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## Arabic Young Adult Literature in English

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**Abstract**

Research shows that literature in translation has a tremendous impact on students' learning in an increasingly interdependent world. The purposes of this study were to explore the usefulness of Arabic young adult literature in English in both American and Arabic classrooms and to examine the current availability of Arabic young adult literature (AYAL), particularly in the genre of fictional prose. Since I wanted my work to be useful for readers and teachers both in the United States and the Arab world, the accessibility of the texts in English was essential. My extensive searches indicated that there is a real scarcity of first-rate AYAL available in English. I found 49 AYAL books that were published or republished in English between 1988 and 2010. The selected books can be placed into two categories: contemporary fiction (timely stories about Middle Eastern/Arab conflicts) and adapted classical Arabic folk literature (simplified versions of classical Arab folk tales). Interestingly, the majority of the contemporary books were originally written in English, and about 19% were translated into English from other languages like Arabic, French, and German. The majority of the adapted classical books were originally written in Persian or ancient Arabic and translated into English. The study also showed that Arabic young adult literature in English, as any young adult literature, plays an important role in classroom instruction in Arabic and non-Arabic speaking countries.

*Keywords:* Arabic literature; translated literature; young adult literature; TESOL

### Arabic Young Adult Literature in English

The Arab and Persian cultures gave the world perhaps the most enduring collection of stories ever assembled, the vast number of *Arabian Nights* tales, which have been well represented in library collections for years; so, too, have a number of folktales from the Ottoman Empire been popular, and new retellings continued to be published in the late nineties. Egypt is well represented in nonfiction about the pharaohs, pyramids, and mummies. There are even Egyptian myths available in English, taken from hieroglyphics written on scrolls. What has been missing, however, is literature showing children's everyday lives in the Arab world and diaspora, both in the past and today.

Contemporary young adult literature reflects the complexity of the society in which it is produced; its themes are of importance to young adults, and the issues with which the characters wrestle are of significance in our ever-changing world (Stover, 1996). Donelson and Nilsen, in *Literature for Today's Young Adults* (1993), stated, "by 'young adult literature' we mean anything that readers between the approximate ages of twelve and twenty choose to read (as opposed to what they may be coerced to read for class assignments)" (p.7). In the United States, an abundance of books have been written and published expressly for American children and young adults. Publishers have come to recognize the consumer power of this age group. Despite the growing size of the Arab American community, a very limited number of books exist that are written solely for and about Arab adolescents.

Extensive research has recently been conducted on the power of young adult (YA) literature in general and multicultural YA literature in particular in addressing the diverse needs of adolescents and young adults in a global society. \ Stover observed that contemporary young adult literature tends to share several structural characteristics that reflect the interest of its intended readers: a young adult main character from twelve to twenty years old; one major plot, with few subplots, taking place within a fairly short

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time span; a limited number of characters; one major setting; and an approximate length of 125-250 pages. The language of young adult literature usually realistically echoes the language of young adults themselves.

There is quite a demand for Arabic young adult literature in English in the U.S. and in Arab countries. However, the scarcity of specialized resources for the study of contemporary Arabic young adult literature (AYAL) is a serious problem that hinders the use of such books. As an Arab and a researcher who conducted and published research about AYAL, I often receive requests from school teachers, librarians, publishers, and others, to make suggestions for titles of “authentic” Arabic YA trade books in English. Unsurprisingly, my e-mail inbox would frequently include messages such as, “I am looking for Arabic YA/teen titles. Do you know of any authors and/or titles for this genre?”; “My company is desperately seeking Arabic YA books, would you suggest any titles”; “I am hoping you can help me with title or author or publisher suggestions about Arabic YAL”. Such messages made me feel that there is a serious need for Arabic YA literature in the U.S. and in the Arab world, but educators are often at a loss to find quality material in English. Having received requests from English language teachers, parents, librarians, publishers, and others asking me to make suggestions of “quality” AYAL for their clients, I became very interested in making all the efforts to collect the readily available AY texts and make them accessible for all readers interested in reading AYAL- an attempt to respond to such important requests.

My search for Arabic YA novels in English, which lasted for more than three years, indicated that there is insufficient literature about and for Arab young adults. The publishing ventures focus mainly on producing literature for adult readers and young children with no or little emphasis on young adults (under 23). Qualey (2010) criticized, in her article “I Declare: The Emergence of Arabic Young-Adult Lit”, the contemporary publishing ventures’ efforts toward Arabic YA literature:

Typically, the Arabic-writing world's grown-up publishing ventures have focused on books for grown-ups, while children's publishing ventures have focused on picture books for the 0-12 set, and very little has targeted the Arabic YA market. They were either left to comic books, or adult literature, or foreign languages. (para. 3)

In my research, I sought to identify quality young adult literature in English and to establish a bibliography that would appeal to the fans of Arabic young adult literature. Since I wanted my work to be useful for readers and teachers both in the U.S. and the Arab world, the accessibility of the text in English was essential. It would be of great value if these Arabic YA books were made available in English translation: *Al Maljaa'* by Samah Idris in 2005, his *Al Nasab* in 2006, Fatima Sharafeddine's *Faten* in 2010, and the Idris's *Fellafel Al Naziheen* in 2010. Also some classic Arabic tales like (Musbah Aladdin) *Aladdin and the Lamp* or (Hekayaat Joha) *The Fabulous Adventures of Nasruddin Hoja* would represent the greatness of the Arabic classic literature. This research project is the first that focuses on Arabic young adult literature as an independent genre. *Arabic young adult literature* (AYAL) in this study refers to any literary piece written about Arab young adults in English or in English translation. This study also sheds the light on the values and benefits of sharing AYAL with Arab and non-Arab students.

### **The Current Availability of AYAL**

Historically, Arabic literature has long been a rich source of knowledge and entertainment that no one can ignore; *One Thousand and One Nights* is one example among others that represent the greatness of the Arabic literature. However, today's parents, teachers, librarians, and publishers are concerned about the scarcity of readily available contemporary Arabic literature for modern readers of any age, including young adults, particularly in the genre of fictional prose. It is very important to mention here

that the availability of Arabic literature has strongly been influenced by the political, social, economical, historical, and religious conditions since the sixth century till today. Traditionally, Arabs produced and transmitted their stories and poetry orally (N.B. *Literature* refers to written work.; it was not usually transcribed. According to Allen (2000) the traditional “hakawati,” or storyteller, would retell the entertaining parts of more educational works or one of the many Arabic fables or folktales to the people who would automatically memorize such stories to retell to the next generation. Consequently, there have been only a few fictional stories written down for Arab readers.

Arabic literature emerged in the 6th century with only fragments of the written language appearing before then. It was the Qur’an in the 7th century which would have the greatest lasting effect on Arabic culture and its literature (“Arabic Literature,” 2011). After the rise of Islam, Arabs preferred to write books about Islam (Qur’an and Hadith) over literature. Consequently, the production of Arabic literature has been minimized in the period between the 12th century and 19th century. On the other hand, during the 19th century a “renaissance took place in Arabic literature” (as cited in Anati, 2010, p. 67). Arab, specifically Egyptian, writers started to release literary texts in Arabic in the 20th century. They spread to other countries in the region. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab world became more open to the Europe, and the result was a growing interest by Arabs in imitating the western forms of the short story and the novel. These forms began to be preferred over the traditional Arabic storytelling and poetry. Many critics point to *Zaynab*, a novel written by Husayn Haykal in 1913, as the first true Arabic language novel (Anati, 2010).

Writing fiction has not often provided a sufficient income for *litterateurs* in the Arab world. According to Allan (2004), very few authors have been able to find the time and opportunity to develop the craft of novel writing for sustained periods; those who have done so have normally held posts as civil servants (e.g. Najib Mahfuz). The short story, rather than the novel, has increased in popularity in recent decades, surpassing

poetry in many Arab countries. A number of Arab authors have developed the craft of the short story in different ways, and they have produced collections of very high quality. For example, Ghasan Kanafani's *All that Left to You*; and *Returning to Haifa* are excellent examples of such genre- the short story.

In an increasingly globalized world, literature in translation has an especially important role. Increasingly, writers, readers and publishers are turning to literature as a bridge between cultures, particularly Western and Arab societies estranged since 9/11 attack. Consequently, at some point in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Arab countries witnessed a growing interest in translating Arabic texts into European languages and the other way around. A few YA literary texts were translated from Arabic into English. For example, *A Hand Full of Stars*, 1992, by Rafik Schami; *Arab Folk Tales From Palestine and Lebanon: Abu Jameela's Daughter and Other Stories*, 2002, by Jamal Sleem Nuweihed; and *Kalilah and Dimnah: Stories for Young Adults*, 2000, by Anonymous. However, perhaps not surprisingly, most of the translated works covered political or religious (Islamic) issues, so that people might learn about an often-stereotyped ethnic group, particularly post 9-11 ("Boom in Arabic Translation," 2008).

Nowadays, in an attempt to remedy the lack of contemporary AYAL, major publishing companies are searching for high quality, young-adult literature to be translated into English that will appeal to teens. Consequently, more YA literature is appearing in Arabic translation, such as [J.C. Michaels' Firebelly](#), and Randa Abdel-Fattah's YA novel *Where the Streets Had a Name* (Qualey, 2010). While still relatively small, the number of Arabic works translated into German, French, and English has been rising. Although the West and the Arab world are largely foreign to each other when it comes to literature, there are some emerging efforts directed towards Arab and Islamic children's and young adult literature. According to Qualey (2010) four books represent the emergence of a new genre of Arabic Young Adult Literature: *Al Maljaa'* by Samah Idris in 2005, his *Al Nasab* in 2006, Fatima Sharafeddine's *Faten* in 2010, and the

Idris's *Fellafel Al Naziheen*" that same year. Qualey hypothesized that the books by Idris and Sharafeddine represent a new phenomenon because of their distinguishing characteristics: a simplified, modern Arabic short sentences, tight writing, strong crafting, and their targeting of young adult readers. Hopefully, these books will be translated into English. Sharafeddine's YA novel, *Faten*, won first prize at the 2010 Beirut Book Fair, it provides a model of simple, beautiful, straightforward prose, written in short sentences for easy and enjoyable digestion by adolescent readers. A number of Arab-American authors also released contemporary YA novels in English which dealt with issues of importance to Arab adolescents in the U.S. Among which are: *Habibi*, 1997, by Naomi Shihab Nye ; *The Scar of David*, 2006, by Susan Abulhawa; *Does My Head Look Big in This?* 2007, by Randa Abdel-Fattah; *A little Piece of Ground*, 2006, by Elizabeth Laird; and *A Stone in My Hand*, 2002, by Cathryn Clinton.

### **Methodology**

The search for narratives with Arab or Muslim-Arab young adult characters was the goal of this study. Information in numerous books, databases, websites, journals, magazines, and other sources in public and university libraries was scanned. My extensive searches indicated that Arabic literature in English is rare. In total, I found 49 books, and these were primarily written by Arab-American authors or by non-Arab authors.

In an attempt to make the selected AYAL books accessible to all readers, I have compiled annotated bibliography of the readily available AYAL books. The list is organized by the books' English-language publication date, from the most recent to the least recent. Each entry includes the book title, author, language (original or/and translation), number of pages, and book category and summary (See Appendix). To fill the "availability" gap, my bibliography includes books that were written by members or/and non-members of the Arab culture. It also includes books with Arab protagonists, Arab-American protagonists, and/or Arab-European protagonists. The settings may be in

the Arab world or outside the Arab world. The list has books that were originally written in English or were translated from any other language into English. Contemporary fiction books, timely stories about Middle Eastern/Arabic issues as well as adapted classical Arabic folk literature, and simplified versions of Arabic folk tales are in the bibliography.

### **The Effects of AYAL in Classroom Instruction**

Having read so much YA and having explored its usefulness with teens, I became very interested in integrating Arabic young adult literature into the English language arts curriculum in both Arabic and non-Arabic secondary schools for the same reasons American teachers integrate YA literature: to motivate teen readers by giving them the opportunity to read stories that connect to their real-life experiences. Of course, non-Arab teen readers of Arabic young adult literature could also experience the benefits of such reading—namely, learning about an often-stereotyped ethnic group, particularly post 9-11. Consequently, it became my goal to seek out quality Arabic young adult literature (AYAL) and explore its usefulness in both the American and Arabic classroom.

Arabic young adult literature, as any young Adult literature, plays an important role in classroom instruction in Arabic and non-Arabic speaking countries. There are some important differences between the educational systems in Arabic countries and Western nations that might influence the use of YA literature. The educational system in most Arabic-speaking countries is still more “traditional,” more teacher-centered, than the systems in the U.S. and western Europe. The English language is now taught and learned as a second language in many Arabic-speaking countries. The reading needs, general interests, and academic experiences of students who live in the Arab world are different from those of Arab or non-Arab students who live outside the Arab world, yet exploring culturally authentic Arabic young adult literature in the secondary classroom,

whether that classroom be in the U.S. or in an Arab country, can have positive impacts on teen readers.

### **The Merits of AYAL in Arabic-Speaking Countries**

Integrating Arabic young adult literature into the English language secondary school curriculum is beneficial for Arab students who learn English as a second language in many Arabic-speaking countries. Although the English language is a secondary discipline in most Arabic schools, many teachers, educators, and parents emphasize the importance of mastering the English language in this global society where English is the language of politics and business. Some Arab parents send their children to private schools where they can learn all disciplines in English; others send them abroad for higher education. Research shows that Arab university graduates tend to major in fields that require strong English, such as science or engineering. Reading literature written in English, literature that is particularly interesting to young readers and with which they readily engage, may positively affect adolescents' English speaking ability.

Moreover, rapid globalization has increased the need for cross-cultural communication so that people have access to information all over the world. This growing need leads to greater demands on the foreign language teaching profession. Although Arab teachers, educators, and parents emphasize the importance of learning the English language, many research reports claim that the majority of Arab secondary students struggle with learning or enjoying English. Several studies have shown that a high percentage of Arab secondary school students drop out of school at this age level. According to Al-Darwish (2006), dropping out of school is often attributed to students' deficiencies in English before secondary school entry.

In most Arabic secondary schools, direct instruction by the teacher remains the primary method of teaching. As a result of this teacher-centered approach, most Arab secondary school students feel hesitant to ask questions or participate in the English

classes; they seem to be passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge. Al-Darwish finds that Arab English language teachers are extremely reluctant to depart from the set lesson plans supplied in the teachers' manual by the ministries of education. While they would like to expand the official curriculum to meet their students' needs and areas of interest, teachers do not have the power or resources to make such a change. The teachers' reliance on official curricula tends to inhibit innovation and creativity. As a result of this teacher-centered curriculum, Arab secondary students can lack the motivation to learn and enjoy the English language, which is fostered through experiencing and responding to English texts such as novels, as well as authentic communicative experiences during which they use English in real-life situations.

Based on my teaching experience, integrating AYAL into the English language arts curriculum could have a positive effect in Arabic secondary schools, as YAL encourages student personal response through written and oral language. As Virginia R. Monseau (2000) writes, "Students need to participate actively in their education—to read, write about, and talk about subjects of interests to them before they can really learn" (p. 101). Monseau and Salvner (2000) emphasize the importance of creating a comfortable learning-teaching atmosphere. According to these researchers, success in the classroom necessitates the establishment of an atmosphere of trust where "readers can take chances without fear of being ridiculed for giving 'wrong answer' and teacher attitude is crucial to the building of this trust" (p. 73). These scholars also encourage the "response based approach" to literature teaching. They argue that reader-response theories have long suggested that what a reader brings to a work of literature is at least as important as the work itself. They believe that "teachers must realize the importance of engagement to the development of literary appreciation in students" (p. 73). Additionally, Trites (2000) suggests that, during adolescence, teens must learn their place in the power structure. They must learn to negotiate the many institutions that shape them, including school, government, religion, and family. They must learn to balance their power with their

parents' power and with the power of other authority figures in their lives. These struggles are perhaps especially acute for Arabic teens, as I noted earlier.

Arabic young adult literature could help create a generation of more flexible and active, rather than passive, reader-recipients. Moore (1997) describes how a young adult novel may be interpreted from multiple perspectives. Moore assumes that, "readers read differently and, consequently, construct different readings, even though they practice the same theory" (p. 187). He encourages teachers to be flexible with YA texts to allow themselves and their students to experience them from different angles. Moore quotes Henry Louis Gates Jr. when he writes, "literary theory functioned in my education as a prism, which I could turn to refract different spectral patterns of language use in a text, as one does daylight. Turn the prism this way, and one pattern emerges; turn it that way, and another pattern configures" (p. 187). Such critical reading is certainly an active transaction with a text, necessitating both cognitive and emotional engagement.

### **The Merits of AYAL in Non-Arabic Speaking Countries**

Arabic young adult literature in non-Arabic speaking countries such as the U.S. might be considered part of a multicultural literature curriculum. Through sharing AYAL in secondary schools, students and teachers celebrate students of Arab heritage as well as introduce the Arabic culture to non-Arab students. According to Landt, "Not seeing one's self, or representations of one's culture, in literature can activate feelings of marginalization and cause students to question their place within society" (Landt, 2006, p. 694). Moreover, teachers who incorporate multicultural YA literature into their curriculum expose students to viewpoints and experiences that can broaden adolescents' visions of self and the world. Thus, good quality YA literature offers teens an avenue for self-reflection and personal development. As educators understand the importance of including AYAL in their curricula and become more confident in their ability to select

appropriate high-quality writing, students will certainly enjoy the benefits. As Landt (2006) writes:

Imaginary barriers dissolve as students see themselves reflected in a diversity of cultures and recognize similarities across invented boundaries. What was strange becomes familiar when viewed through an age-mate's perspective. Doors open, eyes see, and minds grasp, as young adolescents encounter self within others. (p. 697)

When students read a story about another culture, they may eagerly ask questions in order to make sense of it. In analyzing the characters' lives, the students may create personal connections. They may make many inferences and logical conclusions to justify the characters' actions in the context of the Arab cultural, social, or political system. Therefore, it is vital to select books that authentically reflect the diverse life experiences, traditions, histories, values, worldviews, and perspectives that make up Arab society.

The inclusion of culturally authentic Arabic young adult literature in the secondary classroom, whether that classroom be in the U.S. or other Western nations or in Arab countries, can have positive effects on teen readers, ranging from increasing their eagerness to read, to building critical thinking skills, to fostering mutual understanding and respect across countries and cultures. In a time when many movies and books stereotype Arab people as backward, violent, or fanatical, culturally authentic texts which portray the complete range of Arab life with all its beauty and human compassion, even during times of warfare and political struggles, might just open the eyes and minds of contemporary teens.

### **Findings**

This study is the first to examine young adult literature on Arabs as an independent genre. The main outcome of this study was the establishment of the most comprehensive annotated bibliography of books in print in written in English.. The list

includes 49 titles published between 1988 and 2010. I categorized the books based on their themes. The study also identified the need for additional publications in this genre.

The available literature may be placed in two major categories (1) contemporary fiction, including timely stories about Middle Eastern/Arab issues and (2) adapted classical Arabic folk literature, including simplified versions of Arabic folk tales and the tales found in the *Thousand and One Nights*. About 75% of the selected trade books found in this study were contemporary Arabic young adult literature trade books. The books were published between 1988 and 2010. About 25% of the selected trade books are adaptations of classical Arabic folk literature that were published and/or translated into English to be published and/or republished between 1994 and 2010. Both categories of books were written by either Arab or non-Arab authors.

About 19% of the contemporary fiction books were translated from other languages into English. Five books were translated from Arabic into English (Kanafani, 2000; Al-Daif, 2007; Qutb, 2004; Husain, Taha, 1997; Jayyusi, Salma, 1988); one book from Germany (Schami, 1992); and one from French (Marineau, 1995). Through translation, modern Arabic literature is being introduced to world culture.

The two dominant themes that were addressed in the contemporary selected trade books are the Palestinian plight and growing up as Muslim-Arab teenagers in post-9/11 America. Most of the AYAL written since 1980s deals with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, while the books published after 9/11/2001 address the Western-Eastern conflicts. Such books will help fill a substantial gap in existing young adult literature on the Middle East and the Arab/Islamic world.

Having encountered critical difficulties in locating biographical and bibliographical studies of Arabic YA literature, it became my goal to remedy this shortage by establishing a handy bibliography of the readily available contemporary Arabic young adult books. Obviously, my exhaustive searches indicated that there are

relatively few books written that might be categorized as young adult literature about Arabs. In total, I found 52 novels which were published in English between 1988 and 2010. To remedy the availability gap, publishing companies have adapted classical Arabic folk tales for teen readers. The bibliography that is provided with this study includes two categories of books: contemporary fiction and adapted classical Arabic folk literature. About two-thirds of the selected books fall within the first category and about one-third of the books fit in the second category.

### **Conclusion**

Integrating young adult literature on Arabs into the English language courses both in- and outside the Arab world would be advantageous to both Arabs and non-Arabs. Through these books, young adult readers will understand the experiences and cultures of young adult Arabs.. The integration of the literature will foster self- and cross-cultural understanding. Many students in the Arab world are learning English as a second language. In addition to educators and librarians, families will value the list that is included with this study. There remains a need to increase the number of books representing Arab students.

### **About the author:**

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## Appendix

### Bibliography of the Selected Arabic Young Adult Literature Books

Below is a list of the Arabic Young Adult Literature (AYAL) books selected for this study, they are organized by their English-language publication date, from the most recent to the least recent.

1. 2010: *Touch*, by Adania Shibli, 72 pages. (English, contemporary YA). “A historical fiction about the occupied Palestinian territories set in 1982, or a coming-of-age story in which maturation is marked by an ever-growing loneliness and alienation”.
2. 2010: *Stealth*, by Sonallah Ibrahim, 184 pages. (English, contemporary YA). “A coming-of-age story of the young narrator, age 11, lives with his aged father in a messy furnished flat in Cairo. Exceptionally attuned to the moods, habits, and silent yearnings of the adults around him, the boy decides to get organized and become an expert on adult behavior. Stealthily, he listens in on adult conversations, observes adult mannerisms, and guesses about comments he’s not supposed to understand—and then he starts to sneak into neighboring apartments to watch adults napping, copulating, bathing, cooking, and all the other activities normal to their lives”.
3. 2009: *Where the Streets Had a Name*, by Randa Abdel-Fattah, 240 pages. (English, contemporary YA). Thirteen-year-old Hayaat is on a mission. She believes a handful of soil from her grandmother's ancestral home in Jerusalem will save her beloved Sitti Zeynab’s life. The only problem is the impenetrable wall that divides the West Bank, as well as the checkpoints, the curfews, and Hayaat's best friend Samy, who is always a troublemaker. But luck is on their side. Hayaat and Samy have a curfew-free day to travel to Jerusalem. However, while their journey is only a few kilometres long, it may take a lifetime to complete”.

4. 2009: *Ten Things I Hate About Me*, by Randa Abdel-Fattah, 304 pages. (English, contemporary YA). “Tackles the theme of being an Arab Muslim teenager growing up in Australia. She struggles with her two cultures, two identities; at home she is ‘Jamilah’ a Lebanese-Muslim who is proud of her cultural identity, at school she is Jamie a teenage girl from Sydney’s south west”.
5. 2008: *Santa Claus in Baghdad—and Other Stories About Teens in the Arab World*, by Elsa Marston, 216 pages. (English lang. contemporary YA). “A collection of eight short stories offers snapshots of Arab teenagers growing up in environments riddled with religious, historical and cultural dilemmas. Unlike the earlier edition (*Figs and Fate*), author’s notes are included for each story, explaining and expanding on some topics and providing ideas for class discussion”.
6. 2008: *From Somalia, with Love*, by Na’ima B. Robert, 160 pages. (English lang., contemporary YA). “Main character, Safia illustrates how is it like to live as a Somali Muslim teenage girl in inner city London. Safia must come to terms with who she is – as a Muslim, as a teenager, as a friend, but most of as a daughter to a father she has never known”.
7. 2008: *Muslim Teens in Pitfalls and Pranks*, by Maryam Mahmoodian, 168 Pages. (English lang., contemporary YA). “Through her seven main characters, Mahmoodian portrays many typical situations that Muslim/Arab teenagers face in America”.
8. 2007: *In the Name of God*, by Paula Jolin, 208 pages. (English lang.). “Offers a window into a Syrian family’s daily life as seen through the eyes of 17-year-old Nadia. Jolin makes clear that while life in Syria may be different from life in America in important ways, there are common bonds—human connections and similarities—that are universal”.
9. 2007: *Learning English*, by Rachid al-Daif, 161 pages. (English lang.). “It is mainly about “blood revenge” in traditional Arabic villages. The hero’s life is

- threatened specially after the news of his father's murder in his Lebanese village, Zgharta".
10. 2007: *Arab in America*, by Toufic El Rassi, 117 pages. (English lang.). "Illustrates the daily prejudice and discrimination experienced by Muslim and Arab youth in modern American society".
  11. 2007: *I'jaam: An Iraqi Rhapsody*, by Sinan Antoon, 97 pages. (English lang.) "In this debut novel by a young Iraqi exile, an obscure manuscript written by a young detainee provides a portrait of life under the oppressive political regime of Saddam Hussain".
  12. 2007: *The Inheritance of Exile: Stories from South Philly*, by Susan Muaddi Darraj, 196pp. (English lang.). A tapestry of the events and struggles of four daughters of Palestinian immigrants struggling to reconcile their Arab and American identities.
  13. 2007: *Tales of Juha: Classic Arab Folk Humor*, by Salma Khadra Jayyusi, 144 pages. (Adapted and translated from ancient Arabic and Persian into English). "Juha is an old Arab comic literary figure around whom countless popular anecdotes were written. He appears variously as preacher and beggar, porter and petty merchant, thief and honest man, judge and social critic, wise man and fool, jester and charlatan".
  14. 2007: *Does My Head Look Big in This?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah, 368 pages. (English; contemporary YA). "The story is about Amal, a 16-year-old Muslim girl who decides to wear the hijab (headscarf) full time. The book deals with the issues of growing up as a headscarf-wearing Muslim-Australian in post-9/11 Australia."
  15. 2006: *A Little Piece of Ground*, by Elizabeth Laird, 220 pages. (English; contemporary YA). "Focuses on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and hopes of easier times ahead through the eyes of a twelve-year-old Palestinian boy in Ramallah."

16. 2006: *The Scar of David: A Novel*, by Susan Abulhawa, 333pages. (English lang.). “Is a historical fiction set in occupied Palestine. Through the course of this story, a Palestinian boy grows up as a Jewish Israeli who becomes tangled in a truth he cannot reconcile, and his identity can find no repose but in the temporary anesthetics of alcohol. Once in the settlement, a young girl named Amal becomes the story’s focus. This novel weaves through history, friendship, love, frayed identity, terrorism, exhaustion of the spirit, surrender, and courage”.
17. 2006: *Oranges in No Man's Land*, by Elizabeth Laird, 115 pages. (English; contemporary YA). “Tells the story of ten-year-old Ayesha's terrifying journey across no man's land to reach a doctor in hostile territory in search of medicine for her dying grandmother. Set in Lebanon during the civil war, this story is based on personal, real-life events”.
18. 2006: *The Woman That I Left Behind*, by Kim Jensen, 204 pages. (English). “Tells the story of a love between a Palestinian student and a young American lady. Set in Southern California, with flashback scenes in Jerusalem and Beirut, this novel reveals the cultural dilemmas that inevitably occur when lovers from different worlds come together”.
19. 2005: *Figs and Fate: Stories About Growing Up In The Arab World Today*, by Elsa Marston, 135 pages. (English; contemporary YA) “Figs and Fate is a collection of five short stories portraying Arab life in five Middle-Eastern countries. In these short stories, contemporary boys and girls experience pressures from family, friends, and self as they grow older and wiser.”
20. 2005: *Yemeni Folk Tales: From the Land Of Sheba*, by Carolyn Han (ed.), 104 pages. (Adapted and published in English). “From the Land of Sheba: Yemeni Folk Tales is an anthology of some of the oldest stories, fables, and legends of human civilization. The short book gives us an insight to the heart of Yemeni peoples, their interests, desires, and needs”.

21. 2004: *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*, by Sarah Conover, Freda Crane, & Valerie Wahl, 189 pages. (Adapted and published in English). “Beautiful Signs gathers traditional stories from the farthest reaches of the Muslim world, stretching from Morocco in the west to Indonesia in the east and from China in the north to Tanzania in the south. This unique anthology is rich with thorough explanatory notes”.
22. 2003: *The Bullet Collection: A Novel*, by Patricia Sarrafian Ward, 309 pages. (English lang.). “A story of two sisters, Marianna and Alaine, both escaped with their family from the war-torn Beirut to live in America. Marianna struggles to join the threads of her two lives as she finds herself living in past and present at once, telling the stories no one else seems to remember”.
23. 2003: *A Marriage Proposal*, by Samira Hingoro, 93 pages. (English lang.; contemporary YA). “A narrative fiction that focuses on the struggles of Muslim youth maturing in non-Muslim societies. Iman, one of the five sisters, is a young Muslim American lady, faced with one of the most difficult choices in life: to marry for worldly comfort or for Allah's pleasure”.
24. 2002: *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt*, by Sir Gaston Maspero, 275 pages. (Adapted and published in English). “This classic collection of twenty four folktales from Gaston Maspero's classic volume (first published in 1882) is accompanied by extensive footnotes that detail social expectations and patterns of behavior in ancient Egyptian society, making the texts comprehensible to modern readers. Included are important discussions of backgrounds, research methodologies, tale types, and motifs. Each story receives its own brief introduction as well, including provenance, dating of manuscripts, thematic and content discussions, and comparison with other tales”.
25. \*2002: *A Stone in My Hand*, by Cathryn Clinton, 192 pages. (English, contemporary YA). “Tells the story of the eleven-year old Malaak, a Palestinian

- girl in Gaza City, 1988, whose father is killed in a bus bombing and whose brother turns to violence.”
26. 2002: *Arab Folk Tales From Palestine and Lebanon: Abu Jameela's Daughter and Other Stories*, by Jamal Sleem Nuweihed, 248 pages. (Adapted and translated from Arabic into English). “Twenty seven traditional tales that have been told and retold in Lebanese, Palestinian, and Turkish families for generations, translated here for a contemporary audience. These traditional Arab folk stories are authentically Arab in their themes yet timelessly universal. They range from magical to naturalistic, humorous to tragic, and are rich with vivid details.”
27. 2002: *Palestine*, by Joe Sacco, 288 pages. (English lang.). “Award winning graphic novel about Sacco’s experiences in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the early 90s. Sacco’s narrative focuses on the minute details of everyday life in the occupied territories, presenting the daily struggles, humiliations and frustrations of the Palestinians”.
28. 2002: *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds*, by Safi Abdi, 532 pages. (English lang.; contemporary novel). “It is a story on a cross-religious marriage. 15 year old Anisa is an outgoing Muslim girl whose destiny brought her to meet and marry a fun loving Westerner during her study life in the USA. Soon, the couple’s relation struggles for the big gap between two cultures and two ways of life.”
29. 2002: *Heaven Without Stars*, by Waleed Maktari, 160 pages. (English lang.). “This is a religion oriented story of a young boy called Amir, who has always been fascinated by the stars. He cannot rest until he unravels the meaning and significance of those stars, and their constellation in the heavens”.
30. 2002: *The Circle: Terror and Triumph in the Holy Land*, by H. Edward Schmidt, 323 pages. (English lang.). *The Circle*, is a historical fiction set in the Holy Land during the early 1900s, before and during World War I. It is about the unyielding bond of friendship of three children, two Jewish siblings, and an Arab boy, all caught in the raging conflict between Arab and Jew.

31. 2001: *The Fabulous Adventures of Nasruddin Hoja*, by Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd. (UK), Edit., Abdassamad Clarke, 58 pages. (Adapted and translated from Arabic into English). “The Arabs call him Joha, which means “imam.” but this is no ordinary imam. This imam is three people. The first is a fool. He is a complete idiot. The second is a rogue, somebody who is completely dishonest. The third sometimes looks like a rogue or an idiot or both, but is really quite wise”.
32. 2000: *Kalilah and Dimnah: Stories For Young Adults*, by Anonymous, Trans. Muhammad Nur Abdus Salam, 172 pages. (Adapted and translated from Persian and ancient Arabic into English). “The names Kalilah and Dimnah are the names of two jackals who are advisors to the lion king. These stories convey wise messages to young and adult readers”.
33. 2000: *Rumi Stories For Young Adults*, by Jalal al-Din Rumi, 200 pages. (Adapted and translated from Persian and ancient Arabic into English). “This series of stories for young adults are adapted from the writings of Rumi. The stories reflect the same spiritual balance that Rumi spoke about; and ask the same questions about the meaning of life and death that Rumi addressed”.
34. 2000: *Saadi Stories For Young Adults*, by Muslih al-Din Saadi and Mehdi Azaryazdi, 214 pages. (Adapted and translated from Persian and ancient Arabic into English). “A collection of classical stories for young adults are adapted from the writings of Saadi. The stories address various universal themes about life and death, good and evil, success and failure, etc”.
35. 2000: *Palestinian Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories*, by Ghassan Kanafani. (Translated from Arabic into English) “Short stories describing the Palestinian experience of the Middle East conflict. Each involves a child from the villages or the refugee camps as a victim of circumstances, who nevertheless participates in the struggle towards a better future. Through Kanafani's portrayal of history in terms of culture, the reader gains a greater understanding of the Palestinian people”.

36. 2000: *Samir and Yonatan*, by Daniella Carmi, 196 pages. (English lang.; contemporary YA). A story about two boys; Samir, a Palestinian boy who lives in the West Bank and Yonatan, a Jewish boy. Samir, who lives in the West Bank, smashes his knee in a reckless bicycle accident and awaits surgery in a Jewish hospital. As the days wear on, Samir is unable to stop thinking of his beloved family and finds himself increasingly afraid of the Israeli children who share his room. Then Yonatan, teaches him to imagine a better world. And he begins to see that he has more in common with his roommates than he thought and more hope than he knew.
37. 1999: *Sudanese Folk Tales: The Clever Sheikh Of The Butana & Other Stories*, by Ali Lutfi Abdallah, 144 pages. (Adapted and translated from Arabic into English). This book contains series of folktales, myths, and legends from around the world - many available in English for the first time. It includes tales from Iceland, Sudan, Palestine, and Lebanon. Each volume includes 20 to 30 tales, accompanied by an introduction and a historical overview which give the reader compelling insights into the culture, the folk literature, and the lives of the people in the region.
38. 1998: *If You Could Be My Friend: Letters of Mervet Akram Sha'ban and Galit Fink*, by Litsa Boudalika, 128 pages. (English; contemporary YA). Galit, an Israeli Jew, and Mervit, a Palestinian girl who lives in a nearby refugee camp, are divided by the political realities, but long for peace. They begin a relationship by writing letters, and sharing their dreams, feelings and experiences.
39. 1998: *The Army of Lions*, by Qasim Najjar, 190 pages. (English; contemporary YA). "Islamic fiction novel set in the golden age of Islam. It is a novel of suspense and adventure about four Muslim heroes who battle with evil forces to save the sultanate from destruction".
40. 1997: *Habibi*, by Naomi Shihab Nye, 259 pages. (English; contemporary YA). "Liyana is a 14-year-old girl whose Arab-American family decides to move to Jerusalem to stay with Palestinian relatives. Liyana finds it difficult adjusting to

- the cultural and traditional differences, especially when she finds herself falling in love with a Jewish boy”.
41. 1997: *The Days*, by Taha Husain, 406 pages. (Translated from Arabic into English). “A three-part autobiography which sheds the light on childhood of the “Dean of Arabic Literature”, Taha Husain.
  42. 1996: *The Beduins' Gazelle*, by Frances Temple, 150 pages. (English lang.). “A romantic tale about Halima and Atiyah, two engaged cousins of the Beni Khalid tribe, are separated by political intrigue between warring tribes. The story also touches upon conflicts within the larger society, e.g., the Beduin way of life versus that of the educated urban mullahs.
  43. 1995: *The Road to Chlifa*, by Michele Marineau, Trans. Ouriou, Susan 144 pages. (contemporary YA novel, English). “Told by a Lebanese teenager Karim who escaped from war-torn Beirut to live in Montreal. The story is told in the present and also uses journal entries to flashback to terrors that Karim experienced on the danger-filled road to Chlifa”.
  44. 1995: *Aladdin and The Lamp: Tales From Egypt and The Arab World Series*, by Denys Johnson-Davies, Illust. Walid Taher, 47 pages. (Adapted folk tale, translated from Arabic into Eng.). “A classic Arab folktale. Retold by a leading translator of Arabic literature, Denys Johnson-Davies. In this exciting tale, Aladdin travels from China to Morocco and with the help of a genie from a magic lamp and a magic ring, he wins the hand of the princess Badr al-Bodour”.  
Congratulation
  45. 1994: *Seven Daughters and Seven Sons*, by Barbara Cohen, 224 pages. (Adapted folk tale ; English lang.). “Is based on an Iraqi folktale. “Young woman, Buran disguises herself as a man and opens up a shop in a distant city in order to help her impoverished family. Her disguise causes her many complications but she eventually succeeds in redeeming the family fortunes and finding her true love”.

46. 1992: *Gulf*, by Robert Westall, 101 pages. (Written in English). “It is a timely story reflecting the American-Iraqi conflict during the Gulf War. Young boy, Andy has an intense imagination, and he feels things deeply. When the Persian Gulf conflict erupts, Andy is so profoundly affected he "becomes" a young Iraqi fighter named Latif, speaks Arabic, endures the battles, and is so disconnected from his former life that he has to be hospitalized and treated by a psychiatrist.”
47. 1992: *A Hand Full of Stars*, by Rafik Schami, Trans. Lessker, Rika, 208 pages. (Translated from Germany into English) “This novel follows a Syrian teenager’s journey from boyhood to the adult realities of living in a country where censorship and repression are sometimes a fact of life. In other words, the main message of this book is a call for freedom of speech”.
48. 1991: *Fields of Fig and Olive: Ameera and Other Stories of the Middle East*, by Kathryn K. Abdul-Baki, 217 pages. (A collection of modern stories; written in English). “A collection of fourteen stories portraying Arab life in the 1930 to 1990 period in the Middle East. The author's vivid characters offer an insightful view of Middle Eastern culture.”
49. 1988: *the Literature of Modern Arabia: an Anthology*, by Salma Jayyusi (ed.), 560 pages. (A collection of modern tales; translated from Arabic into English). “In this work, Jayyusi collected poetry, drama and short stories from 94 of Arabia’s best-known authors. She addressed cultural constrains in Arabic Gulf countries”.