

13 Maḥmūd Taymūr (1894–1973)

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This chapter: Originally written for, and published in, a volume of “literary biographies” (Roger Allen, ed. 2010), this chapter focuses on the literary and personal formation of Maḥmūd Taymūr, one of the most prominent representatives of early twentieth-century Arabic literature. It follows his work chronologically, examining how his writing evolved in parallel with changes in his environment and life. As such, it covers a whole life span and the complete literary output of the writer who is commonly regarded as one of the pioneers of “national literature” in the Arab world. Such a literary biography can serve as a fine example of how an emerged Nahḍawī subjectivity unfolded in the context of nation-building after World War I and the collapse of the old world order, and along which lines it developed during four, five decades to eventually surpass what is typically called ‘Nahḍawī’. If it is true that Maḥmūd Taymūr’s literary journey encompassed several stages – starting as a ‘sentimental’ writer and progressing through an analytical-descriptive phase, advocacy of ‘national’ local colour, then a broader humanistic approach, and finally a call for ‘committed literature’ (see below) – then we can observe how all these stages are rooted in the Nahḍa, but also how they in the end lead beyond the Nahḍa ‘proper’. After World War II, the Nahḍawī subject generally ceases to be a subject that makes all kinds of efforts to assert itself; rather, the process of “rising” (*nuḥūd*), the “upswing” (*nahḍa*), seems to be completed, and all further developments are made from the position of a personality that regards itself as mature and established.

Furthermore, Maḥmūd Taymūr’s literary biography nicely complements the preceding chapter as it illustrates how a member of the “Modern School” (*al-Madrasa al-Ḥadītha*) sought to ‘translate’ theoretical thinking about an ideal “national literature” into literary practice. It highlights how emerging *national* subjectivity adopted techniques of self-assertion developed during the earlier decades of the Nahḍa, such as being a critical observer, social reformer, psychological analyst, moralist, feeling subject, and innovative creator.

These aspects are still prominent in Maḥmūd Taymūr’s early writings as well as in the two programmatic forewords by which he, too, like ‘Īsà ‘Ubayd (see above, Chapter 12), introduced two collections of short stories (*al-Shaykh Jum’a*, 1925, and *al-Shaykh Sayyid al-‘abīṭ*, 1926). The heritage of nineteenth century Nahḍa is likewise present in what we know about the intellectual climate in

which Maḥmūd Taymūr grew up, with the classical Arabic philological tradition represented in his father (and the latter's enormous library) and all the other influences that contributed to the formation of the young writer, like his readings of contemporary Arab sentimentalists (Jubrān, al-Manfalūṭī, etc.) as well as European authors, especially Guy de Maupassant and Anton Chekhov.

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13.1 Maḥmūd Taymūr's Life and Work – An attempt at a literary biography

Maḥmūd Taymūr is a key figure for modern Egyptian, and Arabic, literature. As a most prolific writer who with hundreds of short stories and a number of programmatic studies contributed substantially to the breakthrough, and lasting establishment, of a new prose genre as a recognised form of literary expression, he is usually referred to as the “father”, or “shaykh” (grand old man, chief, master), of the modern Arabic short story. The remaining part of his *œuvre*, hardly less voluminous than his output in the field of the short story, and in many cases of an acknowledged high quality, has received comparatively little attention: almost ten novels, some twenty plays, a number of studies on Arabic language and literature (some of them pioneering), a handful of travel accounts as well as numerous essays, collections of “reflections, ideas, inspirations” (*khawāṭir*) and memoir-like reminiscences.

13.1.1 Family background, childhood in Darb Sa'āda and 'Ayn Shams

Maḥmūd Taymūr was born in Cairo in the Darb Sa'āda quarter where his great-grandfather had built a large domicile in 1816 after having settled in Egypt. The Taymūrs were of mixed Arab-Kurdish origin and had lived in the region of Mosul before Maḥmūd's ancestor came to the Nile as an officer in the army of the Ottoman provincial governor and “opened” the country for the family (this is why he was called “the Pioneer”). In time he even rose to the position of the Governor's right hand, a position that allowed him to acquire the wealth, real estate, ‘aristocracy,’ and also educational facilities which later generations could profit from. The palais in Darb Sa'āda was to house three generations of major officials and highly cultivated men of letters. “The Pioneer's” son, Maḥmūd's grandfather Ismā'il (1815–1872), served as educator of the princes at the court of the ‘vice-king’ (khedive) of Egypt. Maḥmūd's aunt 'Ā'isha (1840–1902), Ismā'il's daughter,

was instructed in religious matters, grammar and literature by renowned teachers, mastered not only Arabic, but also Persian and Ottoman, started to write poems and prose fiction after her husband's early death, and thus became 'Ā'isha al-Taymūriyya, the famous pioneer of women's writing in modern Arabic literature. Her (half-) brother, Ismā'īl's son from another woman, that is, Maḥmūd's father Aḥmad (1871–1930), received his education, among many others, from his sister 'Ā'isha and became one of the finest Arabic philologists of his time who penned numerous studies on Arabic language and Arab life and culture (folklore) and enjoyed an international reputation. If 'Ā'isha, thirty years his senior, can still be seen as a representative of the Ottoman era and its 'pure' esthetics, Aḥmad Taymūr's interests and efforts focussed on Arabic and Arab culture not without a certain utilitarianism – like many of his contemporaries he hoped to be able to revive the spirit of the Arabs' 'golden ages' and in this way initiate an Arab(ic) *nahḍa*, a “renaissance”, at a time when the Middle East had already begun to become dominated by European powers politically and economically (England had occupied Egypt in 1882 and established a colonial regime and economic system); the intellectuals had to find answers to the challenges of technical modernisation and the Middle Easterners' seemingly evident civilisational backwardness, from which also began to result a feeling of inferiority. Classicism seemed to be an answer and was widespread throughout the Arab world. Yet another age, that of the quest for national independence and then the consciousness of being free – and at the same time responsible – , is what the next generation of Taymūrs stands for, especially Maḥmūd and his elder brother Muḥammad.

These two, and their still elder brother Ismā'īl, were the children of Aḥmad Taymūr, the classicist encyclopedian and philologist, and his wife Khadija, the daughter of Aḥmad Pasha Rashīd, then Minister of the Interior, from a Greek wife. Aḥmad Taymūr and Khadija married in 1890, Ismā'īl was born in 1891, Muḥammad in 1892, and Maḥmūd in 1894.

Darb Sa'āda, situated between al-Mūsķī and Bāb al-Khalq in Old Cairo but bordering on the 'modern' city to the West, was still a rather mixed quarter at that time. There were the little palaces of pashas and houses of begs, but also a lot of workshops, stores and shops; in an autobiographical essay published in 1960 in *al-Ādāb*, Taymūr remembers it even as an “authentically popular” quarter in which many “different groups and classes” were living side by side. Although upper class families usually were eager to keep their children away from those of the lower classes, the Taymūr boys were allowed to mix freely with the craftsmen's, shopkeepers' and domestics' children, playing soccer, having races and enjoying all other kinds of children's amusements, observing also the adults at their work, listening to old men's stories, the alley's gossip and the women's

songs. The father's tolerant attitude thus enabled Maḥmūd and his brothers to get to know, in spite of their 'aristocratic' background, those aspects of the life of the Egyptian 'common man' that would later become the focus of attention in Muḥammad's and Maḥmūd's early writings.

The first tragic blow that seems to have left a lasting imprint on Maḥmūd's personality was his mother's untimely early death. She died – from measles! – in 1899 when Maḥmūd was only five years old, and since the father did not remarry he grew up motherless. There are no autobiographical statements as to the effect of this loss, but judging from the many short stories, both by Muḥammad and Maḥmūd, which made orphans their protagonists, it can be assumed that the children suffered severely from it. The love and affection with which aunt 'Ā'isha (the poetess, then approaching her sixties already) tried to replace the mother seem to have helped them to overcome the stroke of fate, but obviously this was not enough to compensate wholly for the loss.

The place left by their mother was filled, at least partially, by their father, whose influence on Maḥmūd would perhaps not otherwise have been as deep as it came to be. Together with the old family tradition, the children's increased fixation on their father may have given the world of books and learning in which he lived an additional appeal. This was even more so when, only three years after the mother's death, their aunt 'Ā'isha also passed away (1902). At the time Maḥmūd was still attending the Nāṣiriyya Primary School where he received a standard education of the modernised, mostly secular type from a crème of teachers who had to prepare intelligent students from the high society for the secondary level of the *lycée khédivial*. In his free time, Maḥmūd continued to play with the children of the quarter and appears to have been a happy and sociable boy.

13.1.2 Early youth

Though Aḥmad Taymūr was still in his early thirties when his wife died, he seems to have suffered from a kind of rheumatism which his doctor attributed, among other things, to the unfavorable climatic conditions in the old family residence. The large house that "the Pioneer" had built more than eighty years ago was now quite rotten, and its cold and damp interior was certainly not the environment in which Aḥmad's health could improve. He therefore decided, in 1903 or 1904, to give up the Darb Sa'āda domicile – which in Maḥmūd's recollection of his early childhood resembled a "ruined fortress" – and move to 'Ayn Shams, then still at the north-eastern outskirts of Cairo, where the family possessed a fine spacious

cottage in a rural, and much drier, area, not too far from the city. The idea of a change of location may well have helped him get over the loss of his beloved wife and his elder sister.

In ‘Ayn Shams several things became important for the young Maḥmūd and impressed him so deeply that they left their marks/traces in his writings. The first was the experience of life in the countryside. While he had come to know the milieu of the urban common people in Darb Sa‘āda, here in ‘Ayn Shams he could gain a first-hand knowledge of the life of the fellaheen (Egyptian peasants). Although the enormous social distance separating these Egyptians from urban ‘aristocrats’ was never forgotten, Muḥammad and Maḥmūd were allowed to mix freely with the people of the neighborhood, playing soccer with the other boys, joining the fellahs at work on the fields, and joining their customary evening gatherings, when they sat together talking, gossiping, disputing, telling stories, and singing songs. According to the memoirs of Ignatīi Yu. Krachkovskii (1883–1951), the famous Russian Arabist, the Taymūr boys were looked at by the local population as “real fellahs”. The local colour which, a few years later, was to become a characteristic feature of the early short stories of both Muḥammad and Maḥmūd was thus chiefly nourished in its imagery, selection of characters, and ‘Egyptianness’ from impressions that the two boys obtained from encounters outside their aristocratic homes in Darb Sa‘āda and ‘Ayn Shams.

At home meanwhile, the atmosphere of traditional Taymūrian erudition and learning began to exert more and more influence on Maḥmūd as he went to school and started learning to read and write. Aḥmad Taymūr possessed an immense private library, and, according to Maḥmūd’s recollection, he gave it “all his attention” and “spared neither time nor money” on it. Having lost his wife, he never remarried; instead, as some biographers have it, he “married” his own library. Maḥmūd recalls that the library grew up with him; from which stemmed his own love for books. In time it was to become one of the finest in the Middle East (with more than 7,000 titles in 1914 and more than 18,000 at the end of Aḥmad Taymūr’s life). Because it included a large number of precious manuscripts the collection also attracted numerous visitors, among them sheikhs from al-Azhar, intellectuals, writers and scholars, not only from Egypt but also from abroad (among them the above-mentioned Krachkovskii). These people of course also sat down with Aḥmad, sought his opinion and advice, held discussions with him (and often in small circles as well) about matters of shared interest or common concern; this intellectual atmosphere inside the home was to be as important for the two boys’ development during their formative years as the milieus outside where they were consorting with the poorer people in both city and country.

Even before they were able to grasp the meaning of classical Arabic poems, their father made them learn some of the finest pieces by heart. However, this introduction to the world of the classical heritage became much more appealing to Maḥmūd when his father introduced him to the stories from “A Thousand and One Nights”, perhaps because their folkloristic simplicity made them seem closer to the kind of popular stories that Maḥmūd had heard in *Darb Sa'āda* and ‘Ayn Shams or else they simply had a greater appeal for a child of his age.

It must have been still during their time in ‘Ayn Shams that Maḥmūd's brother, Muḥammad, began to compose poetry himself. He showed such extraordinary talent that he soon became known as “the poet of the Ecole Khédivale”. In 1905, at the age of fourteen, he is also said to have published his first articles in one of the most important papers of the time. Maḥmūd admired his brother for that very much. From early age, he used to regard him not only as a playmate and intimate friend but also as an example to follow.

So it was also Muḥammad who introduced him to modern, contemporary Arabic literature after their father had started to familiarize them with the classical heritage. While Aḥmad Taymūr continued in his efforts when the boys joined the Ilhāmiyya Secondary School in order to complete their standard education on the next level, Muḥammad had begun to read the works of the *mahjar* (diaspora) authors, that is, of the Arab, mostly Syro-Lebanese, writers who had left their home countries and settled in the New World, among them, in the first place, Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān (1883–1931), Amīn al-Riḥānī (1876–1940), and Mikḥā'il Nu'ayma (Naimy, 1889–1988), and of course tried to make his younger brother-friend share his ideas and feelings. Maḥmūd may still have been too young to fully understand what these writings were really about but, judging from the first poetry he composed some years later (and eventually published in 1915), it must already have fallen on a fertile ground: it was in that same free-verse form for which Jubrān had become famous, and its sentimental tone very much reflected the spirit of the diaspora authors.

The impact of his reading of *mahjar* writers is evident also from the first piece of fiction at which Maḥmūd tried his hand in 1908, at the age of fourteen. Reportedly, the experiment bore the title *al-Sharaf al-rafi'* (Noble Sense of Honour) and told the story of an Indian girl whom an English officer had assaulted and who was rightly revenged after that by her people. This plot, which of course epitomizes the colonial situation and advocates retaliation for unjust treatment at the hands of the colonial power and self-defense of the local population against foreign aggression, clearly shows that romantic nationalism was appealing very much to Maḥmūd, as it was to Arabs in general at the time, especially so in Egypt where a number of events had heightened anti-British emotions and produced a

nationalist movement that accused the colonial regime of ‘despotism’ and began to call for independence. The British had themselves added fuel to the mass feelings directed against them through unjustified executions of local peasants in the Delta village of Dinshawāy in 1906. The year 1908 in which Maḥmūd penned *al-Sharaf al-rafiʿ* saw the foundation of the Egyptian National Party as well as, for example, the opening of the Egyptian (now Cairo) University, a private initiative aimed at raising the level of local higher education to international standards. An Egyptian author who was also very much *en vogue* then, especially among young men in their late teens, was Muṣṭafā Luṭfi al-Manfalūṭī (1876–1924). Maḥmūd, though still a bit younger, was no exception, and the sadness and exaggerated melodramatic mood of *al-Sharaf al-rafiʿ* reveals the influence of his readings of al-Manfalūṭī. (The father, however, whom Maḥmūd had approached to help him publish the story, did not grant the boy this favour because he found it still not mature enough.)

One or two years earlier, the family had moved back to Cairo (‘Ayn Shams seems to have been a bit too far from the center of intellectual life) and found a new domicile there in the Ḥilmiyya al-Jadida quarter which had been built only recently and was now a favored place to live for many government officials. While the children continued to go to school, received additional instruction from their father and read al-Manfalūṭī and the *mahjar* authors, they also used to ‘stage’ some plays before an audience of family members, friends and guests (Muḥammad was to become a dramatist and an actor later in his life!), and also trained their pens further by editing a family newspaper.

In 1911 Muḥammad finished his secondary education and, like many sons of upper class families, was sent to Europe for further studies. While Muḥammad stayed in Europe (1912–1914, most of the time in Paris), Maḥmūd completed his school diploma (*baccalauréat*, 1912), registered at the Higher School for Agriculture (perhaps because he had liked the rural atmosphere of ‘Ayn Shams and at the same time sympathized with the poor fellahs), and studied there for two years.

However, the year 1914 was to be a kind of turning-point in his life. Firstly, he suffered a heavy attack of typhoid which not only forced him to abandon his studies but also changed his life completely; from then on, he was constantly under medical control, had to follow a diet and a certain daily rhythm, and was restricted in his movements. Thus, from the age of twenty till the end of his life he felt like living “in a cage” (interview, repr. in Campbell 1996). In retrospect, Taymūr even interprets his illness as possibly the main factor in his writing, in that, as a means of distracting himself from his suffering he decided to train himself to write fiction.

The second turning-point was Muḥammad's return to Egypt due to the outbreak of World War I. During the two years he had spent in France Muḥammad had not so much attended university but rather read European literature and frequented theaters. He came back full of new ideas, and it was he who recommended to Maḥmūd the writers of modern European short fiction, and particularly Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893). This latter was to become "the greatest short-story writer" in Taymūr's eyes, a model whose artistic level he constantly tried to attain by working on his style. With his own literature, he desired to achieve what de Maupassant had achieved for the French; his early short stories he even signed as *Mūbāsān al-miṣrī* (the Egyptian Maupassant). Another European author whom Muḥammad recommended enthusiastically was Anton Chekhov (1860–1904). Chekhov appealed to him as a sharp analyst of the depths of the human psyche. He too was to become one of the main models for Taymūr, but only when he made his 'psychological turn' in the late 1920s. Among local Egyptian writers, Muḥammad considered only two texts worth reading: *Ḥadīth 'Īsā b. Hishām* ('Īsā b. Hishām's Tale, first published as a series of articles starting from 1898) by Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī (1858-1930) and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal's (1888–1956) *Zaynab* (heroine's name, 1913). European short story writers as well as the chief representatives of local socio-political satire and 'romantic nationalism' in literature thus widened Maḥmūd Taymūr's horizon in his early twenties, a few years before he published his own first short stories.

13.1.3 Early career

Having recovered sufficiently from the attack of typhoid, Taymūr started to work, still in 1914, in the Ministry of Justice. After a year, he transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for another six months, after which he decided that he should give up this kind of occupation altogether because it did not suit his character and talents. Since the Taymūrs were rich, there was no need to earn a living by working; thus, from 1917 onwards, he lived the life of a wealthy man of letters, dedicating himself to reading, writing and (later in his career) delivering lectures. His decision may have been enhanced also by the successful publication, in 1915, of some pieces of prose poetry (*shi'r manthūr*), still in the style of Jubrān, in the reformist, national-oriented avant-garde review, *al-Sufūr*, and in 1916 the publication of *al-Ḥubb bayn al-ya's wa-qublat al-amal* (Love between Desperation and the Kiss of Hope), a story which, like his early poetry, showed the influence of his readings of neither European literature nor of al-Muwayliḥī or Haykal, but was simply still highly sentimental.

The decision to quit his bourgeois job may also have been influenced by Muḥammad's example: after his return from Paris, the elder brother was living the life of an artist (actor and dramatist). Not only did he bring out some poetry, but also published his first seven short stories (1917, in *al-Sufūr* as well). Furthermore, judging from Muḥammad's first play which bore the title *al-'Uṣfūr fī l-qafaṣ* (The Bird in the Cage, 1918), the fact that the two younger brothers abandoned the careers that they were expected to pursue may also be interpreted as a kind of rebellion against the restrictions of the 'gilded cage' of their education (without ever blaming their father explicitly for that, of course).

13.1.4 The "Modern School", marriage, Muḥammad's death

The second half of the 1910s was of utmost importance for modern Egyptian literature because it is then that a group of writers who demanded for Egypt a modern and at the same time authentically *Egyptian* literature, constituted itself. At first it centred around *al-Sufūr*, but later they formed themselves into *al-Madrasa al-ḥaditha*, the Modern School. The main literary vehicle for the achievement of their goals was the short story, a genre previously unknown to Arabic literature, and it was largely due to their efforts that it eventually came to be established as one of the major genres of modern Arabic fiction. Muḥammad Taymūr was an active member of the group, and through him also Maḥmūd was introduced into this circle of kindred revolutionary-minded reformist spirits, just one year before the national uprising of 1919 under the charismatic leader Sa'd Zaghlūl which finally lead to Egypt's (at least formal) independence in 1923.

Just one year after the 'Revolution', in 1920, Maḥmūd Taymūr married Zaynab Dhū l-Fiqār, the daughter of the King's chamberlain. He was then twenty-six and was not allowed to see his wife before the wedding; but, unlike the hero in Muḥammad's *Bird in the Cage*, Maḥmūd did not rebel against the traditional custom of arranged marriage. There was also no need – he fell in love with the bride, and Zaynab even seems to have become his life's great love. They had a boy and two daughters. However, this happy marriage at the end of 1920 was followed by a terrible stroke of fate a few weeks later. In February 1921 Muḥammad died very suddenly. His death hit Maḥmūd very hard, and he obviously reckoned the best way to cope with the loss of his beloved brother, intimate friend and admired example was to carry on and accomplish what death had prevented Muḥammad from accomplishing. First, he edited his Collected Works (*Mu'allafāt Muḥammad Taymūr*, 3 vols, 1922) and later cared for a book edition of the stories that had appeared earlier under the heading *Mā tarāhu l-'uyūn* (What the Eyes

behold, 1927), thereby honoring the brother's memory, making his art available to a greater public (and preserving it better for posterity). Secondly, he tried 'to take over' and continue Muḥammad's work. Maḥmūd's *al-Shaykh Jum'a*, the title story of the collection that came out three years later, was first published in 1922 in *al-Sufūr* where Muḥammad had played such an important role. Unlike the earlier sentimental attempts, this story was written in the spirit of Maupassant'ian realism – as his lifelong reverence for this author may perhaps also be explained, partly at least, as Brugman (1984, 255) suggests, from loyalty towards his brother, who "cultivated and refined" Maḥmūd's love for literature and to whom he therefore often referred as "my master" (*ustādhi*).

In the three years following Muḥammad's death, Maḥmūd devoted himself not only to editing the latter's œuvre but also to propagating 'modern' forms of writing, first by selecting, translating, and publishing a number of exemplary stories from world literature, then more and more by composing himself "authentically Egyptian" stories in the spirit of the Modern School and their call for an *adab qawmī*, a "national literature". After the stories had appeared in newspapers and journals, he brought out many of them again in his early collections: *al-Shaykh Jum'a* (Sheikh Jum'a [also: Gom'ah], 1925), *'Amm Mitwallī* ('Uncle' Mitwallī, 1925), and *al-Shaykh Sayyid al-'abiṭ* (Sheikh Sayyid the Fool, 1926). Since classical literature was regarded as being out-dated and the writings of the *mahjar* authors and al-Manfalūṭī (as well as the foreign, or foreign-inspired, yet extremely popular boulevard novels) were considered too melodramatic and unrealistic to be able to play a positive role in the construction of new independent Egypt, Maḥmūd Taymūr and the writers of the Modern School sought to create a literature that would both mirror reality and not remain silent about the evils and 'diseases' that stood in the way of progress. In his early stories he and his 'brothers-in-arms' saw themselves as their society's doctors and believed that literature could serve as a remedy and thus help to pave the way for a better future. The diseases which he and the other Modernists identified were, for example, alcoholism and gambling, the corruption and hypocrisy of religious leaders, arranged marriages, despotic husbands, the lack of education, and widespread superstition. But it was not only the themes that had to be 'typically Egyptian', but also the characters and the settings. This is why many of the stories were given the heroes' names as their titles, give detailed descriptions of the surroundings, of the protagonists' and other persons' outward appearances and habits, ways of living and thinking. In the early collections, Taymūr lets them even talk in the Egyptian vernacular (a *faut pas* according to traditional esthetics).

Most stories in these collections are set in the countryside and deal with characters who reportedly were modelled after persons whom Maḥmūd had met in

his childhood in ‘Ayn Shams. From the way he portrays these rural (and also urban) Egyptians in his first collections it becomes clear that as a writer he has not yet been able fully to overcome his aristocratic background. Quite often, he seems to be amused at their “exoticness” (Jad 1983, 37). Two of these early collections are also preceded by programmatic introductions. In the foreword to *al-Shaykh Jum‘a* Taymūr discusses the nature of the short story genre, its usefulness and prospects, as well as the desired ‘realism’, including the question of ‘literarising’ the vernacular. *Al-Shaykh Sayyid al-‘abīṭ* opens with a lengthy study on “The Beginnings and Development of the Arabic Story”, an important document in which the author scans the classical Arabic – elite as well as popular – literary tradition in search of what could serve as autochthonous predecessors to which the new ‘European’ genres, short story and novel, could be linked in order to root them in the Arab culture (he is however well aware that, in general, “the Arabs did not care much about prose fiction”). These forewords can be considered landmarks in modern Arabic literary theory and literary history.

13.1.5 The ‘analytical psychological turn’

From the mid-1920s, Taymūr published a new collection of stories almost every one or two years. In many of them he also re-published texts that had appeared already in earlier collections but which he thought could still be improved. In many cases, the revised texts differ considerably from their predecessors and show his striving for perfection as well as the development of his art.

The constant flow of texts did not stop even when in 1925 he left Egypt for a two-years stay in Europe (mainly in Switzerland). With the principal aim of stabilizing his health, he spent most of his time there reading European fiction, obviously reckoning his previous readings in this field to be still insufficient. The reading absorbed him almost totally and, together with the direct exposure to European civilisation, impressed him deeply. In an autobiographical document, *al-Maṣādir allatī alhamatnī l-kitāba* (The Sources which inspired my writing; published as preface to *Fir‘awn al-ṣaghīr*, 1939), he recalls that what he read and saw often “shocked” him and used to “linger in my heart of hearts.” It is no wonder then that he felt the stay in Switzerland had made him more mature, nor is it surprising that the new insights and experiences stood at the beginning of what would soon lead to a new stage in his writing. In his recollection it was here that he realised that local colour was not everything, that literature should deal,

though perhaps still in a local garment, with matters of a more general significance and that he should therefore focus more on *al-nafs al-bashariyya*, “the human soul”, in general.

It took some time however to translate these insights into a new type of narrative. Literary historians differ as to whether Taymūr's ‘analytical psychological turn’ took place already in the late 1920s or not before the mid-1930s. Wielandt notes that already in *Rajab Afandī* (Rajab Efendi, 1928) the author's sophisticated analysis of the protagonist's character goes far beyond the patterns and categories of characterisation he had applied rather mechanically in earlier texts. Brugman, on the other hand, is convinced that the first example in which the author got past his former exotist, “tourist-like” attitude towards his heroes – preferably “folksy people” and “strange characters” with “distorted appearances” in “dilapidated surroundings”, as Jad describes them (Jad 1983, 37) – , is the novella *al-Aṭlāl* (The Ruins, 1934). Be that as it may, both *Rajab Afandī* and *al-Aṭlāl* give evidence of the fact that the writer was entering a new phase in which the ‘inner worlds’ of his characters received increased attention, but not without relating them to the conditions of upbringing and *milieu* as well as connecting them organically with the behavior of the environment with which they interacted. That is, whereas the earlier stories were either rather static studies of a character or a milieu (tableaux of manners), or effectively focussed on a curious event, or aimed at discussing a certain social problem (Wielandt's four “types of narrative”), the texts now became more and more complex and accordingly also longer. *Rajab Afandī*, though still a linear one-string narrative no different in principle from earlier stories, consists of more than a hundred pages in the book edition, *al-Aṭlāl* ninety. With *al-Aṭlāl* Taymūr also performed, consciously, a ‘novelist turn’: he subtitled the text a *riwāya qaṣaṣiyya miṣriyya*, “an Egyptian novel”.

Maḥmūd Taymūr's increased interest in psychology parallels the same tendency in the Modern School during the second half of the 1920s. Yaḥyà Ḥaqqī, himself a member of the group and also its chronicler, recalls in his *Fajr al-qīṣṣa al-miṣriyya* (The Dawn of Egyptian Fiction, c. 1959/60) that the change in their understanding of what ‘realism’ in literature could mean was brought about essentially by their reading of Russian literature; whereas the French authors had appealed to their intellect, they found the Russians much closer to their hearts. Though Taymūr was staying in Europe when the Modern School started to run their review, *al-Fajr* (The Dawn), in 1925, he does not seem to have been cut off from the discussions going on in his home country; it is also known that he read Tolstoy in 1926. As is indicated not only by the founding of their new literary review (only two years after the granting to Egypt of a limited degree of independence) but also in the subtitle of *al-Fajr*, *ṣaḥīfat al-hadm wa-l-binā*’ (“The Paper of

Demolition and Reconstruction”), this group of writers believed that it was now definitely time to lay new and sound foundations for Egypt’s future national culture. In addition to authenticity (through local colour) and technical maturation, the turn to human universals qua psycholocial analysis was believed to guarantee a breakthrough to global standards of modernity.

However, in the year that Taymūr returned from Switzerland, *al-Fajr* was discontinued, and the group soon separated. The revolutionary vigor had soon cooled down and began to give way to a sometimes rather desperate mood. As *Rajab Afandī* as well as *al-Maḥkūm ‘alayhi bi-l-i’-dām* (Death Sentence), the story included in the same collection (1928), show, Taymūr reacted to this situation with stories “dedicated totally to the dark sides of human existence” (Brockelmann 1942, 221). At the same time, *Rajab Afandī* is the first in which he gives up the use of the vernacular for the dialogues – his tribute to the hope of winning recognition beyond a local reading public as well as the result of a consideration striving for aesthetic perfection: he now regarded two languages in one work as a contradiction that reduced the value of a piece of art (preface to *Rajab Efendī*). In matters of language, Taymūr began to become the purist as which he would later be remembered.

13.1.6 The 1930s and 1940s

From this time on, the author’s private life developed rather “smoothly” (Brugman), but with two major exceptions: the deaths of his father (1930) and son (1940). As an author, he gained more and more confidence in himself, evidenced by not only his turn to the more complex novel genre but also the fact that, in 1937, he brought out a collection of stories that contained exclusively revised versions of texts from his first three books, under the title *al-Wathba al-ūlā* (The First Step), implying that in the meantime he had transcended this early stage and reached maturity. This was paralleled by the edition of collected articles and lectures on “The Beginnings and Development of Fiction” (*Nushū’ al-qīṣṣa wa-taṭawwuruhā*, 1936) and “Our Need for Art” (*Ḥājatunā ilā l-fann*, 1937), which suggest that the maturation process was accompanied by theoretical reflection. By the end of the 1930s Taymūr also seems to have gained the recognition which literary circles had denied him as a member of the Modern School, and must have felt he had become something of a celebrity; otherwise he would hardly have opened his 1939 collection, *Fir‘awn al-ṣaghīr* (Little Pharaoh), with an autobiographical essay entitled “The Sources Which Inspired My Writing” (*al-Maṣādir allatī alhamatnī l-kitāba*). On the other hand, the achievement of a maturity in

crafting the short story genre also meant, according to critics and literary historians, that in spite of uninterrupted production, rewriting (to improve style or plot), rearrangement and republishing, Taymūr from now on was not adding anything substantially new to the field. By and large, this may be true with regard to narrative technique and his fondness for certain modes such as the grotesque, the tragicomical, the satirical, or the simple sketch, as well as perhaps with regard to the stories' personnel and setting, although a shift in preference from rural to urban may be observed in his later *œuvre*. Thus, whereas peasants or village sheikhs and imams had been the favorite subjects of the early collections, now urban characters such as government officials and employees, writers and actors or, from the lower social strata, craftsmen, artisans, shopkeepers, workers, caretakers, woman matchmakers, and also the marginalized – orphans, beggars, tramps, prostitutes – became more present from the 1930s onwards. Together with the psychological turn there is also a shift away from the exotist predilection for the queer and extreme (e.g., religious obsessions, insanity, strange cases of superstition) to more common, everyday problems and situations. There is, for example, the hard social reality seen through the eyes of a child whom his brutal foster-father forces to sell sweets in the streets (title story of *Nabbūt al-khafīr*, *The Guardian's Stick*, 1958); the mocking exposure of sensational journalism (*Najāḥ mi'a bi-l-mi'a*, *A Hundred Percent Successful*, in the same collection); the moving description of a woman beggar who has to decide whether she should sacrifice her honour or pass up an opportunity to provide for her child's living (*Umm Shahlūl*, *Shahlūl's Mother*, in *Thā'irūn*, *Rebels*, 1955); or a biting satire on the hypocrisy and cringing of some lower officials (*Jā'a l-shitā'*, *Winter has come*, *ibid.*).

Strangely enough, in his first full-length novel, *Nidā' al-majhūl* (1939; translated as *The Call of the Unknown*, 1964), Taymūr departs from the realism and Egyptianness of his previous fiction. The events take place in the Lebanese mountains and consist of a rather fantastic adventure, a "Gothic romance" which at the same time can be read as a "novel of spiritual quest" (de Moor 1998b), of "man's search for something more meaningful than the surface truths of social existence" (Jad 1983). The text was announced as the story of a girl who "loved truly and faithfully, but suffered disappointment from her Beloved, therefore left her country and made her imagination the place of her adventures, searching for an unknown (...) whom she could make her guide". This can serve as a metaphorical description of a widespread feeling among intellectuals on the eve of World War II, almost two decades after the uprising of 1919. Nationalist intellectuals had seen their former ideals being shattered by political, economical and social reality, and were now suffering from disillusionment. Many of them turned to radical ideologies (socialism, communism, fascism, Islamism – the longing for a guide,

a leader, a ‘Führer’!), while others, among them the Taymūr of *Nidā’ al-majhūl*, tried to cope with the situation by resorting to the unfathomable, the mysterious, the mystical.

Obviously not satisfied with this kind of solution, he too fell prey later to ‘stronger’ ideas (though only for a moment). His pensiveness gave way to a sort of Darwinism that sought to retrieve at least *something* positive from the pre-war and war situation. In the essay “al-Ṭabī‘a al-qāhira” (The Cruelty of Nature, in *Iṭr wa-dukhān*, Perfume and Smoke, c. 1945), for instance, he holds that life is essentially a fight for survival and that this “law of nature” is always for the benefit of humanity “because it exterminates the weak who are of no use to the world”; accordingly, also wars are seen as “an appropriate means to remove unsuccessful civilisations, to absorb weak states”.

13.1.7 A new field to discover: drama

Fortunately, Taymūr the writer soon outgrew Taymūr the ‘philosopher’, and his essentially humanist attitude vis-à-vis the struggling of his characters as well as his sense of realism and detail reclaimed the upper hand over implicit contempt of the weak and ideological platitude. An indication for this ‘recovery’ is his entering into what Nazīh al-Ḥakīm lists as a next stage after the sentimental, the analytical, the local colour, and the novelistic approaches – drama. With the exception of *al-Infijār* (The Explosion), subtitled “A theatrical piece intended for reading” and published within a collection of short stories (*al-Ḥājj Shalabī*, 1930), Taymūr had not tried his hand at drama before the mid-1930s, and three pieces which he probably wrote in the second half of the decade. During the war years, however, he suddenly came out with no less than ten plays. Many of them were issued in two versions, one in the Egyptian colloquial (intended for the stage), and one in *fuṣṣḥā* (standard written Arabic, for reading). They are either comedies or social drama set in contemporary Egypt, or historical plays dealing mostly with more ‘eternal’ questions. While the early one-acters for the most part satirise “the weakness and pretensions of the upper classes” (Badawi 1987, 90) – *Ḥakamat al-maḥkama* (The Court Rules, early 1940s but published only in 1963) being an exception in that it deals with a case of baby murder in the countryside, two other plays of the first half of the 1940s clearly let the reader/spectator feel the pulse of the Second World War: *al-Makhba’ raqm talattāshar* (Shelter No. 13, 1941) describes the emotions and reactions of some Egyptians of different social standing who become trapped in an air-raid shelter, while in *Qanābil* (Bombs, 1943) – “perhaps Taymūr’s greatest comedy”, according to Badawi (1987, 98) – the author

“delights both in revealing the hollowness of most people’s pretexts, as well as in pointing out the gulf that exists in Egyptian society between town and country” (Landau 1958, 151), taking as his starting point a situation where the city lives in fear of bombardments during the war. Another play, quite similar in intent and pointing to a realist ‘recovery’, is *Ḥaflat shāy* (A Tea-Party, 1942, together with *al-Munqidha*), “perhaps the best Arabic farce” (again Badawi), “a hilarious though scathing satire on the blind imitation of Western manners (Badawi 1987, “Introduction”, 6) and “the emptiness of French-inspired snobbery” (Landau 1958, 254). Unlike the characters in these plays who are all very lifelike and “seem copied *in toto* from everyday society in Egypt” (ibid., 152), those of the other war-time productions – ‘*Arūs al-Nīl* (The Bride of the Nile), *Suhād* [heroine’s name], ‘*Awālī* [heroine’s name], *al-Munqidha* (The Woman Saviour), and *Ḥawwā’ al-khālida* (Eternal Eve), all published 1942–45 and all set somewhere in the Arab or pharaonic past – appear quite artificial, and the themes seem either fairly romantic or rather studied (again ‘philosopher-like’). They all center around female protagonists. The picture of woman as emerging from these texts is however a very traditional one; the author ascribes to the ‘fair sex’ certain unchanging, essentially ‘feminine’ features (as the title “Eternal Eve” already suggests), and it is another “law of nature” that woman can never be man’s equal.

The dualism, just observed, of down-to-earth realism and pseudo-philosophical idealism and abstraction in search of ‘universal truths’ (where Taymūr is certainly not at his best) continues right into the author’s post-war writings – and can be observed in the field of short story, novel and drama alike. Thus, on the one hand, the writer goes on to depict the various everyday problems, hopes and yearnings of his fellow-countrymen, studies both peasant and urban personalities as well as their social situations. As a result of the war-time experience, one can detect in many of these works a sharper edge or even a shift to socially committed literature (as de Moor 1998 and Brugman 1984, 259, have it). In the novel *Kilyūbātra fī Khān al-Khalīlī* (Cleopatra in Khān al-Khalīlī, 1946), for instance, Taymūr sits in judgment on politicians and the world of international congresses, using satire in order to describe the seemingly inescapable temptation of power and the mechanisms of moral decay. *Salwā fī mahabb al-rīḥ* (Salwā in the Whirlwind, 1947), subtitled “an Egyptian story” and probably the author’s best-known novel, is dedicated to the difficult circumstances now faced by the New Woman in the wake of the war. By now she had gained a high degree of self-consciousness and freedom, but that had only exacerbated her sense of privation as social conditions succeeded in preventing her from living the way she would like; as a result, she was blown to and fro by the “whirlwinds” of fate, personalised partly through the men on whom she had to set her hopes.

On the other hand, there is still a tendency to abstraction, intellectualisation, and studied intervention, a feature that may perhaps originate in his early romantic idealism and/or be based on his notion of the writer as a thinker and authority of learning, but which sometimes interferes with or superimposes itself on his quest for realism. As Funk has observed (1969, 94), Taymūr's short stories at this period usually lack specific temporal or spatial coordinates. Two plays of the earlier post-war years are again set in the Arab past and thus show his inclination towards 'literary' subjects: *al-Yawm khamr* (Wine Today, 1949) retells the life of the pre-Islamic poet Imru' al-Qays and *Ibn Jalā* (Ibn Jalā, 1951) that of the famous Umayyad governor, al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 714); both are meant to deal with universal human problems, for which the author thought a 'dignified' classical Arabic to be the most appropriate level of language.

The 'aristocratic' style which Taymūr also utilised, one that is "usually lucid, precise and economical", yet quite "*deliberately* made to sound suggestive of the Arabic of the classical age"; one that is therefore not entirely free of mannerisms and that Jad describes very aptly as that of a "philologist and classical Arabic revivalist" (Jad 1983, 124), this style, together with his services to Arabic literature as a pioneer of the short story, eventually earned Taymūr the First Story Prize of the Academy of the Arabic Language in 1947, followed two years later by membership of the same institution. In 1950 he was awarded the King Fu'ād Prize for Literature. Until then, the author had affirmed his aesthetic conservatism not only through his fiction and drama, but also in an account of his journey to the United States (*Abū l-Hawl yaḥīr*, The Flight of the Sphinx, 1947) as well as in a number of essays, collected in *Fann al-qaṣaṣ* (The Art of Story-Telling, with an Introduction to the Case of the Arabic Language, 1945) and the above-mentioned *ʿIṭr wa-dukhān* (Perfume and Smoke, c. 1945), subtitled *Khawāṭir wa-maqālāt fī l-adab wa-l-fann wa-l-masrah* (Reflections and articles on literature, art, and theater).

13.1.8 After the 1952 Revolution

Despite Taymūr's 'aristocratic' origins, the Revolution of 1952, which sought to abolish the *ancien régime*, did no damage to his reputation. Although some hostile voices maintained that, "as an aristocrat, he knew nothing about the life of the common people or their feelings" (Paxton 1974, 177), he was awarded the first-class decoration for Distinguished Services in 1962 and in the following year the State Prize for Literature, clearly showing that, despite his earlier monarchist af-

filiations, he was acceptable to the new regime. Judging from his play *al-Muzayyafūn* (The False Ones, 1953), written before 1952, he had already sensed the need for, and indeed been in favour of, political change. The novella/novel *Thā'irūn* (Rebellious Ones, 1955) may even be taken as evidence for the idea that, at least at that particular moment, the author had not managed to avoid the spell of revolutionary pathos and identified Nasser as that strong leader whose advent one of the protagonists had so longed for in the closing scene of *al-Muzayyafūn*. The novel retells the events of the last seven months before the Egyptian Revolution of July 23, 1952, through the lives of three young Egyptians who rebel against the prevailing pre-revolutionary conditions.

Yet it goes without saying that Taymūr never became a 'revolutionary.' It is true that in his later fiction he can slip into the role of underprivileged protagonists so convincingly that he manages to make even criminal acts of rebellion plausible. Furthermore, he obviously also felt no difficulty in harmonising his own ideas concerning the role of literature in society with the concept of *littérature engagée* that became a postulate of the new times: in 1959 he published a collection of essays under the title *al-Adab al-hādif* (Committed Literature) in which he stressed that "the writer is a helper of mankind in the widest sense" and that "the products of his pen will soon lead society to new horizons and give them the confidence they need in order to fight the struggle for life successfully". Even so the writer who penned these words is clearly more a humanist nobleman than a proletarian socialist.

Taymūr continued to write until briefly before his death, but, as a work such as *Shumrūkh* (A Stalk of Dates, 1958; revised as *al-Dhahab al-aswad*, Black Gold, 1965) makes clear (it being a novel about the political and social implications of the discovery of oil in an imaginary "Oil-Land", *Zaytistān*), he always remained the observer, the analyst, the visionary warner, without ever becoming a rebellious activist. Since he was already in his sixties during the early years of the Egyptian Revolution, he may well have been too old for such a role in any case. Schoonover, who met him around 1957, describes him as "mild in speech, courteous in manner, careful in attire, ... in every way the gentleman and scholar the Taymūr family represents" (Schoonover 1986, 36). He clearly regarded himself more as a member of the Language Academy than a child of the Revolution. Of his twenty-odd books on Arabic language and literature, three-quarters were written after he had been elevated to the Academy's olympus. Among these, *Mu'jam al-ḥaḍāra* (The Dictionary of [Modern] Civilisation, 1961) deserves special attention. Taymūr here picks up the thread of his earlier work, *Mushkilāt al-lughā al-'arabiyya* (Problems of the Arabic Language, 1956), where he had already advocated the Arabisation of loanwords from European languages. In the later

work, he tries to provide Arabic equivalents for a large number of terms. As a linguistic purist and authority, he also composed a children's story intended for class reading, *Qunfudha wa-Amūra wa-mā jarà la-humā fī l-junayna al-maṣḥūra* (Qunfudha and Amūra and What Happened to Them in the Enchanted Garden, 1968?).

Maḥmūd Taymūr died in 1973 in Lausanne/Switzerland where he had gone for medical treatment.

13.1.9 Reception

Taymūr's life and work have become the subject of numerous studies, some of them not a little hagiographic. Histories of modern Arabic literature remember him foremost as a pioneer of the modern Arabic short story, and the remainder of his vast output has not really been able to add to his fame. Other authors – Najīb Maḥfūz in the field of the novel, Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm in that of drama – are considered the great pioneers. Among his plays, the non-historical, non-abstract, realist ones, especially the comedies and farces, are usually regarded as his best. The novels have had a rather ambiguous reception: some critics (e.g. Vial 1986) hold that, as a master of the short story, he should not have turned to another genre at all, while others (e.g. Jad 1983) mainly criticise his stylistic classicism as being inappropriate mannerisms in certain places. Still others (e.g. Ḥusayn 1988) point out that he often failed to write up to his own standards; in his own essays on literary theory, for example, he maintained that an author should not impose himself on his own characters, a feature that, according to Ḥusayn, is not translated with sufficient consistency into his own narratives.

Throughout his life, Taymūr contributed to the literary life of his country, writing articles in various newspapers, reviews and journals, and touring Egypt and the Arab world giving public lectures on Arabic language and literature. He was highly sought-after as a participant in interviews and discussions, and also renowned as a great patron and promoter of younger talents. Today, his short stories continue to be read as classics of modern Arabic literature, while the novels and plays are viewed more as documents of a distant past.

13.2 Maḥmūd Taymūr's works

13.2.1 Titles in Arabic

- al-Shaykh Jum'a, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* (Shaykh Jum'a, and other stories, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1925).
- 'Amm Mitwallī [Mutawallī], wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* ('Amm Mitwallī, and other stories, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1925).
- Fann al-qaṣaṣ* (The Art of Storytelling, Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Raghā'ib, 1925).
- al-Shaykh Sayyid al-'abī, wa-aqāṣīs ukhrā* (Shaykh Sayyid the Fool, and other stories, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1926); contains as an introduction a study that was published in 1936 in an enlarged version as *Nushū' al-qīṣa wa-taṭawwuruhā* (see below).
- Rajab Afandī: qīṣa miṣriyya* (Rajab Efendī: an Egyptian Story, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1928).
- al-Ḥājj Shalabī, wa-aqāṣīs ukhrā* (Ḥājj Shalabī, and other stories, Cairo: Maṭba'at al-l-timād, 1930); includes *al-Infjār* (The Explosion), a one-act play intended for reading.
- "al-Nizā' bayn al-fuṣḥā wa-l-'āmmiyya fī l-adab al-miṣrī al-ḥadīth" (The Clash of Standard and Colloquial Arabic in Modern Egyptian Literature), *al-Hilāl* 41 (1931): 185–188.
- Abū 'Alī 'āmil artiste, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* (Abū 'Alī Trying as an Artist, and other stories, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1934); revised as *Abū 'Alī al-fannān* (1954, see below).
- al-Atlāl: riwāya qaṣaṣiyya miṣriyya, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* (The Ruins: an Egyptian Fictional Story, and other stories, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1934); revised as *Shabāb wa-ghāniyāt*, in: *Shabāb wa-ghāniyāt, wa-aqāṣīs ukhrā* (1951, see below).
- Nushū' al-qīṣa wa-taṭawwuruhā* (Growth and Development of the Story, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1936).
- al-Shaykh 'Afā Allāh, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* (Shaykh 'Afā Allāh, and other stories, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Salafiyya, 1936); reprinted as *Zāmir al-ḥayy* (1953, see below).
- Thalāth masraḥiyyāt min faṣl wāḥid* (Three One-Act Plays, Cairo: Maṭba'at 'Atāyā, n.d. [1942?; Nazīh al-Ḥakīm gives "Cairo: Muḥammad Ḥamdī, 1936"]); contains *Abū Shūsha*, *al-Mawḥib*, and *al-Ṣu'lūk*, all in Egyptian vernacular (later republished in *fuṣḥā*).
- Ḥājatunā ilā l-fann* (Our Need for Art, Cairo: Dār al-Nashr al-Ḥadīth, 1937).
- al-Wathba al-ūlā* (The First Step, Cairo: Dār al-Nashr al-Ḥadīth, 1937); revised versions of stories from the first three collections.
- Qalb ghāniya, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* (Cairo: Dār al-Nashr al-Ḥadīth, 1937).
- Fir'awn al-saghīr, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* (Little Pharaoh, Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ma'ārif, 1939); includes as its preface *al-Maṣādir allatī alhamat-nī al-kitāba*.
- Nidā' al-majhūl* (The Call of the Unknown, Beirut: Dār al-Makshūf, 1939).
- Maktūb 'alā l-jabīn, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* (Written on the Forehead, and other stories, Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ma'ārif, 1941).
- Ḥūriyyat al-bahr* (The Sea-Houri, Beirut: Dār al-Makshūf, 1941).
- 'Arūs al-Nīl: masraḥiyya ghinā'iyya bi-l-'āmmiyya* (Nile Bride: a Musical Play in the Vernacular, Cairo: Dār Majallat al-Ḥawādith [?], 1941); revised as *Fidā'* (1951).
- al-Makhba' raqm 13 [talattāshar]* (Shelter No. 13, Cairo: Dār Majallat al-Ḥawādith [?], 1941 [?]); annotated phonemic transcription by Stig T. Rasmussen (København: Akad. Forl., 1979).

Abū Shūsha wa-l-Mawḳib: masraḥiyyatān bi-l-ʿarabiyya al-fuṣṣḥā (Abū Shūsha and The Procession: Two Plays in *fuṣṣḥā*, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Taraqqī, 1942; Damascus: Maktabat al-Taḳaddum, 1943).

ʿAwālī: masraḥiyya bi-l-ʿarabiyya al-fuṣṣḥā fī thalāthat fuṣūl (ʿAwālī: a Three-Act Play in *fuṣṣḥā*, Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā / M. al-Istiḳāma, 1942).

al-Munqidha, wa-Haflat shāy (The Savior, and The Tea-Party, Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ahliyya, 1942).

Qāl al-rāwī (The Narrator Said, Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1942).

Suhād, aw al-Laḥn al-tāʾih: masraḥiyya ʿarabiyya bi-l-fuṣṣḥā fī thalāthat fuṣūl (Suhād, or The Lost Melody: an Arabic Three-Act Play in *fuṣṣḥā*, Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1942).

Qanābil (Bombs, Cairo: Lajnat al-Nashr li-l-Jāmiʿiyyīn, 1943).

Bint al-shayṭān, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā (Satan's Daughter, and other stories, Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1944).

ʾIṭr wa-dukhān: khawāṭir wa-maqālāt fī l-adab wa-l-fann wa-l-masraḥ (Perfume and Smoke: Ideas on Literature, Art, and Theatre, Cairo: Lajnat al-Nashr li-l-Jāmiʿiyyīn, Maktabat Miṣr, 1944/45).

Fann al-qaṣaṣ, maʿa taqdīm fī qaḍiyyat al-luḡa al-ʿarabiyya wa-nusakh min aḥdath aqāṣīs al-muʿallif (The Art of Story-Telling, with an Introduction Concerning the Arabic Language Issue, and the Latest Specimens of the Author's Stories, Cairo: Majallat al-Sharq al-Jadīd / Dār al-Hilāl, 1945).

Ḥawwāʾ al-khālida (Eternal Eve, Cairo: Dār al-Istiḳāma, 1945).

Kilyūbātra [Cleopatra] fī Khān al-Khalīlī (Cleopatra in Khan al-Khalili, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Istiḳāma, 1946).

Shifāh ghalīza, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā (Thick Lips, and other Stories, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Istiḳāma, 1946).

Abū l-hawl yaṭīr (The Sphinx Takes Off, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Istiḳāma, 1947).

Salwā fī mahabb al-rīḥ: Qīṣṣa miṣriyya (Salwa Blowing the Wind, Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1947).

Khalf al-lithām (Behind the Veil, Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, 1948); partially reprinted as *Dunyā jadīda* (1957, see below).

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Shabāb wa-ghāniyāt, wa-aqāṣīs ukhrā (Young Folk and Pretty Girls, Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1951); previously published as *al-Aṭlāl* (1934, see above).

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- Ashṭar min Iblīs* (Cleverer than the Devil, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1953).
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- Kidhb fī kidhb: masraḥiyya miṣriyya fī arba'at fuṣūl* (Lie Upon Lie: an Egyptian Four-Act Play, Cairo: Maṭba'at Miṣr, 1953); *fuṣḥā* version of *Kidb fī kidb* (staged 1952, but never published in the vernacular).
- Zāmīr al-ḥayy* (Quarter Flautist, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1953); previously published as *al-Shaykh 'Afā Allāh* (1936, see above).
- Abū 'Alī al-fannān* (Abū 'Alī the Artist, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1954); revised version of *Abū 'Alī 'āmil artist* (1934, see above).
- Thā'irūn* (Revolutionaries, Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl, 1955); the title story is a long narrative classified as a novel by some.
- Kalimāt al-ḥayāh al-'amma* (A Word on Life in General, Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Istiḳāma, [1956]).
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- Tamr ḥinnā 'ajab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1958).
- al-Adab al-hādīf* (Committed Literature, Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1959).
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- Anā l-qātil, wa-qīṣaṣ ukhrā* (I'm the Murderer, and other stories, Cairo: Dār Nahḍat Miṣr / Dār al-Qalam, 1961).
- Mu'jam al-ḥaḍāra* (Lexicon of Civilisation, Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1961).
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- Ṭalā'ī al-masraḥ al-'arabī* (Early Phases of Arabic Theater, Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1963).

Ẓilāl muḍīḥah: falsafat al-fann wa-mushkilat al-mujtamaʿ wa-l-ḥayāh (Shadows in the Light: Philosophy of Art and the Issue of Society and Life, Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1963).

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Zawj fī l-mazād (Marriage for Auction, Alexandria: Dār al-Kutub al-Jāmiʿiyya, 1970?).

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al-Qiṣṣa fī l-adab al-ʿarabī, wa-buḥūth ukhrā (The Story in Arabic Literature, and other studies, Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1971).

13.2.2 Works in Translation

Collections and Novels

Mahmoud Teymour, *Tales from Egyptian Life*, translated by Denys Johnson-Davies (Cairo: The Renaissance Bookshop, 1949).

Bonne Fête (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1954); French translation of *Kull ʾām wa-antum bi-khayr* (1950) and nine other stories.

Mahmoud Teymour, *The Call of the Unknown*, translated by Hume Horan (Beirut: Khayats, 1964); translation of *Nidāʾ al-majhūl*.

Mahmoud Teymour, *Sensuous Lips, and other stories*, translated by Nayla Naguib (Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organisation, 1993).

Single Stories

“Summer Journey”, translated by Denys Johnson-Davies, in *Modern Arabic Short Stories* (London: Heinemann, 1976 [originally Oxford University Press, 1967]), 167–172.

"The Enemy", translated by Anthony McDermott, in *Arabic Writing Today: The Short Story*, ed. Mahmoud Manzalaoui (Cairo: The American Research Center in Egypt, 1968), 47–53.

Plays

Shelter No. 13 (København: Akad. Forl., 1979); annotated phonemic transcription of *al-Makhba' raqm 13 [talattāshar]* (1941?), by Stig T. Rasmussen.

"The Court Rules", translated by Medhat Shaheen, in: *Arabic Writing Today: Drama*, ed. Mahmoud Manzalaoui (Cairo: American Research Center in Egypt, 1977), 53–63; translation of *Ḥakamat al-maḥkama* (first item in *Khamsa wa-khmēsa*, 1963).

Articles

"Le Conflit des langues arabes dans la littérature égyptienne moderne", in *Actes du 18^e Congrès International des Orientalistes*, Leiden 1932; translation of "al-Nizā' bayn al-fuṣṣḥā wa-l-ʿāmmiyya fī l-adab al-miṣrī al-ḥadīth" (1931).

Other

Muḥammad Taymūr, *Mu'allafāt* ("Works"), ed. Maḥmūd Taymūr, 3 vols.: 1. *Wamīḍ al-rūḥ* ("Sparks from the Spirit"; includes as "Book 4" the first edition of *Mā tarāhu al-ʿuyūn*, "What the Eyes See"), 2. *Ḥayātunā al-tamthīliyya* ("Our Theater Live"), 3. *al-Masraḥ al-miṣrī* ("Egyptian Theater") (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-lʿtimād, 1922).

Muḥammad Taymūr, *Mā tarāhu al-ʿuyūn* ("What the Eyes See"), 2nd edition, ed. Maḥmūd Taymūr (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Salafiyya, 1927).

Majallat al-Qiṣṣa, general editor Maḥmūd Taymūr (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Irshād al-Qawmī, Jan. 1964 – Aug. 1965); monthly, suspended with no. 20.