CHAPTER- 3

Outstanding Mahjar Poets

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3.3. Mahjar Romanticism
CHAPTER 3

Outstanding Mahjar Poets:

It is observed that the Mahjar literature is basically dominated with poetry being influenced with western literary values and its objectives. The Mahjar poets from the Northern hemisphere of America in particular exercised their poetry in the light of western free-verse style and they could able to make Arabic poetry easily conceivable to the readers. But, the Mahjar poets from Southern part of America retained both (i.e. classical & modern) styles and thereby they succeeded well in promoting Arabic poetry and its values to the platform of World literature.

The poets like "Amin Rihan" (1876-1940), "Jibril Khalil Jibrani" (1882-1931), "Mikhail Nu'aima" (1889-1957), "Ahmad Zaki Abu Shadi" (1892-1955) are known as the prominent Mahjar poets in North America. On the other hand, Rashid Salim al-Khuri: (Rashid Salim al-Khuri: 1887-1984), Fawzi al-Maluf: (Fawzi al-Maluf: 1899-1987) and Shafiq al-Maluf: (Shafiq al-Maluf: 1905-1976) were the outstanding Southern Arab Mahjar poets in the Americas. But here special attention has been paid on Mikhail Nu'aima and his poetry.
3.1. Exponents of North America:

As mentioned earlier (AR- RABITA AL- QALAMIYYA) was a literary bond of Mahjar poets and authors in North America. They launched a mission to promote the value of Arabic literature, so that new themes may insert in modern Arabic poetry following Western trend. Here a brief account of the Exponents of North American Mahjar poets has been discussed. They are as follows:

3.1.1. (Amin Al- Rihani) (1876-1940):

Amin al- Rihani was an outstanding North American Mahjar poet, prose writer and journalist. He was born in Frayka, Lebanon in 1876 A.D. Al- Rihani accompanied his uncle to New York in 1888. His father and the rest of his family moved to New York to join Al- Rihani in 1889. For physical reasons he returned to Lebanon in 1898, and was there from 1905 to 1910. After meeting Jibran Khalil Jibran in Paris, he again returned to New York to work as a journalist. For this purpose he crossed the Atlantic Ocean some twenty times to visit Europe and the Arab countries. He published some fifty works in Arabic and English.

Amin al- Rihani opened his literary career with a booklet entitled “al- Tasahul al- Dini” (Philadelphia, 1901), followed by “Nubdha fi al- thawra al- faransiyya” (New York, 1902) and the last of these- a fable based on the ideas of Darwin, "al- Muhalafa al- thulathiyya fi al- mamlaka al- hayawaniyya" (New York, 1902). The last of these-
Rousseau, Voltaire and the French Revolution— is an attack on the feudal system and on the clergy who supported it. Al- Mukari wā- al-Kahin” (New York, 1904) shows the donkey man as the true believer, and the priest in need of contrition and conversion. His first book in English was a translation of selected quatrains of Abu al- ‘Ala al-‘Arri (The quatrains of Abu al-‘Ala, London, 1904).¹

Al- Rihani collected his prose-poems and shorter pieces in his ‘Rihaniyyat’ (4 vols. Beirut, 1910-1923), subsequently re-edited and republished as the ‘Rihaniyyat’ (1956), ‘Qawmiyyat’ (1956), comprising the political pieces, and ‘Hutaf al-awdiyah’ (1955), in which most of his prose-poems were brought together. In ‘Antum al- Shu’ara’ (Beirut, 1923) he censured the Arab poets for weeping too much instead of raising their voices against the French mandate. Al- Rihani also differed with Jibran and Nu’aima on a number of important issues, including the belief in the spirituality of the East versus the materialism of the West.²

From 1920 onward, al- Rihani began to visit the Arab Countries— these travels resulting in a number of books, including ‘Ta’rikh Najd al-hadith’ (1928), ‘Muluk al-‘Arab’ (1929) and others. An English series also appeared from 1928 onwards, including ‘Ibn Sa’ud of Arabia’ (London, 1928), ‘Around the Coasts of Arabia’ (London, 1930) and ‘Arabian Peak and Desert’ (London, 1931).
3.1.2. Jibran Khalil Jibran (1882-1931):

The Mahjar poet, prose writer and artist, Jibran Khalil Jibran, played a crucial role in developing 'Mahjar literature', was born in Bishirri (North Lebanon). He was brought up in the conditions of Squalor and poverty. His father was indolent and alcoholic whose frequent anger terrified the children. His mother, the daughter of a priest, was an intelligent and resolute woman but helpless in the atmosphere of tension and brutality.3

Unable to improve their lot at home Jibran emigrated with his mother, his step-brother Butrus and his sister Sultana and Marianna to Boston and settled in its Chinatown in 1895 where they lived in poor conditions. Jibran returned to Lebanon from 1897 to 1899 to improve his knowledge of Arabic. He joined مدرسة الحكمة 'Madrassa al-Hikma' (The Law School) where he also took lessons in French, Arabic and the Bible.4

At this time Jibran fell in love, but this was an unfortunate experience for him: because he was rejected by the father of the girl. Hence, he was courting because of the disparity in their situations.5

Again, Jibran returned to Lebanon in 1902 as the guide of an English family. In 1902 and 1903 Sultana, Butrus and his mother died of tuberculosis and Jibran all by him had to take care of his sister Marianna who earned as a seamstress.

Around this time Jibran took painting and also started writing. In 1907 he found a protectorate in Marry Haskell, owner of a private school for girls,
who admired Jibran’s paintings and enabled him to go to France to study art. Jibran was unimpressed with the modern schools of painting, judging cubism as ‘insanity’; while in Paris, however, he became acquainted with the works of Nietzsche, which left an imprint on his later literary works. He returned to Boston in 1910 and in 1912 went to New York.6

In New York, Jibran met several émigré writers from the Lebanon. In 1920 with Mikhail Nu’aima, Nasib Arida and Abdul Masih Haddad he established the ‘Pen Association’ of Arab writers, (al- Rabita al-Qalamiyya) to become its moving spirit. This was the most productive period of Jibran’s life. His writings in English and Arabic started winning him wide acclaim.

Jibran’s prose poems, which he began to write in 1903, were subsequently collected in “Dam’a wa-ibtisama” (1914): other works in Arabic include الموسيقى “al-Musiqua”(1905), عرائس المرجع “Ara’is al-muruj” (1905), الأرواح المتخرجة “al-awrakh al-mutamarrida”(1908), الأجنة المتخرجة “al-Ajniha al-mutakassira”(1912), المواكب “al-Mawakib”(1918), العواصف “al-’Awasif”(1920) and the badda’ and tara’if “al-Badai’ wa-al-tara’if”(1923).7

After 1920, Jibran wrote mainly in English, producing eight books in eight years. These brought him instant success and watered down his disappointments and bitterness. The books published in New York in the first editions, including (in order of appearance) were: (The Madman); السابق المجلون (The Forerunner); البسوع ابن الإنسان (The Prophet); رمل و زبد (Sand and Foam);
Jibran's most famous work is 'The prophet' (originally published in English, New York, 1923), which has been translated into many languages and is still in print. One of the key notions, both of this book and of Jibran's writing in general, is the idea of reincarnation and the migration of the human soul.

According to Mikhail Nu`aima, who wrote Jibran's biography, Jibran's outpourings in **الإجحاث الإحت号召** helped him to end the period of agony and grief. His will power restored and he held back his tears.8

The artist in Jibran, his passion for truth, his mystic stance and the impetus he gave to new literary trends marked him out as an outstanding man of letters, commending universal acclaim. By 1924, his health began to fall. He was bed ridden and lingered for years till his death in 1931 A.D.

3.1.3. **Mikhail Nu`aima (1889-1988):**

Mikhail Nu`aima was an outstanding Mahjar poet, prose writer, essayist and literary critic (See Appendix A, Fig. 1, P. 215) who soared to fame in the period between the two world wars, was born in Biskinta, Lebanon and nurtured in different cultural milieus. However, an account will follow about Nu`aima and his literary activities in the next chapter.
Iliya Abu Madi was a famous Mahjar poet. He was born in Muhaydatha (Lebanon). Abu Madi immigrated to Alexandria in 1900 where he sold cigarettes for his uncle. He used his spare time to perfect his knowledge of Arabic and of the prosodic rules of classical Arabic poetry. His first volume of poetry, *Tadhkar al-Madi* was published in Cairo in 1911. In the same year he left for the USA and settled in Cincinnati, becoming editor of the journal *Majalla al-arabiyya* the periodical of Palestinian youth, then editor of *Fatâ†*; he was editor of *Mirât al-gharb* from 1918 to 1925. In 1929 he founded his own periodical, *Samir* which appeared as a fortnightly until 1939, then became a daily; it continued until Abu Madi’s death in 1957 A.D.

Abu Madi published another volume of poetry in New York in 1916. In 1919, he published *Diwan al-thâni*, with an introduction by Jibran; this volume was severely criticized by Mikhail Nu’aima on the grounds that the poem did not express the poet’s emotions. Nu’aima claimed that he had won over Abu Madi to his ideas, but Abu Madi never abandoned classical prosody, and he continued to compose the occasional poetry so much decried by Nu’aima.

In 1927 Abu Madi published *Jadawil*, followed in 1940 by *Khama’il* and by the volume *Tibr wa-turab*, all three printed in Brooklyn, New York. He is considered by most critics to be the most important poet of the Northern Mahjar, combining a perfect knowledge of
classical prosody with a modern style and original motifs. One of his most important pieces is دللاصم (al- تالاسيم) a long poem of 284 lines.

Abu Madi became a worker of الرابعة العلمية (al- Rabita al- Qalamiyya) in 1920, and his house became a meeting place for poets and authors. He died in New York. The environment of America made Abu Madi nostalgic for his homeland. He gave vent to his feelings by writing patriotic poems and began to ponder on life and its riddles and a sense of philosophic enquiry became an essential feature of his composition. But, he had an asset and friend in his brother Murad, a man of learning burden of work, allowing him to greater scope for study.

Illya Abu Madi went to New York in 1916 A.D. and joined the ‘Pen Association’. He plunged into the movement and became the main pillar of Mahjar poetry. In 1942, Abū Madi represented the journalist of Mahjar in the UNESCO Conference in Beirut and by then he had become a celebrity not only in Mahjar but all over the Arab world.

Various factors helped to shape Abu Madi’s poetic style. A good grounding in grammar and prosody that he acquired in his formative years in Alexandria gave him a solid base for his verse. He is indeed credited with a more through grasp of the rules of poetry than any other Mahjar poets. Because, he came under the inexorable way of Jibrân’s romanticism and was impressed by his ideal of looking up to nature to find the spirit of love and harmony. But he retained his independence of thought and did not succumb to Jibrân’s pre-occupation with man’s sorrows and the dark facts of life that
cause despair and malaise. Abu Madi who had a happier outlook harboured no such worries.\textsuperscript{12}

Nevertheless, his optimism is not of one who takes things at their face value, but the result of probing deeply into situations like human sufferings. Man, according to Abu Madi, should not rebel against the fate in store for him but accept it with grace.

In the same way, impressed though he was by the ideals of Nu`aima, Abu Madi did not subscribe to his Sufism, nor to his belief in the transmigration of souls.\textsuperscript{13} He responded on the other hand to Umar Khayyam’s philosophy and called for the enjoyment of life and its pleasures.\textsuperscript{14} These two verses from the poem “al- Hayat wal-Hubb” (life and love) also indicate his wide interest in nature.\textsuperscript{15}

\begin{align*}
\text{یرید الحب ان نضحك مع الفجر} \\
\text{وان نركض فلنركض مع الجدول و الاهار} \\
\text{و ان نهنفت فلننفت مع البلبل و القدری} \\
\text{م ما يحدث او يجري} \\
\text{تعلى قيل ما تسكت في الروض الشهاریر} \\
\text{و يذوى الأحور و الصقصاف و الترجس والآس} \\
\text{تعلى قيل ما تطمر أحلامى الأعاصیر} \\
\text{فنسنفظ لافجر و لاخمر ولا كامس}
\end{align*}
Love wills, that we with laughter gay
Should greet the laughing dawn of day;
Come, let us laugh and lightly leap
With leaping brook and river deep;
Come; let us sing as biddeth love,
With nightingale and turtle- dove;
Who knoweth when this day is o’er?
What dark adventures lie before?
Come hither, ere the black birds hush
Their golden song in golden bush,
Ere myrtle and narcissus fade,
And willow be in ruin laid
Come love before the storms descend
And all my dreams are at an end,
No dawn to greet, no wine to take,
No bowls to pass when we awake.16

One of the best strength of Abu Madi is that, for all his flights of bewildered metaphysical fancy, he retains a sense of bitter realism and depth
of perception that is rare, both among the Mahjar writers and in romantic poetry in the Arab world. In the final analysis, he was never quite able to accept the self-righteous, splendid isolation of the poet’s role as expounded by Jibran and others. Abu Madi’s career is a fascinating development from unremarkable neo-classical verse to some of the peaks of achievement in romantic poetry. His work also has that extra dimension of imaginative power which on occasion takes it beyond the limits of the romantic experience, and lends it a permanent value which transcends the style of his immediate generation.17

3.1.5. (Rashid Ayyub) (1872-1941):

The poetry of Rashid Ayyub full of pang and lamentation reminds Hafiz Ibrahim, the poet of Nile. Due to much perplexity and frustration of mind Nasib Arida was known as the perplexed poet, (perplexed poet), likewise, for excess complaint and lamentation Rashid Ayyub was known to all as the lamenting poet. (The lamenting poet). Hafiz Ibrahim could able to change the colour of situation by dint of his presence of mind and weighing jokes. On the other hand, Rashid Ayyub had the capability to alter the lamenting situation into laugh and joy and that is why, Mikhail Nu’aima says about Rashid Ayyub and Abdul Masih Haddad in the following lines:18

"كلما منها خفيف الروح حاضر الكلمة لطيف المعشر فكما احالا العريس في بعض الساعات إلى حالات من الضحك وكما ساعة"
If there had not been the playful and weighing joke qualities in Rashid Ayyub and Hafiz Ibrahim then perhaps their lives would remain full of sorrow and grief.

Rashid Ayyub was a native of Mikhail Nu’aima’s village, Biskinta, Lebanon. After passing three years in Paris from 1889, and another three years in Manchester, he immigrated to New York. His first volume of poetry, ایوبیات (Ayyūbiyyat), appeared in New York in 1916, represents very much a transitional stage between ‘social’ and ‘occasional’ poetry and the more subjective romantic themes which dominated his work at a later stage.

The critics Ihsan ‘Abbas and Yusuf Najm remark on the ‘bewitching effect’ Jibran had on his work that reflects in his second volume, أغاني الدرويش (Aghani al- darwish), was published in New York in 1928, with a foreword by Mikhail Nu’aima. For Ayyub, the dervish or wandering mystic becomes the symbol of the poet who is a person of mystery possessed of special secrets unknown to others. This solitude is a state which is positively desired and cultivated: لست منهم (I am not of them) states an open preference for an ivory-tower existence, which leads to narcissism and delusion. Although the poet insists that his sadness for the people who revile him is greater than the pleasure he takes in his superiority over them, he concentrates too much on this pleasure to make the claim convincing:
"I went on, with poetry as my custom and the house of inspiration my shelter.

If the night darkens, I whisper; or if the dawn breaks, I sing.

Nay, by the goddess of my verse, my abode is like the Garden of Eden."²⁰

Ayyūb’s general inclination for the grand romantic state of solitude is also expressed in a withdrawal from all materialistic concerns, and a flight into the simple, pristine innocence of nature. His third volume of poetry entitled "Hiya al-dunya" (such is life) appeared in New York in 1940 with a foreword by ‘Shukr Allah al-Jurr’ from Rio de Janeiro. In this volume, the Jibranian thoughts, ideologies and personalities are found in an extensive manner which recognized Ayyūb as one of the outstanding Mahjar poets. He was also amongst the ten workers of ‘al-Rabita al-Qalamiyyah’.²¹

After all, Rashid Ayyub was a poet of love, of pain and of wine - many of his poems reflecting his nostalgia for his country of birth and his childhood years. His contribution to modern Arabic poetry is really commendable. He died in New York in 1941 A.D.

3.1.6. نسيب عريضه (Nasib ‘Arida) (1887-1946):

Nasib ‘Arida was a renowned Mahjar poet and one of the workers of الرابطة الاقليمية (al-Rabita al-Qalamiyyah) who shows very little optimism in his poetry. He was born in Hims (Syria) in 1887. ‘Arida was a schoolmate of Mikhail Nu‘aima in Nazareth, where he attended the Russian school from 1900 to 1904. He was chosen to continue his studies in Russia, but his admission was postponed because of the Russo-Japanese war.²²
In 1905 he emigrated to the United States and settled in New York, where he founded an Arabic printing house named 'Atlantic Press' in 1912 A.D. and in the following year he co-operated with Nazmi Nasim in founding the literary monthly review, (al-Funun) (1913-18), but the periodical did not have the success he had hoped for: publication was suspended intermittently, and only twenty-nine issues were published before it folded in 1918, with fewer than three volumes complete. Although 'Arida is not so well known for his own works as Jibran, Nu`aima or Abu Madi; but the credit must go to him for his much struggling to keep (al-Funun) going during its sporadic career in which it was beset by financial crises.

With the disappearance of the review in 1918 'Arida was compelled to give up journalism, but after an unsuccessful venture in business he returned to live by his pen. He fell ill in 1942, after which date he ceased to write poetry, and died in 1946 A.D.

'Arida is the author of one volume of verse, الأرواح الحائرة (Perplexed Spirits), which was published in New York in 1946, the year of his death, although most of the poems had been composed between 1912 and the late 1920s. He identified strongly with the Jibranian vision of the poet suffering in splendid isolation in an uncomprehending world, and a general air of gloom and pessimism pervades the whole of his poetry i.e. he is a poet of the dark side of life. His verses are characterized by pain, tears, separation, nostalgia and bewilderment.

Like other Mahjar writers 'Arida feels keenly the reality of being cut off from his native country in an unsympathetic environment. Sometimes this is
expressed in his poem "sallat fawakih" (The basket of fruit) as nostalgia for his native town in the Lebanon, Hims, which he called "ام الحجار السود" (The City of Black Stone). But, on the other hand, he is moved to frustration and anger at the worst conditions presented by the inhabitants of Syria and Lebanon in the First World War and he expressed his deep concern in the following lines:  

"Wrap them in a shroud! Burry them! Put them into the deep tom's abyss! Pass on. Do not mourn them. They are a dead people who will not wake."

The above verses, taken from his poem "The End", are a good illustration of the prosodic style of much Mahjar verse, demonstrating a preference for the shorter, simple metres and stanzaic forms. The metre is رمال (ramal) and the poem consists of couplets with three feet in the first hemistich and two in the second, but for effect the poet breaks up the lines and keeps the three words of each couplet separate. This is an excellent example of how the Mahjar poets continued to use regular rhyme and metre but took ever
greater liberties with the classical qasida form, using lines of irregular length and occasionally varying the metres within individual poems.  

'Arida's poetry is dominated by a feeling of loneliness and isolation, lack of communication and understanding and every man being an island. Here are the titles of some of his poems: (Sleep and Death), (Prayer), (Before Sunset), (Come Morning), (The End), (O my brother! O my brother!).  

From the poems mentioned here it is clearly understood about the poet's full comment on mankind's disappointed hopes, its eternal restlessness and boredom, its unquenchable thirst, its conflict between body and soul and its longing for death.  

However, the painful quests and mystical longings of 'Arida's poems are moving and attractive; he does not progress beyond them. The egocentric concentration on his own tortured personality did not serve to deepen his general perception, but rather kept him going round in the same mysterious circles.  

For all, described above, Nasib 'Arida's contribution to the modern Arabic literature will be remembered for ever.

Ahmad Zaki Abu Shadi (Ahmad Zaki Abu Shadi) (1892-1955):  

Ahmad Zaki Abu Shadi was an outstanding Egyptian as well as North American Mahjar romantic poet. He left no stone unturned in developing and modernizing the Arabic literature, either as an Egyptian or North American Mahjar poet.
Abu Shadi stayed in England from 1912 to 1922 where he completed his medical degree. He founded the جمعية النيل (The Nile society) in London. He immigrated to North America where he died in 1955 A.D.

Abu Shadi plunged into the literary activities in his old age as he did in his young age. His articles were published in the dailies and magazines regularly. He also took part in the broadcasting of 'voice of America' twice in a week. He remained the members of different societies and it invited him to take part in the lectures related to Arabic literature. In Egypt he founded the مجلة أبوولو (APOLLO MAGAZINE) and created جماعة أبوولو (APOLLO SOCIETY) in 1932 dedicated to the god of sun. Likewise, in America he founded a poetical and literary association named جماعة مينيروا (MINERVA UNION) and he dedicated it to مينيروا (MINERVA), the Greek goddess of knowledge.27

His Diwan من السماء (Min al- Sama') was published from America in 1949 and a sitting of honour was celebrated for this purpose where many authors and thinkers were attended to offer him a note of welcome and thanks.

Ahmad Zaki Abu Shadi contributed a lot in modernizing the Mahjar Arabic poetry and literature in America as the Syrian and Lebanese Mahjar poets did. Some critics do not consider him among the Mahjar poets. In this regard, Dr. Nauri says that when Abu Shadi moved to America in 1946 at that time he was a well established author and no character pertaining Mahjar
literature was noticed in his writings. Though he lived eight years in America but, it was not enough to make him as a Mahjar litterateur.

On the other hand, Abd al- Gani Hassan and others included him amongst the North American Mahjar poets. The Egyptian poet Abu Shadi describes himself the causes of his emigration to America as such that in the course of a distinguished academic career he was appointed to the chair of Bacteriology in the University of Alexandria in 1942 A.D. But, his rivals who had jealousy on him started to make him tired in many ways. Even, the publishers did not like to publish his articles only to make delight his antagonists and it was enough to crush one's talent under the feet. So, being compelled finally he immigrated to America. Moreover, before his travelling to America he got a severe shock at the death of his beloved wife which he expressed in the following lines:

امسيت عمرك للحياة فما وقت
ومضيئ للأبرار و الشهداء
لهفني عليك وقد آتيت مومعاً
فكيت فوق جبينك الوضاء
زارد الممات جماله و تناثرت
من الدموع عليك كالألداء

The diversity of themes makes the poetry of Abu Shadi beautiful. His two national and patriotic anthologies entitled Insan al- Jadid and Nairoj al- Hurr were published in America wherein he expressed the sense of freedom enjoyed therein. The styles in composing poetry of Abu Shadi were changed within three years in America and it can be seen in his anthology entitled min al- Sam’a. Though he lived in
modern America yet his poetry was not devoid of classical pattern. For instance, he composed poetry in a Lebanese royal festival celebrated in New Jersey in 1946. He composed poetry in the golden jubilee of (al- Huda) a magazine published from New York. Moreover, he composed elegies at the death of Nasib Arida, Abd- al- Mun‘am Riaz and Khalil Mutran.

Abu Shadi was an outstanding figure. He was a doctor, painter, litterateur and poet. He produced several anthologies: theشفق الباكى ; انداء الفجر ؛ من السماء ; عودة الراعى ; أطياف الربيع ؛ فوق العباب ؛ أشعة وظلال ؛ الشعلة ؛ الينبوع ؛ and so on, were published in Arabic magazines like - and and The distinguished Arab Mahjar litterateur Abd al-Masih Haddad Said.

Abu Shadi died in Washington on April 13, 1955 A.D.
3.2. Exponent of South America:

The authors of Northern School of Mahjar group living in New York, Washington and other places have already been discussed and now, the literary activities of those poets and litterateurs have been brought into discussion who made their abodes in Brazil, Argentina and other places of Latin America and there they remain involved with the literary activities. They are known as (Al-Usba- al-Andalussiya).

3.2.1. رشيد سليم الخوري القروي (Rashid Salim Al-Khuri Al-Qarawi) (1887-1984):

Rashid Salim al-Khuri al-Qarawi was a remarkable Mahjar poet of South America. He was born in a village of Lebanon named al-Barbara in 1887. Al-Khuri received a good formal education, and taught in the American Schools in 'Sidon' and 'al-Mina', and in the الكلية الشرقية (al-Kulliyya al-Sharqiyya) in Zahle. He immigrated to Brazil in 1913. In 1915 he was invited to Sao Paulo because the Arab community there was in need of a poet. He adopted the pen-name "al-Shā'ir al-Qarawi" (Qarawi for short) after he had been disparagingly so named by journalist.

Al-Khuri's first volume of poetry الرشيديات (Al-Rashidiyyat), was published in Sao-Paulo in 1916. He became a member of the Al-Usba al-andalusiyya and was its chairman from 1938 to 1942. His poetry is nationalistic, attacking the French mandate in Syria and Lebanon as well as Jewish colonization in Palestine. Al-Khuri's Diwan was first published in Sao-Paulo in 1952, and has been several times reprinted. He returned to Lebanon...
in 1958. Rashid Salim al-Khuri's brother was the emigrant poet Qaysar Salim al-Khuri, who took the pen-name الشاعر المدني (al-Sha'ir al-Madani) and whose Diwan was published in Damascus in 1966 A.D.\(^{30}\) He died in 1984 A.D.

3.2.2. Fawzi Al-Maluf (1899-1930):

Fawzi al-Maluf was one of the renowned Latin American Mahjar poets and dramatists. He was the brother of Shafiq and Riaz Maluf. After attending the الكلية الشرقية (Kulliyat al-Sharqiyya) in Zahle (his birth place), and the "École des Frères" in Beirut, he went to São Paulo, Brazil, where he worked in industry and trade.

In 1922 he founded the منتدى الزحلة (al-Muntada al-Zahl), a meeting place for the members of the Syrian and Lebanese colonies and had his plays performed in this club. His first play, ابن حامد وسقوط غناته (Ibn Hamid aw Suqot Ghurnata) was written in 1926 and published in 1952 by العصبة الأندلسية (al-'Usba al-Andalusiyya) in São Paulo.\(^{31}\)

Fawzi al-Maluf earned his fame with his long poem شاعر في الطبيعة (Sha'ir fil tayyara) originally published in the São Paulo magazine الأندلسية (al-Jaliya) and republished in book form in 1929 with the title على بساط الريح (Ala bisat al-rih) with colour plates by the Russian painter A. Ignatovich. His four collections of poetry: تأو 비 해ت الروح (Ta'awwuhat al-ruh) and شعلة الأدب (Aghani al-Andalus) and شعلة الأدب (Shu'lat al-adhab) were posthumously published as ديوان فوزي المعروف (Diwan Fawzi al-Maluf) in Beirut in 1957. A five hundred page memorial volume, ذكرى فوزي المعروف (Dhikra...
Fawzi al- Ma'luf) was published in Zahle in 1931. He was further honoured with a bronze statue erected in Zahle in 1937, and by a rose planted for him in the Garden of the poets in Alhambra, Granada. He died in 1930 A.D.\(^{32}\)
3.3. Mahjar Romanticism:

Romanticism in the context of Arabic literature is as elusive a term as it is in Western literatures. Arab literary critics and historians of Arabic literature have nonetheless employed the term, arabicized as الرومانشية (al-romantikiyya) or، الرومانسيّة (al-romansiyya), and have used the concept very much as it has been used in western literatures.

Mahjar romanticism is a literary movement characterized by subject-matter, attitude, and form. The subject-matter includes nature as an immediate personal experience, Christianity, the supernatural; night, death, ruins, graves, dreams and the subconscious.

The most characteristic romantic attitude is individualism; the poet is seer; the emotions are preferred to reason; the ideal to the real. In expression romanticism proclaims freedom from rules and conventions, emphasizes spontaneity and lyricism, and tends to reverie, vagueness, synaesthesia, and overlapping of the functions of Arts.33

A vital contribution to the development of romantic poetry in the Arab world was made by the Mahjar group of Syrio-Lebanese writers who had emigrated to North and South America in the early years of the 20th century and who developed a flourishing school of literature in Arabic, particularly in New York.34

الرابطة القلمية (The Pen Association) was founded in 1920, bringing together a number of the poets and writers who had been writing in the Arabic
journals and newspapers published in New York: the first president was Jibran Khalil Jibran (1883-1931) and the secretary was Mikhail Nu’aima (1889-1988).

Jibran Khalil Jibran was leading a Romantic movement in the North American Mahjar that had deep effects on Arabic literature generally. He and other members of the الرابطة القلمية (al-Rabita al-qalamiyya), were evolving a new style in which they experimented with rhyme, rhythm and language to express their own vision and individual feelings. This new movement influenced many in the Arab world, including the Syrian poet ‘Umar Abu Risha’ and the Tunisian Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi.

Mikhail Nu’aima’s الغربال (al-Ghirbal - 1923) brings together his literary critical essays denouncing traditional poetry and advocating the spirit of wonder, sincerity, adventure and innovation in poetic form and content which is typical of this group.35

A number of themes developed initially in the Mahjar were to become features of Arab Romantic poetry generally:

(a) The desire not to conform to traditional social norms and institutions;

(b) The celebration of scenes of natural beauty and intense emotional identification with such scenes, along with a tendency to regard towns and cities as centres of evil and corruption;
(c) Deep emotional introspection and a tendency to glory in the isolated state of the poet who, like the prophet without honour, is shunned by his contemporaries;

(d) A strong sense of the neo-platonic duality of body and soul;

(e) A tendency to write amatory poetry which is ethereal and spiritual rather than strongly physical.  

The Mahjar poets, being far removed from the traditional centres of scholasticism in the Arab world, wrote verse in language that was simple and readily accessible to the readers, and radically different from the lexicon of neo-classical poetry. In their hands, strophic forms became much more frequent and simple rather than compound metres were usually preferred. Through the works of critics such as the Egyptian, Muhammad Mandur, Mahjar poetry became much admired in the Arab world and Nu‘aima’s poem ‘Akhi’ written in 1917, was hailed as an example of what could be achieved with the new, less loudly rhetorical style of Arabic poetry.

Romanticism as a reaction against definitional strictures of classicism, found its earliest creative impulse among Arab writers living within a set of communities that were themselves the consequence of a major change, the émigré (Mahjar) communities of the Americas, North and South. Far removed from the watchful eye of conservative critics, these predominantly Christian poets found themselves exercising their poetic creativity in a cultural environment in which they were almost automatically exposed to the literary and philosophical heritage of their newly adopted abodes. These influences
were to have a profound effect on the way that a whole generation of Arab poets looked at the role and, especially the language of poetry; in this latter regard, many of them were also much influenced by the language and cadences of the new protestant translation of the Bible into Arabic that had been completed in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In order to provide each other with support in both writing and publication, these writers established their own cultural societies: "al- Rabitat al-Qalamiyyah" (The bond of pen) founded in New York in 1920, and "al- 'Usba al- Andalusiyyah" (The Andalusian Group) founded in São-Paulo, Brazil in 1932.

Of the northern group the undisputed leader is Jibran Khalil Jibran; indeed he led from the front in his use of different forms—revivals of earlier strophic structures such as the الموشحة (muwashshah) and early experiments with prose—poetry—and above all in his sensitivity to the creative potential of language. As has often happened within the Arabic poetic tradition, a refrain from his most famous poem المراكب "al- Mawakib" (processions), a lengthy contemplation of the human condition that advocates a return to nature as well as the primitive realm of the forest الغاب (al- ghab) where simplicity is supreme. As he says:

"In the forest is life to be lived, and, did I have gathered within my grasp,

The passing of days, it is there that I would scatter them".
Jibran’s colleague in New York and the Northern group’s most significant critical writer was Mikhail Nu’aima (1889-1988). As a Romantic poet his most searing poetic statement reflects his experience as an American soldier of Arab descent who has fought in the First World War. The speaker in “Akhi” (My Brother) localizes the issue from the outset by noting the possibility that ‘someone from the west’ may brag about his accomplishments. However, as he notes in the final stanza, the Arab world has nothing to brag about:

"My brother who are we, with neither homeland, people nor neighbour?
Whether asleep or awake, our garb is shame and disgrace."

In other poems and especially in his collection of critical articles, The Sieve (1923), Nu’aima displays his advocacy of change in a less pessimistic vein.

But of the poets in the Northern group it is Iliya Abu Madi (d.1957) whose works best illustrate the tensions involved in this process of change in poetic sensibility. His most famous collection al-Jadawil (Brooks), 1927, with an introduction by Nu’aima, is generally regarded as a major contribution to the development of Arabic romantic poetry. Song has once again made one of its poems, “Talasim” (charms), widely known in the Arab world, and, in spite of its wayward length, the opening stanzas do establish a characteristically quizzical tone.38

I came; I know not where from, but I came.
I had seen a way before me, so I took it.

And I will continue, whether I wish or not.

How did I come? How did I see my way?

I do not know.

The generation of romantic poets that came after Shauqi laid great stress on the centrality of the individual and the role of the soul in the imaginative process. As in the European literary traditions to which they had turned for critical insight, much of the poetry that emerged from such inspiration was devoted to the topic of love. It was among the poets of emigré communities in the Americas (Mahjar) that the most accomplished examples of early romantic poetry are to be found. Iliya Abu Madi (d. 1957) finds his idealized beloved Salma, contemplating at Sunset:39

The clouds scurry across the spacious heavens as though scared,

While behind them the Sun is yellow-hued with brow wrapped.

The Sea a silent teak, humble as ascetics,

But your gaze is pallid as you stare at the distant horizon.

Salma, what preoccupies your thoughts?

Salma, of what are you dreaming?

While, writing in Brazil, Iliyas Farhat (d. 1977) questions nature about his beloved:40
I ask the morning breeze about her,
the flowers in the garden,
the breezes in the lavender;
How often I have said that, when we meet,
my passion Will suffice to quench thirst!

Among the Southern group of poets the most prominent names are Rashid Salim al-Khuri (d. 1984) and Iliyas Habib Farhat (d. 1980), both of whom are recalled for their advocacy, albeit from a substantial distance, of the cause of Arab nationalism, and the Ma’luf brothers, Fawzi Ma’luf (d. 1930), author of the famous long poem "Ala bisat al-rih" (on the wind’s carpet, 1929) and Shafiq al-Ma’luf (d. 1905).

The work of these poets was transmitted to the Middle-East, not only through publication in the region itself (such as that of Fawzi Ma’luf’s poem in the Lebanese journal, المقتطف (al-Muktataf), but also through journals published in America such as Abu Madi’s المسير (al-samir) that were sent back to the Arab world and personal correspondence.

The introduction of Mikhail Nu’aima’s critical collection, الغربال "al-Ghirbal" was written by Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad, one of the most prominent early advocates of romantic ideals in Egypt. Al-Aqqad and his two colleagues, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Shukri (d. 1958) and Ibrahim Abd al-qadir al-Mazini (d. 1949), became avid devotees of the school of English romanticism as students, and, even though the group later split apart in acrimony, the causes
that they espoused were still gathered around the title of the journal that they published in two parts in 1921, al-Diwan. Part of the process involved debunking the pretensions of neo-classicism, and al-Aqqad undertook the mission with gusto in his attack on what he regarded as the outmoded artificiality of Shauqi’s public poetry. As al-Aqqad’s introduction to Nu’aima’s collection also shows, the Egyptian poet-critic regarded it as part of his function to stand guardian at the gate of change and to monitor some of the more radical changes being advocated by the Mahjar poets and others.

Instigated by a number of groups and movements—the Mahjar poets in the Americas, the Diwan group and later the Apollo group in Egypt, romantic poetry—stretching the inter-war period saw its heyday in the 1930s and 1940s. As, these years were of social turmoil and of confrontation with the western powers for the Arab nations.41

However, the Romanticism in Mahjar literature was a new dimension in modern Arabic literature. This school of romanticism in Arabic was the result of direct influence of western literature. Consequently, a total change was observed in Mahjar Arabic poetry in its themes, attitude, diction, style, rhymes and metres which enabled the Arabic literature to stand in parallel with other literatures of the world.
Reference


2. Ibid.


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.


18 Mikhail Nu’aima, Jibran Khalil Jibran, Hayatuh, Mautuh, Adabuh, wa-Fannu, Beirut, 1964, P.224.


29 Ashfaq Ahmad Nadawi, Jadid Arbi Adab ke Irtiqa main mahjari Udaba ki khidmat, Lucknow, 1984, P. 374 ff.


