation of James Baikie's famous introductory work on Ancient Egypt, and Mahfouz's first essays in novel form consisted of three novels set in that same period. 21

And to bring things right up to date, I have just received a further selection of Mahfouz's musings (over 100 of them, in fact), under the heading "Ahlam" (Dreams). Since I have cited relatively little of Mahfouz's own writing in this study, let me compensate now by providing a sample of his most recent creativity. Here is the first of these "Dreams":

I'm riding my bike hither and yon. It's hunger that is driving me, and I'm desperately searching for a restaurant suitable for someone with a limited income. I'm forever finding them shut. I happened to look in the direction of the clock in the square. Beneath it I spotted my friend. When he gestured at me, I rode over to him. He knew all about my situation and suggested that I leave my bike with him;

21 All three of these early novels have recently been published (by the American University in Cairo Press) in English translation: 'Abath al-Aqdar (1939) as Khafif Wisdom (2003); Rudubin (1943) as Khudapis of Nubia (2003) and Kifah Tiba (1944) as Thebes at War (2003). Raymond Stock has also published a collection of Mahfouz's short-stories on the same theme: Voices from the Other World (2002).
that would make the search that much easier. I did as he suggested and carried on with my quest. As my hunger intensified, I came across the family restaurant. Even though I was fully aware how expensive it was, hunger and despair combined to push me towards it. The owner was standing by a curtain at the entrance. However, no sooner had he pulled the curtain back than a dump full of garbage appeared in the place where the plush dining-room was supposed to be.

“What’s happened?” I asked in consternation.

“Hurry over to the young kebab-seller,” the man replied. “You may be able to catch him before he closes up shop.”

Losing no time I made my way back to the clock, but I failed to find either my bike or my friend.

CONCLUSION

It is, I believe, sufficiently clear that I have not used this wonderful occasion to engage in a deep discussion of a selection of individual works by Mahfouz or even to comment exclusively on certain strands in his creative output. The list of novels and short-story collections is so long that such a project would be impossible in the time available. What I have tried to do however is to place Mahfouz’s achievement into a broader historical and generic perspective, and at the same time both to offer an appreciation of who he is and what he has achieved and to problematize that very same achievement within that larger framework that is virtually demanded by the award of the Nobel Prize in 1988.

Naguib Mahfouz is, without the slightest doubt, the Arab writer who managed to master the many and variegated techniques of the novel genre and to apply them to a profound and sustained consideration of the ills of his native country and, more specifically, of its urban middle-class. He himself lived the life of a bureaucrat for many decades, and he writes about the tensions involved in the daily lives, education, and careers of that class with an unsurpassed artistry. The novels begun in the 1940s and continued into the ’50s establish the validity and potential reformist power of the novel genre across the Arab-world region, and the 1960s is the decade in which content and technique are combined in their most enduring form. All this is crowned, albeit at something of a chronological distance, by the Nobel Prize of 1988, with its focus on the Trilogy and his pre-1967 works.

It is the absence from that citation of any mention of post-1967 works and the above-mentioned phrase “the Dickens of Cairo” which, in my opinion, point to some more widespread issues. While it is true that, at the time of the award of the Nobel Prize, the Trilogy itself had not yet been published in English translation (and behind that lies another tale), it is also the case that, even after the Nobel award and the American University in Cairo Press’s systematic project to translate the majority of Mahfouz’s oeuvre into English, the more experimental works that we have alluded to above have not sold particularly well in Western markets. It appears to be “the Dickens of Cairo” that most appeals to the Western readership (I invite you to visit any bookstore of Borders or Barnes & Noble [or Waterstones, say, in Britain] and check for yourselves). I often wonder whether it is the English title

22 See Akhbar al-adab no. 543, 7 December 2003.
of the second volume in the Trilogy, namely Palace of Desire [1991] (a dutifully accurate rendering of the Cairo street-name Qasr al-Shawq [1957]), along with the wistful scene of languid palm-trees on the cover, that manage to evoke Arabian Nights-type thoughts in the potential buyer and thus account for the fact that it sells more copies than the first volume. Bayn al-Qasrayn [1956] (Palace Walk [1990]).

The period following the June War of 1967 led to what my great Oxford mentor, Albert Hourani, termed "a disturbance of spirits" (a chapter title in his famous A History of the Arab Peoples [New York: Warner Books, 1991]). The profound investigation that followed such an event, involving a search for the essence of what it meant and means to be an Arab, a nation, and a collectivity of nations, had inevitable consequences for literary genres and their role in society. A search into the heritage of the past for exemplars and models led almost axiomatically to an increased resort to history and its textual modes as a source of creative inspiration. However, it also showed up the many ways in which attempts to provide conveniently generalized summaries of a vast swath of Asian and African territory (and literary creativity) under the single epithet "Arab" or "Arabic" were increasingly less valid and useful. In the context of this summative evaluation of Mahfouz, it is perhaps possible to suggest that his early career coincides with a more unified historical approach to the development of Arabic fiction; in such a context, it seems reasonable to declare him the foundational figure. After 1967 however, the scenario changes, not merely in the creative environment itself but also in the critical and evaluative context (and yes, just for the record, I include my own attempts at encapsulating "The Arabic novel" (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982 and 1995) within this frame of reference. I do not believe it is a useful gesture at this point to produce any further editions of that work, which are representative of a period of modern Arabic literature scholarship that now confronts a much more variegated subject. Thus, a number of excellent Egyptian novelists have, as it were, emerged from Mahfouz's shadow in recent years: Jamal al-Ghitani, of course, but also Edwar al-Kharrat, Khayri Shalabi, Sonallah Ibrahim, Ibrahim 'Abd al-Majid, Salwa Bakr, Radwa 'Ashur, Miral al-Tahawi, May Telmissany, Sumaya Ramadan, Halah al-Badri, 'Ala' al-Aswani, being just a few of the more prominent names. In this sphere as in others with the developmental history of modern Arabic literary genres, Egypt may have provided the early fostering ground for the fictional genres (not least because, following the civil unrest in Syro-Lebanon during the 1860s, large segments of the literary elite of that region emigrated to the more hospitable soil of Egypt). By now however, chronological differentials no longer exist—with the possible exception of the Gulf States. Some of the most radical experiments in the Arabic novel have involved such names as the late and much lamented 'Abd al-Rahman Munif (d. 2004), Ilyas Khuri, Rashid al-Da'if and Huda Barakat of Lebanon, Ibrahim al-Kuni of Libya, Rashid Abu Jadrab of Algeria, and Ben Salim Himich of Morocco, again to name just a few.

The Arabic novel thus continues to fulfill its function as an advocate and a reflector of change, and as such, it is involved in a process of continual change itself. The career and achievement of Naguib Mahfouz is the best possible illustration of what has been achieved within the Arabic tradition and an inspiration for those who will determine the road ahead.
GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Note: a Bibliography of works by and/or about Naguib Mahfouz, even ones restricted to works in English, would be extremely long. The following is thus intended solely as an introduction to the subject of this presentation:


Peled, Mattityahu, Religion My Own, New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983?