

## Self- Liberation and National Struggle in Yemeni Women's Early Short Stories

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### ABSTRACT

The first women's short story in the Yemen was published in the South in the 1960 at the beginning of the decade that was to witness national liberation movements in both the South and the North. In the South independence was gained from British colonial control in the 1967 when the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen was formed. During this decade women from the South began to publish short stories. In the North the revolution of 1962 led to the creation of the Yemen Arab Republic, ending the rule of the Imams. But for most of the rest of the decade there was instability and fighting between republican and loyalist forces. Women from the North started to publish short stories in the 1970's. Since then Yemeni women have continued to write and publish their stories in newspaper, magazines and in anthologies<sup>1</sup>

Although Yemeni women had been writing short stories for more than three decades, beginning with F. Ahmed who published *Zalim ya-Mujtam'a (Society, You Tyrant)* in 1960 in the Adeni journal, *Saut al-Janub* (the Voice of the South), their work received little critical attention until the 1990's<sup>2</sup>. In 1992, two years after the union of the North and the South, Nahlah Abdullah published *Aswat Nisa'iyya fial- Qissa al-Yamaniyya* (Yemeni women's Voice in short stories), the first anthology of Yemeni women's short stories. The seriousness with which Nahlah Abdullah treats woman's short stories is a far cry from the patronizing disdain Abd al -Hamied Ibrahim displayed in the first literary history of the Yemeni short story and novel, *Al - Qissa al- yamaniyya al-Mu'asira (the Contemporary Yemeni story)* published in 1977, where he asserted but the main contribution of women writers was to add "the perfumed feminine touch".<sup>3</sup> He also said that he refused to look at women's work "objectively", because women writers were too sensitive and might stop writing if they heard any criticism.<sup>4</sup> Many newspapers, such as *al- Jumhuriyya* and others, now give considerable space to women to publish their literary work to the extent that some readers feel that newspaper compete to publish women's writings. Women have also recently founded their own newspapers, such as *al-Mar'a* (The woman) in 1994, *al-Yamaniyya* (The Yemeni Woman) in 1998 and *al-shaqalaq* (The Anemone) in 1996 which publish women's literary works and serve as a new window for self-expression. Some women publish collections of their short stories independently and some have also received the help of the Ministry of Culture. The Empirical Research and Women's Studies Center at Sana'a University offers courses on

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Yemeni Women's writings, and it supports research on women's literature.<sup>5</sup>

In this paper, which is part of a large work in progress, I shall look at some of the works of the first women short story writers in Yemen. This is an effort to redress previous neglect. The pioneering women short story writers, who belong to the group of newly educated urban women, addressed two main themes in their early production; the liberation of women and the liberation of the nation.<sup>6</sup> I shall examine their treatment of these twin themes of liberation in my paper, placing their writing within the context of the histories of the North (The Yemen Arab Republic) and South (The people's Democratic republic of Yemen), which were separate countries when these women began writing.

### **Contexts, Conventions, and Conditions; Gender and literary Production**

Yemeni men, from both the South and North, began to write short stories in the late 1930's and early 1940's whereas women began two to three decades later; in the 1960's in the South and in the 1970's in the North. This was in part due to the unequal education opportunities available to men and women. Also, women in the South had more access to education than women in the North. Furthermore, women were also constrained from writing stories.

In the South, under British rule (1839-1967) there were some primary and secondary schools founded for girls, especially in Aden. The domestic isolation of women, especially those of the elite, was reduced to some extent through social contact with the British in Aden. Exposure to alternative social contact with alternative social practices enabled some women, mainly Adenis, to take part in inter-literary competition. During the national liberation struggle women participated with men in political activism.

Most of the North, during the rule of the Imams, was a highly isolated society. It was also a highly gender segregated society. Women and men virtually lived in two different worlds. There was no schooling for girls, apart from some opportunities given to a very few elite women to learn *The Qur'an* and the rudiments of reading and writing Arabic. Girls only started going to school in parts of the North in the 1960's. As late as 1973 the rate of illiteracy for the entire North was estimated to be ninety percent. Men were freer to get education and the more fortunate among them were able to pursue higher studies abroad.

Women in both the South and the North were more confined to their respective regions than the men, who were able to move about more freely. Many literary men such as Ahmad al-Zubairi, Ahamed Nu'man and Abdullah Nu'man from the North, traveled between Sana'a and Aden and published in both places. In cooperative ventures between the North and South two newspapers were begun in Aden, *Saut al-Yaman* in 1946 and *al-Fadul* in 1948. The well-known Yemeni journal *AL-Hikmah* was first published in Sana'a in 1938 by Abd al-Wahhab al-Warith and continued for twenty-eight issues. It was started up again in Aden in 1971 by 'Umar al-Jawi. It is now being published once again in Sana'a.<sup>7</sup>

The constraints women suffered were due to social practices, which were often erroneously claimed to stem from religious prescription. For example, it was alleged that Islam frowned upon education for women. Popular belief also holds that women's entire beings, body and voice, are *awra*, something sexual that should be concealed. However, religious prescription simply enjoins both men and women to cover their private parts, which are designated as *awra*. Moreover, popular convention held that just a woman's voice but even her name was *awra*, and must not be heard in public. In practice women in Yemen are often not called by their names. They are commonly referred to in terms of their



relationship to men; the wife of so - and- so or the mother of so- and -so. In some parts of Talz and Sana'a women have adopted male names with which they address one another. In some parts of Yemen even the words women *mara* or wife (*Zawja*) are considered 'awra do that a man may refer to a woman or wife as "those at home" (*ahl al-bait, al 'adhi fil - bait*) or he may refer to his wife as "the goat" (*shufa*).

The beginnings of Yemeni women's short story writing, or their finding of a public voice, coincided with the national liberation movements in the North and the South . the freedom of women to speak in public however did not mean that women suddenly were free to claim a public identity . indeed, we do not know the real name of the first Yemeni woman short story writer who published under the pseudonym F. Ahmed . Salamah 'Abd al-Qadir Ba- Matrif (born in Shahir, Hadhramut in 1933) signed the short stories she published in the 1960's with the initials S.'A. B.<sup>8</sup> When Nabiha'Abd al -Hamid (born in Aden 1948) began to publish her short stories she used the name Fawziyya Abd al-Razzak. Amal al- Shami ( born in Sana'a in 1956) used several pseudonyms including Bint al Yaman (Daughter of Yemen), Bint al Sharq (daughter of the East) and Amal Kamal. Amat al- Rauf Hussain al- Sharki (born in Sana'a in 1958 adopted the name Raufa Hassan to hide her true identity as a radio announcer although she published short stories under her real name.<sup>9</sup> In looking at the short stories women wrote in the 1960's and 1970's we see how the pioneering writers confronted problems of self- emancipation at the same time as those of national liberation, since many felt constrained to give themselves the protective covering of pseudonyms.

### **Liberating the Self through Story Telling**

Early Yemen women short story writers employed a realistic mode which was characteristic of men's writing at the time . Women writers provided a picture of what was happening in real life inside and outside the home. Their daring creativity brought the private and the taboo into the public domain where it could be seen, read and criticized. Dominated by patriarchal rules, women wrote about the oppression of their sex to foster inner liberation. They presented women characters who revolted against traditional thinking and the conventional roles of women. They portrayed the changes occurring inside families. They advocated such revolutionary ideas as the women's right to choose her own marriage partner.

### **Southern Writers**

In 1961, F. Ahmed about whose life we know nothing, become's the first Yemeni woman to publish a short story. "Zalim ya- Mujtama'a" points to the injustice of a society which condemns a daughter for her mother's transgressions .! Muna's mother had run away with her lover before she was forced to marry another man who become Muna's father. Muna who looks like her mother also becomes a victim. Everyone treats Muna as if she were already guilty, expecting her to act like her mother. Muna's father frequently beats her for trivial reasons. Her stepmother, Muna's father second wife, constantly reminds Muna of the "terrible crime" her mother had committed. Muna eventually falls in love with 'Abd Al-Mun 'im, the brother of her friend, who wishes to marry her. Her father refuses him and prevents Muna from leaving the house. Abd al- Mun'im, meanwhile, becomes angry and marries another woman . After several years of domestic incarceration Muna decides to run away . public reaction is predictable; she is just like her mother.<sup>10</sup> Muna's life becomes unbearable and she runs away. She refuses to be oppressed and takes action. Muna's flight symbolizes the persistence of the struggle between women and patriarchal society.

The story deals with the sensitive subject of honor, in Arabic *sharaf* (honor and nobility) and *ird* (honor associated with both women and land). We come to realize that what happens to the daughter had happened to the mother before. Muna's father had agreed to marry her mother, even though he might have sensed she was in love with someone else. But as it turns out he was not able to deal with the idea that she was not a virgin.

Nabiha Abdul Hamid (born in Aden in 1948) published under the pen name Fawziyya Abd al- Razzak. She earned a bachelor's degree in social work in Egypt and later went on to do advanced study in social science in Moscow. She started publishing in 1963. In 1968 she won the second prize in a youth competition. She is currently Director-General in the Department of Research at the Ministry of Social Affairs.<sup>11</sup>

In her 1936 story "Ummi" (My Mother) she deals with the family and social change in Yemeni society.<sup>12</sup> Traditionally upon the father's death responsibility for the extended family falls upon the eldest son whose mother is expected to live with him even after her son marries. The story opens with the protagonist and main narrator of the story, remembering the sacrifices his widowed mother made to raise him and his brothers and sisters by working as a seamstress and more secretly working as a maid. After graduating from a university abroad he starts working. Instead of helping his mother as would be expected of him he informs her that he is engaged to a girl who refuses to live under the same roof as her mother - in - law because she wants a house of her own. His mother though disappointed accepts the situation telling him that his fiancée has the right to make such a request. Later, when a colleague invites him to his son's birthday he notices that his mother lives with him. He sees how the married couple respect the woman and that she is happy with them. Suddenly, he decides that he will divorce his wife if she refuse to have his mother live in the same house with them. When he tells his mother of his decision, she "hugs and kisses me wishing me happiness in my new nest".<sup>13</sup>

The story presents three kinds of women with three points of view: the self-sacrificing mother whose goal in life is the happiness of her children, the son's fiancée who is a woman of the new generation influenced by western ideas of the nuclear family, and the friend's wife who is a woman of the new generation who is able to assimilate both old and new values. The writer favors the friend's wife, who appears in a positive light, whereas the son's fiancée is not given a chance to defend her point of view. As for the mother, she is portrayed as wise, intelligent and aware of how difficult her life would be with her daughter - in -law, preferring to live peacefully by herself.

#### Northern Writers

Amal al- Shami was born in Sana'a in 1956 into a conservative family of religious judges, in the 1970's, she wrote short stories, play, songs, and journalistic articles, publishing under a variety of pseudonyms. She published a series of three stories under the title *al- Mutakabbirun* (The Arrogant ones) in 1948.<sup>14</sup> During this time she also, attended various cultural events in Sana'a. However, by the late 1980's after unrelenting family and social pressure, disappointments in her personal life, and frustration with publishing she withdrew from public life. She secluded herself at home and seldom published anymore. As a way of rebelling, she wrote a velvet a *sharshaf* the traditional black covering urban women wear outside home, which is usually made out of a silky synthetic material but did not veil her face.

Her stories take up the themes of education and writing as paths to self- liberation ,

and deal with the problems girls face with the recent changes in society . In the first story, the heroine, Huda, tries to liberate herself through writing and publishing but encounters family opposition, which stops her. The first scene takes place in a company director's office. The director is reading a magazine while Muhammad, an employee, waits anxiously. The director apologizes, saying that he was so absorbed by an article written by a woman writer in the newspaper that he forgot Muhammad's presence. He asks Muhammad if he thinks educated Yemeni women have achieved any success. Seemingly disinterested, he answers that a Yemeni woman is simply a woman. When the director gives him the article to read, Muhammad murmurs that he should tear up the newspaper because «her picture is there and it ruins the reputation of the family. She embarrasses me. I would like to cut up her picture together with the whole newspaper.<sup>15</sup> The director then realizes that the author of the article is Muhammad's sister, as he had previously suspected (since they have the same family name. Suddenly, the director says that he wishes to marry Huda. Her brother thinks that the director is being sarcastic and says : "disgrace (ar) has invaded our peace".<sup>16</sup> By the end of the scene we see that the director only pretend to admire the educate, liberal woman writer .Ironically, he becomes upset when his secretary takes the initiative of expressing her love for him. "What are these times coming to ? A woman dares to a man ! It is impudent of her to announce her love to me".<sup>17</sup> Such contradictions in the attitudes of Arab men towards women are a frequent theme in many women's writings.

Meanwhile, the brother returns home furious and shouts at his sister. He as the eldest brother, after the death of their father, feels that he has the right to exercise his authority over her. He tells her that she has humiliated the entire family and should stop writing. Huda challenges his authority, saying that he has no right to stop her. As brother and sister they should respect other. However their mother brought up to be dependent and submissive to patriarchal authority backs her son and criticize Huda's defiance. She tells Huda she should surrender to her brother's will because "only men can help her". The brother continues to insult his sister, repeating what is commonly said about women: "She is just a woman- a servant of man in a house full of children". Finally, Huda runs to her room "crying loudly like a child".<sup>18</sup> The cry symbolizes the helplessness of women. A woman's life is like that of a child, in the hands of others. The story portrays the sad end of many ambitious, pioneering women who can not resist intense family and societal pressures. In this short story Amal al- Shami is prefiguring the end of her own struggle.

During the same period, Raufa Hassan, born in 1958 into a family of religious judges in Sana'a earned her bachelor's degree from Cairo University, her master's degree in the United States, and her Ph.D. at the University of Paris. While still a schoolgirl she was one of the first Yemeni women to become a radio announcer. She went on to work in television when it first came to Yemen in 1975. In a mini- short story, consisting of just a few lines (a genre that is currently popular in Yemen where these concise pieces appear in the mainstream press) she deals with women's self- liberation, using a man as the narrator. Told in one brief camera shot, an educated and cultured man demands freedom using all the terms for this idea to be found in a dictionary. When he comes marry, however, he chooses an uneducated girl. He makes his new wife cover her face while he continues talking about justice and brotherhood and sisterhood. When his wife gives birth to a girl, he cannot hide his disappointment and goes into mourning. In this brief but dense story the author shows how a man is unable to apply his liberal ideas in his private life. By choosing a male character as her protagonist, the writer may be suggesting two interpretations : that a woman is more capable of change or that men's so- called "liberation" in no way

guarantees women's progress.<sup>19</sup>

### **Telling Stories of Gender and National liberation**

Before the two revolutions in Yemen works of literature were devoted to expressing people's wish for freedom from the Imam's rule in the North and from British colonial rule in the South. Short stories contributed to the struggle and to winning the two revolutions. They were used as weapons to motivate people to work against both oppressive systems. Abdullah Salim Bawazir, for example, considered his 1968 collection of short stories, *Thaurat al - Burkan* (The Revolution of the Volcano), to be a contribution of the pen in the battle against tyranny.<sup>20</sup> Some women also used their pens to support the nationalist causes but their writings, like the militant roles they played during the two revolutions, have been neglected. Their writings probe the double oppression of gender and nation.

### **Southern Writers**

Thurayya Mankush (born in Aden in 1948) who graduated from Damascus University was active in intellectual, political, and cultural life in the South. Along with the poets 'Abd al'Aziz Maqalah, Muhammad Said Jaradah and 'Abdullah al- Baraduni, she won the Arts Medal presented by President Ali Nasir in 1980. She also received the women's Medal from the Women's Union in 1983 and the liberation Medal from the Salih in 1997. She is now teaching in Aden University.

In "Mata Tuftah al -Abwab"? (When Will the Gates be Opened?) published in 1972, she portrays people's hardships and the existence of rampant corruption during the colonial administration. Written in a stream of consciousness from the whole story takes place in less than an hour. While the male protagonist is about to break the locks of a store he recalls what has pushed him to become a professional thief. He remembers the corruption of the colonial administration, his wife's sickness, his son's sickness, his responsibility towards his old parents, and his despair in finding a job. The story is a moving depiction of the ways colonial oppression and called for independence he was made to pay the price. Like many other men he lost his job and remained unemployed. The man's wife sells her jewelry to keep her family alive. While her husband is searching for a job she is the one who takes care of the whole family including her husband's mother. She is the one who takes their sick son to the hospital. The narrator declares, "to keep them living his wife is paying the price".<sup>21</sup> she loses her youth, beauty and health. Finally, she falls sick and is bedridden. When the family loses the woman's support, the man starts to steal for a living. In this case the woman is shown to suffer from the same conditions that oppress her husband, while she is also portrayed as the bedrock of the family.

Shafiqah al- Zukari was born into a cultural family in Aden in 1942. Her stories were read on the radio in Aden. She received first prize for "Armala Shahid" (A Martyr's Wife) published in 1968 in the weekly youth competition in Aden. She published two collections of short stories : *Nabdat Qulub* (Beating Hearts) in the 1960's and *Dhalla Ukhra* (Another loss) in the 1970's. She has a special interest in children's literature. Presently she is the head teacher in a school in Aden.

In "Armala Shahid" the story moves between the pre- revolutionary past and the present using a series of flashbacks. The story opens on the wedding anniversary of the protagonist, Laila. It is also Martyr's Day when the country honors the heroic deeds of those who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of their country. When the jasmine seller comes he triggers off in Laila memories of her martyred husband Jalal and the tender moments they had together. When Laila's daughter Ahd tells her of the martyr's Day



processions underway she recalls the valiant role her husband played in the national revolutionary struggle against colonial rule. She remembers the night of his death. She then remembers her own participation in the national struggle following her husband's martyrdom. In the second part of the story protagonist recalls her feeling towards Galal's friend Khalid who helped her after her husband's death. The writer endows Laila with contradictory and confused feelings which are often revealed symbolically. The reader feels that the writer, who is the protagonist, wishes to express emotion more directly but hesitates. The protagonist asserts that she loved her husband and had a happy life with him but describes her feelings towards her husband's friend in a warmer manner. Her love for her husband is loaded. It is connected with the *ahd* or marriage contract which is also her daughter's name. The coincidence of the wedding anniversary falling on martyr's Day suggests that Laila's marriage was a martyrdom, a performance of social duty. Following her husband's death when she participated in the revolution she felt useful and fulfilled.

Laila and Khalid are cautious about their love. Laila calls him "brother" while he says that he consider her a sister. When Khalid takes her to visit her husband's grave it seems that they are alone until unexpectedly it becomes apparent that her mother has joined them. By the end of the story Laila is not hesitant about her love for Khalid and indeed is more daring in proclaiming it than he is. She announces that she will not deny her love. The story ends on an ambiguous note. When Khalid goes away Laila remarks: "Khalid has traveled. I wish him success in his heart's mission Khalid's will be a martyr".<sup>22</sup>

#### Northern Writers

In the North the national struggle was directed against the rule of the Imams rather than western colonialists. The revolutionaries, or the republicans as they were called, worked to end the isolation and ignorance the people suffered under the Imam. In the 1962 a republic was declared but fighting went on between republicans and loyalist for the rest of the decade. Following the revolution schooling began to be provided for women and they gained the necessary tools with which to write.<sup>23</sup> So far I have found only one short by a woman from the North which deals with women's struggle in the context of state oppression.

Ramziyya al - Iryani published a powerful short story in 1979 called "al-Rahinah" (The Hostage). Born in Iryn in Ibb in 1995, Ramziyya is Yemen's first woman novelist and the first writer from the North to publish a short story collection. She graduated from Sana'a University in 1976, majoring in philosophy. She currently works in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She is one of the few early writers who have continued to write and publish until now. She has published two collections of short stories: *L'alla Y'ud* (He Might Come Back), 1981 and *al- Qanun Aris* (The Law is a Bridegroom) as well as two novels: *Dahiyat al - Jash'a* (The Sacrifice of Greed ) in 1970 and *DarAl- Sultanah : Rawaiyya Tarikhiyya* (The palace of the Sultan: a Historical Novel) in 1998.<sup>24</sup>

Al-Iryani's short story "The Hostage" deals with the Imam's practice of imprisoning in his palace a son of each leading tribal sheikh to ensure his obedience as well as that of his tribe.<sup>25</sup> Al- Iryani makes the mother of a hostage her protagonist showing how she suffers patriarchal oppression at the hands of her own tribe. The story reveals how patriarchy works through an intricate set of gender oppressions tied to social status. The mother is oppressed by the sheikh and his other wives. Her sons, in turn, is oppressed and mistreated by his own father. The sheikh is himself oppressed by the Imam who forces him to give one of his sons as hostage. It is a chain which the strong hold power and authority over the weak and oppress them.



The story opens with a sad woman taking advantage of her son's sleep to cry. She feels lonely and old. She had once been a fair young girl from a distant village happily engaged to her cousin. When the sheikh caught sight of her he forced her to marry him and imprisoned her in his house. Later, when he becomes angry with her family he had their house burned. Her parents died of shock and her brother fled the country. She has suffered oppression for many years. Although she is one of the sheikh's wives, she is one treated like the others but more like a servant. The sheikh neglects her and ignores their son, whom he does not treat like his other sons. One day the sheikh decides to take her son to the Imam's palace to offer him up as a hostage. The previously obedient wife revolts. No longer a passive victim, she now takes a stand against the sheikh. She tries to run away with her son but is caught. Then for the first time she shouts at the sheikh, telling him what a despotic, unjust person he is. She tells him that he has imprisoned her in his house, destroyed her youth, ruined her honor, and robbed her of her family. When the time comes for her son to be taken away as a hostage, she runs out into the street without her veil calling for help. No one offers her assistance because every one fears the sheikh. His wife must not mix with the mob. The sheikh orders that she be caught. He then has her taken to a deserted house to be locked up forever. The people are angry with the unjust sheikh but cannot act. They watch her come to the window every morning to tell her story. Deprived of her son she becomes a living dead person. Ramziyya al- Iryani's moving short story is a trenchant indictment of tribal patriarchy and the Imam's oppression.

### Conclusion

Yemeni women came naturally to the art of short story as they became familiar with oral modes of story telling. Women used to create stories to tell their children and some women narrated their stories in women's gatherings. The art is still practiced by older women. Thus when women were equipped with writing they had another tool for telling stories.

When women write short stories about women it is not only a way of revealing what is considered to be *'awra*, or to be hidden, but it is a revolutionary act that liberates the writer and ends the prison of "the age of the harem". Yemeni women writers used short stories as a device of self- liberation. The protagonists of all of the stories I have dealt with are women with only one exception. All the writers show concern with women's issues that were long absent in print.

In the stories presented in this article, liberation is achieved on different levels : the level of the individual (Raufa Hassan and Amal al-Shami), the family (Nabiha Abd al-Hamid), the society (F. Ahmed) and the state (Ramziyyah al-Iryani, Thuraiyya Mankush and Shafiqah al-Zukari). In the stories, the individual and the collective interact. Sometimes the odds are so overwhelming that the protagonist runs away. As the stories I have discussed reveal, ultimately the liberation of women can not be achieved without the liberation of the nation.

Most literary historians have neglected Yemeni women's written contributions to the national movements, just as women's activist participation in the two revolutions has been largely ignored. This article has been an attempt to bring critical attention to the pioneering women short story writers and their contribution to reshaping national discourse and to creating a new discourse on women.

### References :

1. This article grows out of research for my doctoral dissertation entitled " Gender in the Writing of Yemeni Writers " in Tilburg University in the Netherlands. It was supposed to be published in the first issue of the (Dirasat niswiyya journal (spring 1999) the journal of the Empirical

research and women Studies Center, Sana'a University, but because of the closure of the Center and the great attack against it the journal was not published . The article draws on three major sources: a survey of the main Yemeni newspaper and journals that will be used to compile a guide to all Yemeni women's writings by the end of 1999; a questionnaire I distributed to Yemeni women writers; and an anthology of women short story writers by Nahlah Abdullah, *Aswat Nisa'iyya fi al- Qissa al-Yamaniyya* (Sana'a ; al Mufadal Publishing House, 1992). I am rateful to Dr. Margot Badran, who read and commend on different versions of this article, and to Dr.Tineke Willemsen, Dr.Thaker and Dr. Catrien Bijleveld.

2. Abdullah, Aswat Nisa'iyya, p.15.
3. Abdul Hamid Ibrahim, *Al-Ojssa al-Yamaniyya al-Mu'asira* (Beirut:Dar al- 'Udah, 1977). The book, as is true of many other books dealing with the role of literature in the September and October revolutions, neglected women's contributions.
4. Ibid., p. 116. Taha Hassain said the same regarding women writers in Egypt in 1939. He said that he would treat them with far more gentleness and kindness than he would their male counterparts. He claimed that it was not because of any weakness on their part, but to show ((care, regard and good patience)). Joseph T. Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995) p.232.
5. Dr. 'Abd al - Aziz al - Maqalah, a professor of Arabic and literature and a well- known Yemeni poet and critic, teaches and coordinates this course with specialists in the field uch Dr. Yumna al -' Id and Dr. Hatim al- Sukar.
6. Margot Badran in « Dual Liberation: Feminism and Nationalism in Egypt 1870's-1925», *Feminist Issues* 8, no 1(1988) pp. 15-34 discusses the earlier struggle of Egyptian women mounted against the double oppression of gender and nation.
7. Muhammad Abd -al-Malak al- Mutawakil, *al- Sahafa al- Yamaniyya: Nash'ataha Wa atawwaruha* (Caïor: al- Dubji, 1983)pp.45-61.
8. she only began to use her name in 1998 after she had become a grandmother, by which time she felt that society had come to respect women, published their work in newspapers. I received this information from Faiza Bamatrif, a relative of hers and a teacher at al-Ahqaf University in Hodramut, to whom I am grateful for information on Hadrami women writers.
9. Al- Sharki, now widely known as Raufa Hassan, tells the story of how she changed her name in «A Veiled Voice », in Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke. Eds.,*Opening the Gates : A Century of Arab Feminist Writers* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1990) pp. 376-77.pseudonyms have been used by Arab as will as western writers. Malak Hanifi Nasif used the pseudonym Bahithat al- Badiya (researcher of the Desert); Zaynab Fawwaz used several names including Durrat al Sharq (the pearl of the East) to sign her polemical articles; and Aisha Abd al- Rahman used the pen name Bint al - Shati (Daughter of the Beach).
10. Abdullah, Aswat Nisa'iyya, P.24
11. Ibid., p. 25.
12. It was published in al-Ray al-'Am in 1963. Abdullah, Aswat Nisa'iyya, p.25.
13. Abdullah, Aswat Nisa'iyya, p.31.
14. Ma in, nos. 4 and 5 (September - October 1978) pp. 40 - 41.
15. Ibid., P.40.
16. Ibid., P.40.
17. Ibid., P.40.
18. Ibid., p.40.
19. Ghada al -Samman in her short story *Al- Sa'aton wa al- Ggurab*, in Rahil Al- Maraf'l al- Qadimah (Beirut: Ghada al- Samman Publication, 1973) deals with some problem of dual personality. Her story takes place in Aden, where Fadl is married to a traditional wife and has five children. However, during the revolution he marries a colleague. Later he falls in love with yet anther woman, a Yemeni journalist who comes to report on the revolution. He wanted the three women in one ngle woman.
20. Ibrahim, AL - Qissa al - Yamaniyya al-Mu 'asara, p.53.
21. Ibid, p.74.
22. Abdullah, ASWAT nisatyya, P.86. This evokes the Egyptian novelist Qut el kouloub's Ramza

trans. From the French by Nayra Atiya (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

23. In the 1950's the government newspaper al- Iman announced the establishment of a girl's school to be supervised by two Palestinian teachers. Al-Mutawakil, al -Sahafa al- Yamaniyya p.223.
24. The stories of the collection L 'alia Y'ud were previously published separately in newspapers . She has also published a book on pioneering Yemeni women in education.
25. The novelist Zaid Muti'l Dammaj deals with this same theme in his novel al- Rajina (The Hostage) (Beirut Dar al- Adab, 1984),, which has the same title as al- Iryani's short story. Though many critical works have been written about this novel, nobody has mentioned the possibility that Dammaj may have been influenced by al- Iryani's work.