



The growth of modern Arabic prose through new literary genres

Dr. Md Nurul Amin Sheikh

Assistant Professor, Halakura College, Halakura, Assam, India

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.66856/ijmrd.2022.9.8.13314>

Abstract

This paper discusses the development of Arabic prose literature especially during the modern period. In Egypt, the development of modern Arabic literature was closely related to the growth of the city of Cairo. Anyone familiar with the history of Arabic literature would know this fundamental fact. Both were producers of social, intellectual, and political forces for the advancement of modern literature, which led the movement toward westernization, and Muhammad Ali accelerated it and widened its scope, especially during the reign of Khedive Ismail, which brought significant changes to Cairo and considerably altered the geography. In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt created a new consciousness in the eastern regions. According to some historians this awakening is called the al-Nahda era, and some even claim that it marked the beginning of a new period in Arabic literature, considering the French revolution as the start of this era. According to some historians, the modern period is considered to extend from 1798 to the present. The new awakening came through Arabic prose literature that began from the al-Nahda or renaissance era is regarded as Arabic literature.

Keywords: New genre, modern prose, ethnography, philosophical literature, scientific interpretations etc

Introduction

Modern Arabic prose literature includes fiction, research thought, journalism, essays, short stories, children's literature, novels, drama, travel stories, adventure writings, etc. Journalism by journalists is based on daily information and news written in newspapers and is published daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. These magazines and newspapers were against the arbitrary rule during the French revolution and at that time, these magazines played a significant role in taking an active part (Meherullah, 2014, p. 265) ^[5].

The Egyptian government established a gazette in 1828 known as 'al-Waqa'i al-Misriyya.' The main purpose of establishing this publication was to enable the advancement of modern prose literature in Egypt, as it had progressed more compared to modern poetry. After the establishment of 'al-Waqa'i al-Misriyya.' for the first time in 1866, research papers started to appear. Under the leadership of Al-Tahtawi's student and associate Abdullah Abul Sudan, students began to write more about prose in periodicals and newspapers. In Alexandria, Egypt, Ibrahim Al-Muwailidi and Muhammad Osman Galal published 'Nuzhat Al-Afkar' in 1869; 'Tahtabir Rawdat Al-Madaris' in 1870; and in 1877, Yakub Sanu's 'Abu Nazzarah Jarga' was published. Salem Pasha's 'al-Hamawiyahall-Kawakib al-Sharqiyah' was published in 1873. Prose writings began to be published weekly in al-Ahram in Alexandria, but later in 1898, it was moved to Cairo. In Egypt, since prose had become popular, the development of poetry was somewhat limited (Brugman, 1984, p. 63) ^[4].

Objectives of the study

To study new trends and genres of modern Arabic prose literature.

To study the emergence of modern Arabic prose, prose forms can be seen at the beginning of modern Arabic literature in the nineteenth century.

To shows the Arabic prose emerged during the al-Nahda era through translations from western literature.

Hypothesis

For this proposed work hypotheses will be tested the development of Arabic prose led to the emergence of various literary genres, drama, novel short story, journalism, religious books etc. and genres which were directly contact with western literature except the religious books. To shows the new themes and techniques, from the Arabic classical ornate to modern forms and structures.

To know about Arabic prose literature before the 19th century dominated by classical forms which is called saj and the old genres like old makama and its rhetorical complexity emphasized. At the beginning of the 19th century Arabic prose literature began with new shape and new genres in response to political, social and broader intellectual direct contact with European library culture, thoughts, translation of western literary movements and followed the western educational systems.

Data and methodology

The data for this research paper secondary sources which are related to this subject. Secondary sources representing new genres, the classical traditional ornamentations direct suited to modern Arabic prose literature

is concern that directly reflects on the innovation of modern Arabic prose and thematic diversity that grew out of various writings. The secondary sources are on classical and modern Arabic prose discussing new genres, modernization and development.

Descriptive method has been imposed for this study, to describe new genre characteristics and to analyze the significance which is reflects on modern Arabic literature.

Results and Discussions

New Genres and Styles in Modern Arabic prose

Arabic prose literature did not develop much during the classical period, mainly due to the lack of tradition, which led to the decline of al-Maqama literature, a notable contribution in Hamdani's Arabic literature. In contemporary prose literature, instead of maqama, a kind of refined and conduct-oriented prose style has emerged. Besides this, the 18th-century Arabian Nights stories were considered popular literature and narrative prose literature, but in the Arab world, they were not regarded as great literature. Although it reflected the prestige of entertaining literature, the popular stories of the second half of the nineteenth century had appeared in all kinds of discussions, they had not been published as expected until the beginning of the twentieth century. Some authors tried to continue the tradition of classical stories, though it was not long-lived. In Egypt, neo-Classicism can be divided into two parts: one is neo-Maqama, which sought classical inspiration and a connection with the modern era, and the second is inspired by the style of classical letter writing, such as how al-Khwarizmi famously used it as a measure for writing prose embellishments (Brugman, 1984, p. 64) [4].

The progress of modern literature, as a medium and the dynamic of values and their mutual effects, had been neglected until the end of the eighteenth century and continued into the first half of the nineteenth century. Even today, while some have adopted western literature, there has been a slow abandonment of some of the traditional principles and norms by certain Egyptians. People were interested in enjoying the spread of popular education, secular diversity, etc., but for them, the principles and rules of classical literature were not easily accessible. Egyptian literary creation was guided by efforts such as old makama literature, the movement of Arabic translation, journalism, and the expansion of nationalism. Later, Egyptian literary critics gradually abandoned traditional principles and began to follow western literary rules and prioritize social realities. As a result, they became more capable of aligning with and reflecting contemporary realities than before (Badawi, 1985, pp. 29-30) [3].

In addition to biographies, history, and travel, Arabic literature also considers fiction writing on various subjects as a form of narrative, just as in modern Arabic literature where fiction traditionally extends beyond limits, and innovative writers have depicted their attractive portrayals. Abdul Rahman Munif (born 1933) is the storyteller of several notable novels. Narratives by traditional storytellers or stories written by them are known in Arabic as 'Hikawani.' The main characteristic of Hikawani relates to human thought about diversity, a feature whose trends are seen in the style of modern novels alongside the characteristics of traditional narrative methods. Elias Khuri's "Rihlat Ghandhi al-Sagir," published in 1989, and "The Journey of Little Gandi," published in 1994, as well as Jamal al-Ghitani (born 1945), in his narratives, has most prominently exhibited this tendency. In his fiction, one can find historical aspects, virtual quests, physical nature, and mysterious elements.

Their immense framework does not clarify the various types of generic categories, which is why we should seek out authentic Arabic literary works as an excellent starting point, because these integrate with the references seen in Leidar and Kilpatrick's very useful essays, and function positively in Arabic prose. In Arabic literature, beyond poetic literature, the continuous examination of interrelated streams of prose letters and the difference between classical writing traditions and modern styles is considered by scholars as a basis (Allen, 1998, pp. 218-19) [2].

Novel, Drama and Short Story

The novel or Qissa tul-Hubb, which was not present in Arabic literature but emerged in Arabic during al-Nahda era through translations from English and French novels. These are the writers of legendary content Khalil Jibran of Lebanon, Zaidan and Farah Antun of Syria, al-Manfaluti of Egypt, Ibrahim Hilsil al-Usar of Iraq, and Yakub Saruf of Lebanon are particularly noteworthy. Mohammed Haykal's 'Joynab' and Farah Antun's 'Hakayat al-Haywan' are significant contributions because 'Joynab' is considered the first novel in Arabic literature. Subsequently, Mostofa Lutfi al-Manfaluti translated both novels into Arabic; further Hafez Ibrahim translated the novel 'al-Busha' of Nasher into Arabic. In addition to this, Egypt's renowned literary critic Taha Hussain made valuable contributions with works like ' wal-Tijarat al-Bush bil-Ayyam', Tawfiq al-Hakim's 'Awdat al-Ruh', 'Tahta Samsu al-Fikr', 'Hammar al-Hakim', and 'Haja Huwa al-Hubb'; Abdul Qadir al-Mazin's 'Dawat ala bab Ibrahim'; Jafar al-Al-Khalili's 'Qada al-Jinn'; and Nagib Mahfouz's 'Kalb al-Layil' and 'Qahira al-Jadida'.

Arabic prose literature also saw a significant improvement with new styles. Famous litterateur Al-Ahdar from Syria (1826-1891) wrote nearly twenty plays for the first time, among which Ibn Zaidun, Yazid bin Abdul Malik Iskendaru, and Abu Nuwas are notable. In the eight decades of the 19th century, Ishaq and Salim Naqqas in Alexandria played an important role in writing plays. Another two notable writers of Syria, Nazir Haddad and Khalil Yazidi, developed a movement for writing intelligent plays. At the beginning of the 20th century, Muhammad Taimur and Osman Jamal contributed to the development of drama not only by writing

but also by staging plays. The famous Egyptian writer and critic Dr. Taha Hussain wrote *Zahr al-Islam* and *Erama zatil emad* of Khalil Gibran practiced for praise.

The playwright who has made the greatest contributions is Tawfiq al-Hakim with his works *Muhammad Shahar Jad*, *Hammar al-Hakim*, and *Sajarat al-Hakim* being particularly notable. Pre-romantic poet Khalil Mitran's *Taziral al-Budd wa Khayat*, Abdul Goni Hassan's *Cleopatra Min Nadarat al-Tarikh*, and Muhammad Awrang Ibrahim's *Laila tu al-Thaniya* are especially remarkable. There are also some other notable dramatists such as Zikriya Tamer, Osman Saadi, Yusuf Idris, Ibrahim al-Arij, Yusuf Maruni, Sulaiman Musa, and Abdul Rahman who began to write Arabic drama. At the beginning of the modern era, the state of satire was similar to the Abbasid period, but Sheikh Muhammad Abduh and Sayed Abdullah Nadim significantly transformed it. Aisha Taymur (1840-1902), Muhammad Taymur, and Suba Elahi of Cairo (1870-1930) as well as Junnun Ayub of Cairo (born 1909) are legends who wrote short stories. Inda Makuntu Kaziyani of Yusuf Idris, Manfaluti's *al-Abarat* and *al-Kibz fil-Arz* of Taha Hussain, and *al-Shiri* of Junnun Ayub short story collections are extremely incomparable (Meherullah, 2014, pp. 267-68) [5].

Studying the development of prose-fiction strands and modern narrative in Arabic literature brings to light aspects of earlier literary traditions, particularly in two areas: the first being poetic and the second being prose, each with its own social and evaluative standards. The greatest narrative anthology of the Arab world, "The Thousand and One (Arabian) Nights," was translated into French by Antoine Galland and published in 1704, which can be seen as having a contrasting influence on Middle Eastern and western culture. Ever since the publication of this book, the western world has been fascinated by the stories and themes of this work, often adapting or critiquing them, though now it has gained recognition among critics in the Arab world. The emergence and development of belles-lettres in Arabic literature have, over a century, significantly transformed its meaning (Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic literature*, 2000, p. 134) [1].

Journalism and printing press

Arabic writers did not know how to write Arabic articles that idea knew from western writings. Thus, Syed Alamuddin's political, Muhammad Abduh's reformist writings created a consciousness against the British. Sheikh Ali Yusuf and Mustafa Kamil wrote in strong political story *risala al-Moid*. Modern prose literature is familiar to European civilization, stories were written by Lebanese writers among Franchis Sarras Halabi, Salis Bostani, Jourgiback Zaidan are noteworthy. Further from the Egyptians prof. Mohammad Hussain, Nakula al-Turk and Sheikh Nashif al-Yazidi is noteworthy. Many new styles are never seen in Arabic literature before called gesture short stories but the *al-Nahada* era, the new style of prose in Arabic literature was due to the evolution. Ali Mabararak during the reign of Ismail he publishes a *risala* called *Rawsatul-Mudaris*. *Al-Jinan* edited by Butras al-Bustani, *al-Jarida* edited by Ahmed Lutfi al-Sayyid, *al-Siyasat* edited by Mahmud Hasan Haykal, *al-Iraq* edited by Rajjak Gummas, *Al-Hilal* edited by Jurji Zaidan, *al-Mukattatafat* edited by Eakub Maruf and edited *al-Thakafat wal-Risalat*, *al-Kitab*, *al-Kitab al-Misri* and *al-Balaga* (Meherullah, 2014, p. 266) [5].

Influenced by western literary culture

When discussing the Arabic language and Western languages, it is seen that these two have continuously evolved and are complex. The beginning of this development is considered to be the 1798 Napoleon Invasion, but for some parts of the Arab world, its relevance is less because some areas were distant from both literary and social aspects. Although the linguistic, literary, social, and political development of the Middle East remained far behind, modern Arabic literature was influenced by western literature and progressed by drawing from it; this cannot be denied. Whether it is classical Arabic poetry or the influence on poetic development, it was made possible through the western tradition. Novels, short stories, plays, imaginative literature, and poetry have been influenced by western literary culture and have given Arabic literature a new form of advancement; there is no doubt about this (Starkey, 2006, pp. ix-x) [6].

Biography and other Genres of Literature

In addition to these autobiographies are significant. The modern literary critic and father of literature, Dr. Taha Hussein studied al-Azhar University in Cairo while studying there he placed special emphasis on student life and wrote an autobiography named '*Al-Ayyam*', reflecting a portrait of life. Mazini wrote *Kabz al-Ruh* and Tawfiq al-Hakin wrote *Arani Allah*. Arabic prose literature also sheds light on travel stories. Sayid Abdul Hamid was a famous writer, and for his joint efforts in compilation, '*Muzmuat al-Qasas-ul-Shirat*' is considered a treasure of imaginative stories. Butras al-Bustani (1819-1883) was a thoughtful writer who compiled a six-volume encyclopedia from a new perspective, which included medicine, science, philosophy, historical places, and events. Another of his contributions was a modern dictionary, which he published in 1870 in two volumes under the name *Haidul ul-Musik*.

Grammar literature gained special recognition in modern Arabic literature in 1834 through the work of Nafez al-Yazidi. His published grammar books *al-Fusul wal Khuttab* has been included in the curriculum of western universities. After the Golden age called the Abbasid period, there was little progress in Arabic literary criticism for a long time. However, in the modern era, the influence of western literature and civilization gave Arabic literary criticism a new life. Notable figures in modern criticism include Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, Taha Hussain, Shawqi Daif, Majini, and Muhammad Mandur (Meherullah, 2014, p. 269) [5].

Qur'an and Hadith in Scientific Interpretations

This includes scientific interpretations of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith as well as various discussions about them, as they have had a significant influence on Arabic literature. Among the most successful scientific commentaries on the Holy Qur'an are Abu'l Fazl Ibrahim's 'Burhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an', Sayyid Rashid Rida's 'Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Hakim', and Jamaluddin al-Qalimi's 'Tafsir al-Qashimi', which are very important works. In addition, Ahmad Muhammad Shakir's 'Umdat al-Tafsir' and Sayyid Qutb's 'Fi Zalal al-Quran' are also highly significant.

Hadith plays an important role in the development of Arabic literature. Through its scientific explanation, it has been transformed into religious literature. Abdul Aziz al-Khaleel's 'Al Adab Al-Nabawi,' Sheikh Abul Hasan al-Bakri's 'Dirrat al-Maqalat fi Makati,' and Sheikh Manshur Ali Nafis's 'Al-Taj Lahj al-Osul fi-Ahadith al-Rasul' have significant contributions to Arabic religious literature. Alongside the interpretation of the Holy Quran and Hadith, explanations of modern medical science as well as modern scientific interpretations have also been included (Meherullah, 2014, p. 270) [5].

Historical, Ethnography and Philosophical Literature

Both in science and literature there has many contributions such as Mustafa Sadik Ar-Rafai's 'Amja al-Quran', Al-Ghazali's 'Jujra fih al-Quran', Muhammad Hafni Sharaf's 'Badi' ul-Quran', in addition to these, contributions written in various branches of science include works such as Doctor Ahmed Zaki's 'Sayat al-Sahar', Doctor Osman Asin's 'Ahsas al-Ulum', Mustafa Kamil's 'Al-Ilmu wa al-Hayat al-Insanat', , Ahmed Mustafa's 'Muhit al-Ulum', 'Al-Talifuna wa al-Radio, wa al-Kamira, wa al-Tayer', Ismail Haqqi's 'Al-Safaratuh ila al-Kawakib', among others, shed light on science.

In modern Arabic literature, ethnography, which can also be called anthropology, was first addressed by the famous Egyptian author Dr. Ahmed Al-Batbari in his book 'Al Junda Al Bashariya'. He also wrote 'Al Arj' wal-Masurate Al Bashariya', and Dr. Ahmed Fakri wrote a special book titled 'Al Hujaratul Misriya'.

Arabic literature has made significant contributions to writing books and historical essays, covering topics such as art, literature, culture, a nation's art, country, religion, state, and rulers. The first three prominent authors of this literature were Ali Muhammad Al-Bajari, Muhammad Ahmad Jadal Mawla, and Abu'l-Fazl Ibrahim, who collectively wrote 'Ayyamul Arab fil Islam' and 'Ayyamul Arab fil Jahiliya'. Additionally, Aqqad's 'Asharul Arab fil Hujaratil Awrabayuh', Ismail Ibrahim's 'Al Biladu al-Magdasu', Zaidan's 'Al Arab Qablal Islam', Mahiuddin Ahmed's 'Tarikh al-Khulafa', and Abdullah Usman's 'Dawlatul Islam fil Islam' are notable books worth mentioning.

In modern Arabic literature, several works have also been written on the philosophy of language. The first book written on this subject is 'Mayani al-Falasafat,' authored by Dr. Ahmad Fuad. This book is a comprehensive work of comparative discussions on Greek and Indian philosophy. In Arabic literature, many interpretations and research articles have been written on music. The Music Emperor Saleh authored a work called 'As-Sakafatul Musiqiyyat'. Among the works capable of bringing changes to modern art, Muhammad Taimur's 'al-Taswir inda al-Arab' and Aziz Hasan Kamel's 'Fununnat Tasbirudowa' are the most notable. The creators of research and reflective writings in modern Arabic literature have displayed their talent in every field, which is why Arabic literature is so rich and developed due to their contributions (Meherullah, 2014, pp. 271-72) [5].

Conclusion

In contemporary Arabic literature, fiction and short stories are the most popular literary contributions. In line with this trend, in a certain decade in the mid-twentieth century, Arabic prose occupied that role, influenced by western culture, educational priorities, novelty, and the selective impact of various electronic media such as television and cinema. It is observed that the prose styles of previous centuries almost aligned with poetic traditions, but with the development of modern prose literature's belletristic styles, prose literature has taken on a new form. There has also been considerable progress in thoughtful and research-oriented Arabic prose literature, such as philosophy-centered literature, scientific literature, grammar, religious literature, historical literature, and critical literature. In addition to these literatures like social sciences, astronomy, music and fine arts, and medical science developed.

Reference

1. Allen R. An Introduction to Arabic Literature. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
2. Allen R. The Arabic Literary Heritage. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
3. Badawi M. Modern Arabic Literature and the West. London: Ithaca Press, 1985.
4. Brugman J. An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt. Netherlands, Leiden: E.J Brill, 1984.
5. Meherullah G. Arobi Kobi Shahittik wo Shahitta. Dhaka: Nahada Prokashoni, 2014.
6. Starkey P. Modern Arabic Literature. George Square, Edinburgh. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.