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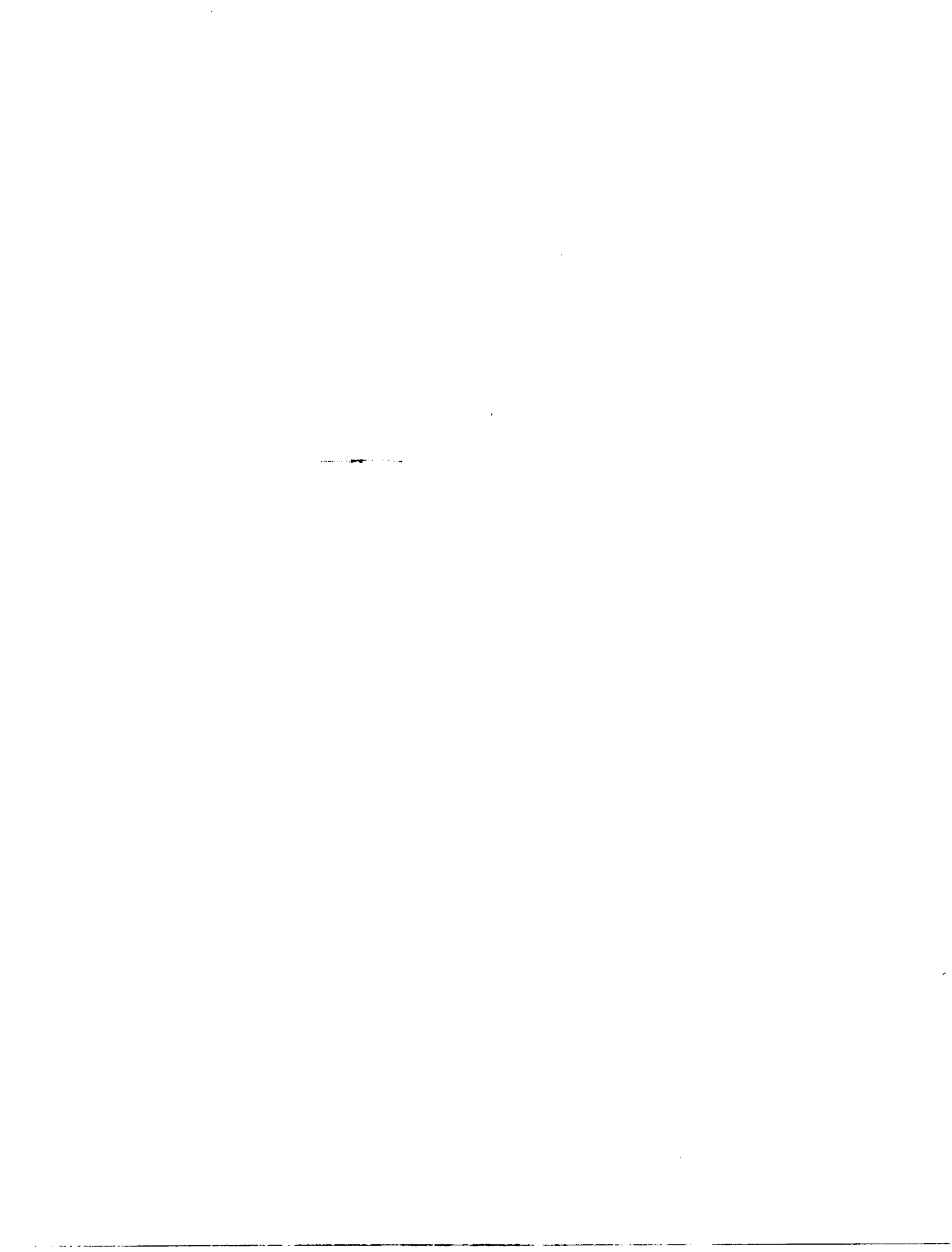
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**Diwān *Al-Jadāwil* of Iliyā Abū Mādī**

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**The University of Arizona, 1991**

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DIWĀN AL-JADĀWIL OF ILIYĀ ABŪ MADĪ

by

Cynthia Johnson Romy

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## APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

*Adel S. Gamel*

*April 10, 1991*  
Date

To my father Derald  
and  
my mother Helen  
with love

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Gamal for helping me to choose this lovely poetry, and for his great patience during my studies of the Arabic language. Dr. Wilson is appreciated for his assistance in Arabic language and literature and Dr. Adamec for his support of my studies in Near Eastern history. A special thanks to my dear Khaled Marei for his help with the translations.



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## ABSTRACT

Arabic literature mirrors the aspirations, sufferings and hopes of the Arabic people from the past to the future. In 1920, the Exiled Arab men of letters from Syria and Lebanon formed a literary guild, al-Rābiṭa al-qalamiyya (The Pen League) which advocated innovation in Arabic literature to fortify their society in the struggle for liberation and progress. Iliya Abu Madi became the most celebrated poet of al-Rābiṭa; with the poetry of his third diwān (collection) al-Jadāwil (The Brooks) he cast a magnificent pearl into the treasury of Arabic literature. These poems portray the poet's views about his art, his struggle with life in the Exile and his hopes and fears for the homeland. Philosophically, his poetic ideals are transmitted through a naturalistic imagery that gives a universal hue to his humanistic perspectives.

It is hoped that this English translation of the poems, not previously translated from Arabic, allows the English reader to feel and sense the universalistic world of The Brooks.

## Part One

### INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY AND AIMS

The aim of this thesis is an examination of a specific group of forty-six poems by the Syrian immigrant poet Iliya Abu Madi, in fact his third diwan, the collection published in New York in 1927 under the title al-Jadāwil<sup>1</sup> (The Brooks). Although thirty-four of these poems had been previously published, two in the poet's 1919 collection Diwān Iliyā Abū Mādī<sup>2</sup> and thirty-two individually between 1914 and 1927 in the pages of three New York papers al-Sā'ih, al-Sā'ih al-mumtāz and Mir'at al-gharb and the Caireine journal al-Muqtataf,<sup>3</sup> all publications of the group or of individual poems have to date been only in Arabic.<sup>4</sup> This situation probably results from the understanding that al-Jadāwil, although written and published in New York where the poet lived and wrote from 1916<sup>5</sup> until his death in 1957,<sup>6</sup> cannot be considered a western literary work. Rooted in the rich soil of classical Arabic poetry and watered by the innovative spirit in Arabic literature whose season had, inevitably and naturally, arrived, the poetic talent of Abu Madi was nurtured by the gentle winds of popular acclaim and sympathetic appreciation of Arab readers in the homeland and in the lands of exile. Unfortunately, lack of access to this work in translation has deprived readers of world literature of a priceless key

to the Arab treasury of literary contributions, for al-Jadāwil takes a strong stand in support of the universal humanistic values, social, individual and literary, that mark significant contributions to world literature.

Considering this view of al-Jadāwil as a non-western work belonging to the Arab literary corpus, and considering that this author's experience with literature is primarily western, it was natural to seek, for purposes of this study, a critical vehicle<sup>7</sup> that is culturally and linguistically non-specific, that neither disregards nor is specific to the cultural orientation of the artist. And, it should not be discounted that what the choice of a critical approach undoubtedly reveals is the orientation of the critic - his or her own interests and views on literature and its relationship to society.

Wilfred Guerin et al. point out in their handbook on criticism that "we must...remember to be eclectic in our choices of critical approaches to a given literary work...a given work demands its own combination of approaches".<sup>8</sup> At the same time, they warn that "a given object of literary art has its unique aesthetic experience; the reader [or critic] is no more at liberty to mar it with careless extensions [by subjective or tangential interpretations] than the author is free to do so with infelicitous inclusions".<sup>9</sup> For this study, a sociohistorical approach of

the sort promoted by Jerome McGann<sup>10</sup> has been chosen. McGann's concept of "a renovated historical criticism"<sup>11</sup> allows inclusion of useful aspects of a number of other approaches, as advocated by Guerin et al., while providing a strong overall framework for the analysis.

To review briefly the basis of McGann's approach and its position relative to the evolution and varieties of literary criticism, it should be remembered that the historical-biographical approach, which can be generally described as assuming that the contemporary milieu, artistic, social and political, generally as well as his own life experiences specifically are of significance in understanding a work of art, is a time-honored method of critical analysis and is common to most world literatures. It emphasizes appreciation of the context within which the various elements, including many internal structural forms, come together to comprise a literary work.

The smooth evolution of the sociohistorical basis of critical writing was interrupted in the early and middle twentieth century by some quite different concepts described by McGann as "intrinsic and text-centered" where "the idea of 'the poem itself'" was the "stable (if paradoxical) object of critical attention".<sup>12</sup> For these critics it is the formal aspects of the work of art, the structure and vocabulary for example, that leads to the meaning of the

literary piece. The authorizing premise of these American and European critics was that "literary works are self-enclosed objects" of study<sup>13</sup> and that their complete meaning can be interpreted from the work itself; historical, biographical or sociological facts that connected the work to contextual realities outside the work itself were distained. It is McGann's premise that these structural and intertextual studies, separating literature from 'life' and 'the world', separating meaning from its social ground and structure,<sup>14</sup> are insufficient<sup>15</sup> and that critics must return to the more pragmatic and comprehensive sociohistorical method which he suggests must be rounded out by the addition of a new factor.

But before such details can be discussed, a basic and relevant question should be answered. What is criticism? What, indeed, is the justification for critical writing? McGann is emphatic that "...the production of interpretations is all but universally regarded as the function of criticism".<sup>16</sup> It is this advocacy of the hermeneutical function of criticism, the goal of which is to find the meaning in a work and explain it to others, that inclines him to the historical approach. For if the justification of criticism is to operate as a sort of interpretive science, that scientific approach cannot afford to discount the great mass of extra-literary context by

which the artist was influenced in the process of creation.

Alan Swingewood<sup>17</sup> clarifies the point that the text-centered approaches of the twentieth century were poetical as distinct from critical, that the father of poetics was Aristotle who "advanced an argument which was to become the basis of later poetic theory, that knowledge of literature can never be derived from non-literary disciplines only from literature itself".<sup>18</sup> He points out though that "although poetics begins with Aristotle, poetic theory developed much later and is largely a twentieth century phenomenon".<sup>19</sup> It is over these formalistic, text-oriented poetics that McGann's historical criticism has been chosen for this study. This writer is in full agreement with McGann's observation that a piece of historical criticism at its best can, by reconstructing and reflecting the array of facts and contextual particularities relevant to the literary work, widen the "communicative potential of every poem".<sup>20</sup> He eloquently elaborates on this possibility: "It is as if...one were to glimpse, however briefly, the deep and totalizing truth in and toward which literary works are always moving."<sup>21</sup>

The new element which McGann asserts must be introduced into historical, or sociohistorical, methodology to provide a depth lacking in the traditional historicist "reconstructions" of literary contexts - he calls them

"recollective" frames - is the future factor. As he himself says, "The picture which the historical critic...[should make] is one which includes a future as well as as present and a past."<sup>22</sup> He clarifies this:

The task of criticism is [not] an historical reconstruction of a particular work's originary reference field...for literary works continue to live...indeed, that focusing period [of the time of composition]...is revealed to be itself a vehicle...by which history is rendered up for human use. In the end what we must see is that works...have reference to - make use of and assume an interest in - some more or less comprehensive aspects of the past, the present and the future as well.<sup>23</sup>

Here, then, is the ultimate goal of this thesis; to attempt to catch a glimpse of the "truth" toward which the poet is moving, through appreciation of the facts of the personal, cultural and literary environment in which the poems were composed and the way these facts encouraged Abu Madi to create an innovative poetry that, although rooted deeply in Arabic tradition, significantly extended the artistic limits of Arabic poetry in his own time, and reached toward a point at which Arabic poetry can and must influence the world canon with its own observations on the human condition and its hope for the society of mankind.



## Part Two

SOCIOHISTORICAL CONTEXT OF AL-JADĀWIL

## 2.1 The Arab Poetic Tradition and Iliyā Abū Mādī

What is this soil in which the al-Jādawil poems are so deeply rooted, the classical Arabic poetic tradition that evolved from the powerful pre-Islamic modes of expression into the sophisticated verse of the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, stagnated during the long night of the Ottoman occupation,<sup>24</sup> and was revived by the neoclassical poets of the early twentieth century?

Arabic poetry can be said to be traditional in terms of a combination of form, function and content or meaning. It will be shown that Iliya Abu Madi, in this poetry written between 1917 and 1927, experiments with some departures from the tradition which are quite innovative, yet overall retains a continuity with the tradition which in some sense sometimes serves to translate or clarify the intent of the innovation. More will be said on this latter point in the next section.

In terms of form the classical tradition from the pre-Islamic period through to the twentieth century is built upon the monorhymed qasida, a structure where the poem is made up of lines (bayt, pl. abiyāt) each composed of two

hemi-stiches (each called a shatr) of equivalent metrical value, with each bayt as well as the opening shatr ending with the same pronounced rhyme, or qāfiya.

In terms of function, there are three dominant motives characteristic of the classical poetry and the classical gasida can usually be assigned to one of the categories: the eulogy, or panegyric, which is intended to enhance the prestige of some individual or group, the elegy lamenting some individual or collective loss, and satire, by which individual, social or political grievances may be publically aired.

Finally, in terms of content, meaning is conveyed via certain standard themes that encompass most classical poetic works; these<sup>25</sup> include chivalry, fakhr (boasting, or vain-gloriousness), longing, description and war.<sup>26</sup>

Mikha'il Nu'aymah writes of Abu Madi's first diwan, published in Egypt in 1911 and entirely traditional in its orientation,<sup>27</sup> that it was witness to the poet's natural poetic sensibility and the fertility of its brilliance.<sup>28</sup> Himself the mentor of Abu Madi's modernity, which is agreed to be most pronounced in the al-Jadāwil diwan, he notes that Iliya evolved from a poet who was excellent at imitating the old ones to a poet who dipped his pen in his heart.<sup>29</sup> Salma Jayyusi, herself a poet, comments that "...Abu Madi is one of the most interesting poets of modern Arabic, for he

arrived at a high degree of modernity without ever becoming divorced from traditional roots".<sup>30</sup>

If al-Jadāwil is held to mark the greatest length of Abu Madi's departure from classical tradition, it is interesting to see that of the forty-six poems in the collection, thirty-four<sup>31</sup> are formally identifiable as monorhymed gasā'id, while eleven<sup>32</sup> are arranged in innovative stanzaic structures, each different from the others. The remaining poem is made of abiyāt like the gasīda, however the rhyme scheme is internally variable, occurring only in pairs of lines.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, then, the traditional element is heavy where structural form is concerned. Jayyusi, speaking of Abu Madi's use of the traditional meters, calls his poetry "a pronounced victory of the old two-hemistich forms, for he proved them to possess an inherent flexibility to be moulded and exploited by a skilled innovative poet".<sup>34</sup>

As to traditional functions of poetry, three al-Jadāwil poems can be recognized as elegies (rithā');<sup>35</sup> all three are couched in the monorhyme gasīda structure. There is only one, traditionally organized, eulogy (madih).<sup>36</sup>

Satire, in this writer's opinion, is not strongly represented in this collection. There are hints of it in seven poems. The most striking examples are "al-Ilah al-tharthār" (The Chatterbox God)<sup>37</sup> and parts of "Barridī yā

suhub" (Cool, O Clouds), the latter challenging some of the classical poetic tradition itself as superficial.<sup>38</sup> Others of this group criticize the values of "civilized society"<sup>39</sup> and the futility of attempts to find final truths through profound discussions about the mysteries of life.<sup>40</sup>

Khouri and Algar illustrate the social function of classical Arabic poetry when they write:

One of the basic concepts of traditional poetry described its function as "the register of the Arabs...their versified discourse, the recorder of their battles, and the witness to their judgments".<sup>41</sup>

It can be said, although without great emphasis, that classical Arabic poetry was much more public in its domain than western poetry can be thought to be, which facilitates understanding of the trend in the modern poetry after World War II that espoused deep commitment to nationalism and social change within an Arab context. This committed (multazim) poetry developed out of the political and social milieu of the post-war era, but it was foreshadowed, indeed made possible in the literary sense, by the works of some early twentieth century poets who had already made inroads to innovative forms and had changed the expectations of readers in terms of the rising predominance of content in poetry. Iliya Abu Madi was one of these pioneers, and many of the poems of al-Jadāwil make the connection between the

tradition and the modern through a sense of public awareness and social guidance that is far from alien to the tradition.

As has been mentioned, excellence in classical poetry was established by comparison to "an ideal balance between beautiful form and excellent meaning",<sup>42</sup> and it is generally agreed that the earliest and most persistent innovative elements of the modern literary revival were found in the meanings, the content, of some poems by Arab poets from as early as the mid-nineteenth century up to the time of Abu Madi when they proved irreversable and soon to become themselves the platform on which the multazim, or committed literature, was to stand. As a man of his time, Abu Madi reflects in his poetry some of these and other new attitudes, mostly concerning social responsibility, meditations on the human condition, and the development of his personal vision of his art. Yet there are also many lines of continuity that go back to the traditional themes: love, war, longing, passages of descriptions of natural beauty, and even an example<sup>43</sup> of fakhr (boasting of his own qualities) in which the poet's studied objectivity in revealing the proofs of his sense of justice, his compassion, his perception of human character and his dignity is convincing and endearing.

Thus it can be seen that in terms of form al-Jadāwil shows Abu Madi to be a poet who does not feel confined by,

and therefore has not abandoned, the tradition of his most illustrious predecessors. Abu Madi's poetic experience carries truth from the poets of the past, from Abu Ala' al-Ma'arri, Abu Nawas, the Andalusians and others to his own time.<sup>44</sup> He is not isolated from the experience of the past - that is not a law of the nature from which he drew his inspiration. And, in the areas where he is more distant from that tradition, the arenas of function and content, we still find continuity of traditional poetic expectations.

## 2.2 al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya and the Exile Poetry

The Exile literature - deep-rooted literature, humanistic and truthful - the ages of the Arabic language don't know anything like it...[it] has freed literature from the heavy shackles that bound it down toward the free atmosphere to breathe in freedom without restrictions, like a survivor.<sup>45</sup>

How did this liberating Mahjar literature, of which al-Jadāwil is said to be "a treasure",<sup>46</sup> come to exist? And from what exactly was it liberating Arabic literature? The literary society al-Rābiṭa al-Qalamiyya (The Pen League), founded in New York in 1920,<sup>47</sup> became the North American focus of a call for innovation in Arabic literature not limited to the new world, and produced the most successful response to that call.<sup>48</sup> Iliya Abu Madi is considered the best of these Mahjar poets; his poetry has been termed the beginning of modern verse.<sup>49</sup>

The call for innovation in poetry was not confined to the northern Mahjar, as mentioned. The influential Egyptian man of letters Taha Hussein was himself a proponent of innovation. He argued that writers and poets must reflect life and that they should be free to express themselves unhampered by fear, social and literary prejudice, or dogmatic conceptions.<sup>50</sup> Taha, however, was a critic, and it is to the activities of poets that we look for manifestations of a ripening trend.

The early twentieth century saw two significant and simultaneous movements in Arab poetry, one in the new world and one in the old, both calling for change in diction, subject matter and form. Jayyusi states that these two movements do not seem to have been aware of each other until a late stage in development after the basic principles of each were already established. She feels that this simultaneous rise of innovative thinking in literature demonstrates the change in the needs of poetry at the time and reaction to foreign influence, i.e. western concepts of literature.<sup>51</sup>

The Diwān Group in Egypt directed itself against the entrenchment of the neo-classical revival, in an effort to lay the foundations for a new poetic apparatus upon which the next generation of poets would build. It is characterized by a subjective element, by personal emotions and ideas; they desired to avoid the traditional involvement of the poet with public events and the externals of life.<sup>52</sup> Led by 'Abd al-Rahman Shukri, they required that poetry derive its inspiration from human experience: poetry should probe deep into the self, search for the essential in things, and abandon the poetry of occasion and of public events.<sup>53</sup>

The similar but independent Arab-American movement was of two streams. That of South America was limited in



innovation, more in the mainstream of Arab poetry and culture, while those in the north, guided by the ideals of al-Rabiṭa, were the great innovators in form, content and tone. The southerners openly supported Arab nationalism and retained the rhetorical tone of classical Arabic tradition, while the northerners introduced abstract themes and philosophical attitudes, and stressed the universal brotherhood of all men.<sup>54</sup> It is this North American group that we usually refer to as the Mahjar poets.

The Mahjar poets, then, represent a literary movement, contemporary to and parallel to the Diwan Group, among Syrian immigrants in the United States. They successfully transformed their new prescriptive norms into an impressive literary reality and exercised through their creative writing a greater influence on Arabic letters than did the Diwan Group.<sup>55</sup> Khouri and Algar ascribe the lack of effect of the Egyptian group to "a striking discrepancy between the high level of their conceptual schemes and poetic ideals, and the mediocrity of their actual poetic performances".<sup>56</sup> Jayyusi<sup>57</sup> agrees with their assessment, which cannot be more succinctly stated. It should be remembered, however, that of the three members of the Diwan Group only Shukri was really a poet. The others, al-Aqqād and al-Māzini, were critics, with innovative ideas that simply were not translated into great poetry.

Zuhair Mirza recounts the story of the formation of al-Rābiṭa. The Syrian immigrants in the United States in the early part of this century, feeling they were Arab in spite of their Americanization, and that their Arab character was threatened by the currents of American life, established their literary reviews and daily newspapers to be their voice and the indicator of their common response.<sup>58</sup> al-Rābiṭa organized when it was thought that there should be a bond linking the forces and uniting the inspirations of the men of letters.<sup>59</sup> al-Rābiṭa thus came to have the honor of publishing the ideas of the immigrants about literature,<sup>60</sup> presenting a unified outlook on literature and art, and introducing into Arabic literature a new, adventurous and successful literary experiment.<sup>61</sup>

The four prominent members of al-Rābiṭa, Jibran, Nu'aymah, Abu Madi and Nasib 'Arida, cut out an existence in which the great distinguishing feature of their literature was that it was derived from the core of life and the human soul. And the great length of their work is about the secrets of life and the tendencies of the human soul.<sup>62</sup> It seems generally agreed that of these four, Abu Madi was the late-comer to the new ideas. In al-Rābiṭa, Jibran had the position of "dean", or guiding spirit, Nu'aymah was advisor and critic, who formulated the literary criteria, and Nasib 'Arida was initially the most powerful poet of the new

current. These three are credited with "the conversion of Abu Madi", whose great poetic talent was channeled from traditional imitative forms of expression to the contemplative, more abstract approach apparent in al-Jadawil.<sup>63</sup>

And at this point the question can finally be answered, and a new one presented. In terms of the former, what exactly was this imitation against which the al-Rabiṭa poets set themselves? Mirza has considered this point very deliberately.<sup>64</sup> He quotes Nu'aymah's words from the introduction to the Qanūn of al-Rabiṭa al-galamiyya, where the iconoclastic critic calls for a new spirit in Arabic poetry:

Indeed this is a new spirit which aims for the emergence of our literature from the period of rigidity and imitation to the period of creativity by a beautiful attitude, to liberate our view to be the hope of today and the support of tomorrow. Thus the spirit that tries by all of its efforts to enclose the literature of the Arabic language within the circle of imitation of the ancients in meaning and structure is as we define it a blight that bores into the body of our language and literature. And if it is not resisted it will lead us to no awakening or renewal.<sup>65</sup>

As Mirza points out, the call appears inexcusable, for there is no rigidity in the classical poets. As Nu'aymah goes on, he seems to concur in this:

When we are activating the new spirit we don't mean to cut the links with the ancients; among

them were the superior poets and thinkers and what they left will be a source of inspiration for many of tomorrow and after that. But indeed we don't see in their imitation anything but the death of our literature, so that to keep our literate being we are forced to move away from them and care for our daily needs and our future, which are not like the needs of the past.

So against what is the rebellion? Mirza concludes that what the al-Rābiṭa school intended to escape from was the decadence, the lifeless and rigid imitations of the traditions which Nu'aymah feels are not beneficial for expressing the social and literary needs of the modern Arabs.<sup>66</sup> For example, as Badawi notes, while the medieval and post-medieval literary tradition showed great interest in the formal and purely linguistic aspects in poetry, during the period of stagnation poetry often degenerated to verbal acrobatics and linguistic exercises.<sup>67</sup> Not the classical poets, then, but their imitators through the Ottoman period are the tyrants of poetry, as well as the rising neo-classicists of the early twentieth century who intended to limit poetry within traditional constraints. It is in this sense then that Abu Madi's retention of some traditional aspects, as suggested in Section One, must be understood - the achievement of Abu Madi in many cases was his flexibility, his freedom with the tradition which did not, in al-Jadāwil, confine his talent but was rather a framework within which he not only proved his poetic ability

but introduced innovative facets which his public, and most of his critics, had no difficulty in comprehending and accepting.

So what was the lure of these new ideas, that a talent like that of Abu Madi was so quickly drawn to experimentation? Indeed, Jayyusi considers al-Jadāwil the result of "intelligence and great poetic power" which "gives authenticity to Abu Madi's experiment with new concepts, basically foreign to him, such as the idea of the forest [or jungle or wilderness] and the trend toward Nature, both adopted from Jibran and Nu'aymah".<sup>68</sup> Her appraisal is borne out when it is noted that the diwan succeeding al-Jadāwil reverts in many ways back to tradition, and that with his final diwan the relapse is completed.<sup>69</sup> She feels that "Abu Madi's intelligent and impressionable mind responded quickly to what must have appeared to him more in the nature of a challenge",<sup>70</sup> and that, in terms of al-Jadāwil, "Abu Madi's peculiar genius lies in his ability to assimilate new concepts and immediately translate them into poetry".<sup>71</sup>

Perhaps the most representative aspect of the new ideas can be seen in the concept of the role of poet, which marks a significant break from tradition and which Abu Madi appears to have accepted whole-heartedly in al-Jadāwil. Traditionally, as previously discussed, the poet was a public orator recording the culture of the Arabs, an

historian and a defender of honor. The new concept brought by al-Rābita was at the same time more personal and more universal; more personal in that the poet as an individual was thought to have a special position in relation to reality, with special abilities, perhaps God-given, to discern the truths and to perceive the secrets of life, and more universal in that this understanding was applicable to mankind generally, to those who share equally the condition of humanity, not to any privileged or specified group or individual.

This rather mystical view of the poet results from the recognition that because the poet shares in the general human condition, his individual vision and his poetic drive to articulate his perceptions contribute to the common situation.

The pragmatic al-Na'uri speaks of the truthful poet: he is a messenger, teaching life, and what appears in his poetry is pictures of life and a humanistic society, pictures alive with emotion, beauty and a magic vision, carrying hope and desires.<sup>72</sup> Nu'aymah's poet is equally a social creature, and yet more mystical in his role. He has the responsibility to prepare a useful lesson from every aspect of life<sup>73</sup> and his poetry is not less than a message between the soul of the poet and the soul of another person.<sup>74</sup> In another place he defines a poet as prophet,

philosopher, painter, musician and priest in one:

He is a prophet because he can see with his spiritual eye what cannot be seen by other mortals. A painter because he is capable of moulding what he can see and hear in beautiful forms of verbal imagery, a musician because he can hear harmony where we find only dissonant noise...Lastly a poet is a priest because he serves the Goddess of Truth and Beauty.<sup>75</sup>

Mirza paraphrases some lines from the poem "al-Shā'ir" (The Poet)<sup>76</sup> where Abu Madi, shortly after arriving in the United States, presents his new view of the role of the poet: the poet is like electricity in its hiddenness and its appearance; he is the one whose God gave him the power of tracing the hidden things, and it is as if he is not satisfied with their appearances but goes further, questioning what is beyond the visible. Here then is the view from the poet who went on to write the poems of al-Jadāwil.

It is true that, as far back as pre-Islamic times, the poet was considered a special individual, born with poetic powers beyond those of the average person. What has changed is the material, the new abstract and subjective content of his works, and the way it is conveyed. The al-Rābita poets advocated elements such as lyricism and spontaneity, simple evocative language, subjective perceptions and feelings, the sense of mystery and wonder, and a deep reverence for nature and for life in general.<sup>77</sup> Jayyusi speaks of the great

influence of al-Rabīṭa on Arabic poetry, of the agreement of its members in the necessity for change and the introduction of new tools and attitudes. The change in the concept of the role of the poet, from defender of group honor and recorder of group history to the one endowed with the ability to express the universal condition of man, is a result of evolution and change in the situation of the Exile poets. The change has been attributed to foreign influence, the American and Russian Romantic literature specifically,<sup>78</sup> but both Badawi and Jayyusi find that only one factor of several in the crystalization of the new poetic concepts. Badawi acknowledges that the Romantic features in the Mahjar literature are not just imitative intellectual and psychological attitudes but are based in the real facts of the poets' situation in an alien culture: their sense of isolation and heightened sense of individuality, their awareness of modern social and cultural change, the political malaise,<sup>79</sup> and what he terms the awareness of being strangers in an unfamiliar universe, were factors that made the Arab Romantic poets no less original to their evolving tradition than the German or French Romantics, who were influenced by the English Romantics, were to theirs.<sup>80</sup> Jayyusi sees the richness and vitality of poetic output of the Mahjar poets as a result of great natural talent combined with the freedom to express



themselves without political or social fears or opposition from a conventional hierarchy of literary arbiters.<sup>81</sup>

Another factor has been advanced to explain the openness of these poets to new possibilities in literature, and their willingness to experiment with non-traditional elements. The Mahjar poets, as Nijland points out, are all of Christian origin, and he feels that they could therefore more easily step outside of the limitations of the traditional concept of poetry which he intimates would not be so deeply impressed in them as in their Muslim counterparts because of their education in foreign missionary schools.<sup>82</sup> Jayyusi also mentions the "basically different outlook [of the poets] colored by a persistent foreign cultural outlook" and the weaker linguistic heritage "of two al-Rabiṭa leaders, al-Raihani and Jibran, compared with the classical training received by most poets of that time."<sup>83</sup> Badawi as well includes these considerations in his analysis.<sup>84</sup> It must be remembered, however, that the similar efforts by the Diwan Group in Egypt were exerted by poets of Muslim background.

In the company of al-Rabiṭa, Abu Madi lifted the shackles of imitation seen in his second diwan and "freed his imagination to go forward toward the horizon of existence and nature without fear or caution."<sup>85</sup> Nu'aymah states that Iliya had been a long time searching for his

road between imitation and creativity, and he found his road, and with it his soul, and became the great poet of al-Jadawil.<sup>86</sup> It was in New York that Abu Madi, searching, had made the acquaintance of Nu'aymah and Jibran, and through their influences had found his own road. Or, as Jayyusi would have it, his challenge.<sup>87</sup>

The idea of the Forest, or Jungle, signifying the innocence and wonder of natural life as opposed to the bustling, mechanical city life in society, and the trend toward nature generally, are both adopted from Jibran and Nu'aymah according to Jayyusi's thesis of al-Jadawil as an ephemeral experiment by Abu Madi.<sup>88</sup> al-Na'uri considers that Abu Madi was independent in his strong poetic character and his humanism, but was still influenced by Jibran in Jibran's great ideology of the "unity of existence", although he feels that Abu Madi was not completely converted to the idea as were Jibran and Nu'aymah.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps Nu'aymah was greater than Jibran in his purity and energy of phrase, as well as in his critical ability;<sup>90</sup> but it is as critic, perhaps, that we should see his most profound influence on the poet who was soon to produce al-Jadawil. In his well-known critical work al-Ghirbal (The Sieve) Nu'aymah states his view that the critic, by guiding the poet, may be able to bring him to better use of his talents.<sup>91</sup> While it has been said that Nu'aymah's great influence was in the

humanistic brotherhood, the unity of existence, and spiritual philosophy<sup>92</sup> it was also clearly in what Nu'aymah himself called the new tools: the direct language, the stanzaic forms and multiple rhymes, and possibly the varieties of emuneration<sup>93</sup> that are found also in some al-Jadāwil poems.<sup>94</sup>

Abu Madi himself, in his poetry, has given us lines from which his ideas about poetry and his poetic development can be understood. It is within the scope of this paper to point out some of those lines that are found in al-Jadāwil, where the fruits of his most innovative period are presented.

For example, in the sixth poem "Barridī yā suhub" (Cool O Clouds), the poet introduces himself as one who does not chase wildly after purposeless concepts or endeavors:

Each star that has no guidance in it  
I don't care if it appears or sets

Each river that has no quenching in it  
I don't care if it flows or dries up

He complains about the uselessness of some traditional poetry, about its lack of guiding principals and truths, and he finds little of value in it. Playing on a famous qasida of Abu Nawas, he concludes:

It doesn't satisfy me, your speech  
indeed, it is vanity that pours out

Then he explains why that poetry is so unsatisfactory. There

is no learning, no moral advancement, to be expected from those who are intellectually separated from the world. And no literary advancement can come from those confined by tradition<sup>95</sup>:

What happens to him who can't tolerate seeing  
the light of the valley or the sadness

What benefits the bird in the cage  
if the atmosphere closes in or opens widely

The poet then states his expectation that in nature can be found the freedom and inspiration that produce precious poetry:

Cool, O clouds, my thirst  
and after that precipitate gold

The conclusion of the poem affirms the opening bayt, and the origin of his satisfaction. He in his thinking is being true to his heritage, to his culture, and he doesn't need to follow other "stars".

My self was satisfied with its lot  
so let another explore the luminous star

I am of a nation who when they got sad  
found melodies in their sadness

And when a desire met difficulties  
they ease it by raising what is difficult

From his people he has learned flexibility and the way to true compatibility with life despite its difficulties. And this final point is an example of what al-Na'uri meant when he called Abu Madi the truthful poet.<sup>96</sup>

As early as 1919 Abu Madi had already made his

indictment of the traditional poets in "al-Faqīr" (The Poor One)<sup>97</sup>:

Don't ask me to commend to describe the dolls  
I threw away the silly talk of poets

They don't understand what poetry is  
except that it has become a means to wealth

They were accustomed to the lies until the lie  
became their habit  
God will remove each liar from his mercy

proclaimed the separation of his poetry from theirs:

They didn't accept my literature; don't be surprised  
if sick eyes suffer from the sun's rays

Each time the truth is victorious by an honorable one  
the impudent ones rise against him

and announced his poetic mission, to inspire humanitarian  
emotion towards those who are less fortunate in life, and to  
give them hope:

I don't stand today among you in my position  
except to give tearful condolance to the miserable ones

It is for me through poetry to move their hearts  
indeed the hearts are the place of deep love

Also written in 1919, Poem 19 "al-'Umyān" (The Blind Ones) anticipates the innovations of diwan al-Jadāwil in structure as well as content. The mystical position of the poet, linking the visible world with the hidden world of universal truths, is emphasized in this poem, which is organized in a non-traditional stanzaic form:

Indeed we are the society of poets  
the secret of prophecy is revealed in us

He explains clearly the path to poetic truths and to appreciation of this poetry:

If you entered the house of inspiration  
 And you roamed freely in the universe of dreams  
 Then you received clearly the secret of honorable  
     imagination  
 Then you know God as we know him  
 and you fall down bowing before us

After acknowledging that some people are in doubt about the new poetry, in spite of their intoxication by it, he explains that they put too much concern with the formal structure, and not enough with the meanings, which should charge them with a universalized, truthful emotion, humanistic and unselfish:

Your anxiety is in the glasses and the tumblers  
 Ah, if your concerns were in the drink!  
 Then you would free yourselves from the shackles  
     of the self  
 And you would feel, in rapture or in suffering,  
 this wine - I hope you drink

The lyricism for which Abu Madi became so well-known, the music so rhapsodized by Nu'aymah, prevades diwan al-Jadāwil. It is seen clearly and simply, even in translation, in poem 34 "Maut al-'abqarī" (Death of a Scholar) which is organized as a traditional elegaic gasīda. The subject of the poem, Sulayman al-Bustani, is attributed with the aspect of poet as magician, one of the new roles of the poet according to the al-Rabiṭa ideas:

A poet was making time dance, sometimes  
 and it cries sometimes at his melodies

The magician went and the magic remained

A romantic concept that was brought by Jibran and Nu'aymah into the al-Rābiṭa vision, as mentioned, was the idea of the search in nature for the meaning of life, and the corollary that the answer is within the soul of the poet, who transmits it to humanity, is found in perhaps half a dozen al-Jadāwil poems. Some of these will be considered in a later section of this paper<sup>98</sup> but at this point two poems<sup>99</sup> representing two aspects of this concept should be noted.

In "al-Asrār" (The Secrets), Jayyusi sensitively observes, nature appears "as a mysterious Being that attracts the poet's spirit"<sup>100</sup>:

Awe introduced its secret to me in the fields  
and the secret in the gaiety of the flowing stream

And the smile of the fertile grassy meadow

So many times I looked at beauty that I imagined it  
nearer to my sight than the edges of my eyelids

I asked for it, and the locks opened  
and there were a thousand thousand curtains

Understanding of it appeared, making my emotion  
impossible  
and I give up my life to the appearance of death

The simplicity of the traditionally ordered, monorhymed "al-Asrār" is in stark contrast to the structural complexity of "al-Majnūn" (The Crazy One) which in its unusual stanzaic pattern and its rhyme scheme, which varies and yet remains

consistent, gives an impression of unusual beauty of structure that is, in fact, internally regular. Only the smallest detail, the rhyme in the last two lines of each stanza, is inconsistent and irregular, yet it comes to be expected to be so. For this reason the poem in its structure alone could be said to resemble nature itself: unique in its patterns and reliable, the accidents and coincidents within the pattern are unpredictable but predicted.

The subject of "al-Majnūn" is not nature itself, but the romantic mystical poet introduced in "al-Asrār", aware of his dichotomous position and willing to isolate himself from society and go to nature to find the understanding that will unify his psyche. But the understanding remains unattainable:

I am a songster, I am the one who cries; I am the naked  
 one, I am the clothier  
 I am the wine and the earthen wine-jug; I am Saki the  
 server and I am the wine-sipper

I got rid of clothes that my hands didn't design  
 I began to go to the valley without a garment

And you imagined me freed from my chains

Yet I still remain in my shackles  
 and I am still in the dark night of the unattainable

Even the mysterious places where, in the previous poem, he had found solace, are inaccessible as the poet struggles with this mystery:



The fields and the grassy meadows hide from me  
under the darkness of night and the sea of horror

I said Who is this? And my partner said  
a whisperer raves from the imagination

In the darkness of night he shouts loud shouts  
as if he is in struggle with the night

As if the night binds him  
with shackles and ropes

And hits his naked body  
with the whip of the merciless tyrant

At last the dilemma is resolved when the poet realizes that  
the reconciliation he desires is to be found not in nature  
but in his own imagination. He has finally grasped the  
essence of his humanity, and no longer raves:

Whenever the horizon became spacious  
then my soul is the greater horizon

If a longing for reunion of lovers is within me  
indeed my affection is toward my imagination

I wore the daylight and the night  
in my peace and in my sorrow

Indeed the darkness of night doesn't increase my fear  
and the daylight doesn't increase my peace

In its meaning "al-Majnūn" is closely related to two  
other al-Jadawil poems. "al-Talāsīm" (The Enigmas), the  
famous long poem, will be considered in a later section. One  
difference between "al-Talāsīm" and "al-Majnūn" is that the  
poet is very evident in the latter, the mystical poet who  
recounts his psychic struggle to attain mastery over the  
enigmas of existence, while the narrator of the former is

less poet than pedagogue, as it will be presented.

In its mystical intent and initial premise that answers may be found in abandoning the self to nature, "al-Majnūn" is much like "Fī al-qafr" (In the Wilderness), composed a year earlier, where the poet in a similar way comes to realize his humanity. Of these two "al-Majnūn" is the more lyrical, evocative, imaginative work.

From these examples we can see that in al-Jadāwil Abu Madi has come some distance from tradition in terms of formal structures, most strikingly in the lyrical "al-Majnun", and in poetic concept, through his creative response to the stimuli of al-Rābita and the special attentions given to his talents by its leadership, Jibran and, even more so, Nu'aymah.

And yet there remain some links to the tradition- in the meters, in the bayt as the basic formal unit, and even in content where mystical elements, like the imagery of wine as creative inspiration, have been present in Arabic poetry since 'Umr Khayyam, the Sufis, and others.

Indeed, it seems that Abu Madi himself was perfectly confident in the poetic value of these verses, and yet he clearly anticipated some opposition. For this reason, it seems, he wrote "al-Fātiha" (The Opening), the poem which introduces the diwan, and which had not been previously published. His sense of the cooperative relationship between

a poet and his public is clear:

These are the echoes of my soul, let your soul  
be an ear

Perhaps I was rich, but indeed with you I am richer

O my companion, if you took care of my dawn it would  
become more brilliant

If you tour in my vineyard you will increase it  
productively and peacefully

I had poured the wine for you, so drink calmly

He is confident in the value of his new offerings:

So give a drink, generously, to whom you will, don't  
fear that you will incriminate him

He admits that formal structure and linguistic feats are not  
priorities in these poems:

You are not with me if you expect the poetry of words  
and rhythms

and acknowledges that not everyone will approve:

Your road differs from my road and what was between  
us passed away

To these he advises that they find another poet, more gay  
and conventional perhaps, more compatible with their  
expectations:

Then go away from me so you don't have to have  
troubles and sadness

And take another as companion, and another world  
rich, not like mine

And in these final lines we understand that Abu Madi  
himself sees his poetry as a result of the facts of his life

which, as will be seen in the next section, was not an easy one. Much of the power of his poetry is to be found in his lyrical and truthful portrayal of the human character, and his realism is the source of that power. The drink Abu Madi offers is his meanings, in his vision of an inspired struggle toward a society of justice and humanity and equality.

### 2.3 The Biography of Iliya Abu Madi Related to al-Jadāwil

Art, including poetry, is not produced in a vacuum. Literary art is created within a literary framework that has its own evolutionary history. And it is created by an artist who is possessed of a unique combination of personality and personal history including cultural heritage, education and family background as well as his/her own life experiences.

It has already been shown how, on the literary plane, the diwan al-Jadāwil resulted from the poet's contact with innovative ideas about poetry and the role of the poet through his association with the other men of letters in al-Rabīṭa al-qalamiyya. He experimented with the new ideas, transposing them upon his already-established traditional development as a poet, and generally received wide acclaim for his success.

But what of the poet himself? It should be remembered that one aspect of the al-Rabīṭa ideology, one of the so-called Romantic aspects, encourages the contemplative tone, the introspective quality that is the reflection of the poet's private vision of life and its inherent mysteries. When we follow this thread of subjective inspiration through al-Jadāwil, we find the poet to be highly involved with humanistic concerns, often in the social sphere but also in the personal. Some of his views on his own literary

development have already been examined, and even in these brief excerpts the current of humanistic responsibility can be heard.<sup>101</sup>

The social humanism that Abu Madi encouraged will be discussed generally in a later section of this paper<sup>102</sup> where the universal aspects of the poet's humanistic view are detailed. The present section concerns itself with the possibility that some of the al-Jadawil poems can be directly related to the poet's personal biography and background.

Considering the issue of Abu Madi's life story and how it may have affected his poetry, George Salim summarizes the ideas of some writers on this point<sup>103</sup>: 'Abd al-Latif Shararah took the view that there was nothing in Abu Madi's life that was unusual - that he lived, worked, was in exile, married, had sons successfully, and so on, and so the poetry was the result of his moody nature and his environment. Salim disagrees, saying that the contradictions and troubles in Abu Madi's life had a stronger effect than the American environment and it was not moodiness of nature that produced the poetry. 'Isa al-Na'uri was dismayed at Abu Madi's reticence to speak of his life, feeling that there were influences there that made him a great humanistic poet. He saw Abu Madi as a man who faced extreme difficulties with honor, who fell on thistles and hot coals and bayonets for a

long time before he knew a comfortable bed.<sup>104</sup> Nadra Jamil Saraj also sees Abu Madi's life heavy on the side of misery, and yet he hid his sadness; his pride led him to smile and show optimism and he concealed his misery so as not to project it onto others.

This, then, is the general view, that the difficulties in life for Abu Madi led him to understand misery, and that his personality, his pride, was the source of the optimism in the face of difficulty that pervades his poetry. The role of poet as a teacher of life encouraged him to lead his readers to this optimistic steadfast way of approaching life.

Salim has given us a chronology of Abu Madi's biography.<sup>105</sup> If events in the list are correlated with the known publication dates of some of the poems that were eventually collected as al-Jadāwil, it takes no great leap of the imagination to see that there are indeed a handful of poems in the diwan that seem to be inspired directly by an event in the poet's life.

The earliest of these is a beautiful elegy "Ibnat al-fajr" (Daughter of the Dawn) first published in 1917. If the dead youth of the poem is to be identified as Abu Madi's younger brother Dimitri, who committed suicide in Cincinnati in 1916 at the age of 19, then the tragedy of that death is revealed with great compassion as the result of a secret

unfortunate love affair with a girl who loved him in return:

A look from you - the skies know from it  
that he died for a faithful young girl

If you stand at the brooks  
and remember his standing and his silence

Where you swore that you would keep the promise  
and he swore that he wouldn't betray it

The youth urges the girl to be discreet in her public  
mourning for him:

Overwhelm sorrow and sit by my coffin  
silently, indeed I love calmness

And if you fear that the ecstasy of love rises in you  
and our hidden secrets appear

Then come back, and pour out your tears secretly  
and wipe with your hands what you pour out

and to release her grief in the company of nature and alone  
at his graveside:

Then remember him with the caravans of lightening  
lament him with the pouring rain of the clouds

And say to the bird: my loved one died!  
so why O bird don't you cry for him?

And if you sat alone in the night  
and the buried distress rebels in you

And you become angry at the remaining nights  
and you yearn for the magnificent nights

Then go from the beautiful chamber and visit  
that grave, and greet its inhabitant

Another lovely poem is number 15 "al-Masā'" (The  
Evening) first published in May of 1921. This stanzaic poem  
is thought to have been addressed to Abu Madi's mother



Salma; the Salma of the poem is exhorted not to be anxious about the passage of time and other difficulties of life but to keep the cheerfulness of morning and youth:

Did your eyes see the ghosts of old age in the clouds?

The day - son of the morning - died. But don't say  
how he died

Thinking about life increases the pain of life  
Leave sadness and tragedies behind, bring back the joy  
of girlhood

When your face in the daylight reflected a cheerful day

He encourages her to see that even in depression, for which he uses the image of night, the lovely aspects of life still exist unchanged:

For the night there is no difference between the river  
and the swamp

If night covered the countries, their fields and  
hilly areas

The night wouldn't steal the fragrance of the flower,  
nor the rippling echo of the water

It is interesting that this poem appeared during the time in which Abu Madi's mother, in Lebanon, must have been preparing for the marriage of the poet's younger sister Jana. That the family ties were kept close is as clear as the deep affection and compassion of the son toward his mother's psychological situation. The overriding tone of the poem is toward optimism, hope and love:

Let all of your life be good, beautiful hope

And let your soul be filled with dreams, in old age and  
in childhood

Let your heart be at the command of love, like a world  
in itself

Its flowers do not wither  
And its stars do not set

Abu Madi's shock at the death of this same sister, who died giving birth to her first daughter in 1923, is probably the subject of his second dramatic elegy, poem 43 "al-Dam'a al-kharsā'" (The Dumb Tear). The poet's extreme shock at this unforeseen death is expressed through the image of a tear which

doesn't fall lovingly, and doesn't dry

It was dumfounded, and everything became silent  
the light and the shade and the darkness

The universe most of all is dazed by her daze  
until it is as if the earth doesn't rotate

The poet's shock is followed by reminiscences of his sister, of her ways and of her speech with him:

She was teasing me and laughing, then the time of  
teasing  
stopped, and her laughter was thoughtful

She said, and sorrow had taken her smile  
he was right who said life is an illusion

and he remembers his own fanciful speech to cheer her:

Don't be anxious, for death does not harm us  
we have after it return and resurrection

And you will be back, a fragrant tree  
I am on its apex like an attracted nightengale

He sings for her and he flies at her sides  
and she is in good spirits when he sings and  
when he flies

And he goes on, speaking now as much to the departed one as to himself, about rebirth in imaginative naturalistic forms:

she as a glittering stream and he a laughing wave, she as a fluttering butterfly and he in its wings "like prismatic daylight", she as a breeze in the meadows and he its whispers and rustles. He conjures up natural images of great beauty and sensitivity and joy, and in his mind he sees her happiness return, and feels his own escape from the pain:

I treated her with imagination and she was happy  
and how the anesthesia benefits the suffering one

But the bitterness of reality soon regains control of the poet's mind and he finds no comfort, and he echo's the departed one's despairing cry:

Then it was like I was a boat that lost its mooring  
and the sea attacked, swirling around it

Doubts circled around my soul as if it was  
prey, and as if they were hawks

O night where is the light? Surely I am a stray one  
either bitterness is emitted or you have no light

Is this the way we die and our dreams vanish  
in a moment and we become one with the soil?

Jana died in April of 1923. In July Abu Madi published a poem "Hiya" (She) in which a young man expresses his love for his mother and his appreciation of her sacrifices.

...I drink the health of she who  
sacrifices selflessly for me, and I for her

Her picture is traced on my heart  
and nothing can erase it, until death

He raises the love of a mother over the sensual loves being discussed by the companions in the hall:

She has given generously all of her self  
and she doesn't fear that I victimize her

The poem was apparently written in anticipation of seeing his mother after many years. Both parents both arrived in New York from Lebanon in October of the same year; after Jana's death they no doubt wanted to be near their sons in the new world.

Two other poems may be conjectured to be Abu Madi's response to the birth of his second son in January of 1924. The feelings of the poet after the birth of his first son seem to have been confined within the privacy of the family circle; no poetry was produced in that year, 1922. But perhaps now those aspects of fatherhood that had been accumulating in the mind and soul of the poet call for expression and he commits some thoughts to poetry in April and October of 1924.

The first of these is poem 10 "al-Hajar al-saghīr" (The Small Stone); Jayyusi rightly calls it "a charming allegory or parable".<sup>106</sup> The importance of the individual, even the smallest and most lowly, to society, is the theme. By choosing as his subject a small stone in a huge city dam, the poet emphasizes that even the most humble must be shown that he is significant, or his loss of hope can be the downfall of all:

I am a dusty stone, and a lowly one  
no beauty - no wisdom - no sharpness

Let me go from this existence  
in peace, I hate staying here

He fell from his place, blaming  
the earth and the falling stars and the daylight  
and the sky

The dawn opened his eyelids  
while the flood overwhelmed the city

"al-Hajar al-saghīr" is followed by "al-Yatīm" (The Orphan) where the responsibility of each member of society for not only his own children but for the orphaned ones as well is laid out with a compassionate logic that is both for the sake of the child and for the society:

The orphan who appears miserable  
is not nothing is you know misery

Perhaps God has deposited in him  
a philosopher or a poet or a prophet

Every intelligent one is not an orphan  
but he was, like the orphan, a child

Indeed if death has taken away his father  
he didn't take away the feelings from you and me

Don't say Who is his mother? Who is his father?  
For his father and his mother are Syria!

Fight miseries in the young one while they are small  
before a strong one dominates him

Themes restating the importance of love towards fellow human beings are found throughout al-Jadāwīl and will be studied later. Of love poetry, concerning love between man and woman, there are at least four examples, each quite different from the others in approach. Three are of unknown dates, and the fourth, "Ta'ālī" (Come In) was written five

years after his marriage to an American girl of Arab parentage.

Jayyusi has introduced the possibility that most of Abu Madi's poems were based objectively on some idea, that through the emotional, lyrical quality of his presentation he conveyed an impression of personal involvement more than a reflection of direct experience.<sup>107</sup> The love poems found in al-Jadawil seem to present some examples of this possibility.

Poem 46 "'Arūs al-jamāl" (Bride of Beauty) is a short romantic song evoking the image of an untouchable beauty, which can only be reached vicariously, through the sight of the full moon, the song of the nightengale, the night fragrances of the meadow flowers. It is a pretty, artistic poem in which one sees the poet like the nightengale, succeeding through his own special gifts in touching beauty.

"Ya shadhāhunna" (O, Fragrances!), poem 49, opens with a conversation between two friends on a sleepless night, each remembering his experiences in love. The poet then drifts in his own thoughts around a woman whose memory stays with him in the exile where he fails to find any one like her. The image of this woman is a symbol of the homeland from which he is exiled:

I imagined if I was far away I will forget  
her, and time will fold the journey of her love

I sniffed the roses in each land  
 O their fragrances - you are not like her fragrance

If the breeze played with my clothes  
 I said: the breeze was taught by her hand!

She is closer to my heart than wishes  
 and my heart cries: how far away!

He reflects that some would disapprove of his love,  
 but declares rather the opposite, that through love he has  
 come to know God:

Indeed a soul that love doesn't rise in  
 is a soul that doesn't know the meaning of it

The gods don't have fire waiting for me, but love  
 and I'm not afraid of the fire of people

In love I reached my soul  
 and with love I knew God

"Gharāmiyya" (The Enamoured One) is a soliloquy within  
 the soul of the poet, where the images of the beloved  
 homeland create the magic in his soul that makes him more  
 than an ordinary poet:

Your eyes and the magic that is in them  
 made me a magic poet

If you remained absent from my eyes and the night  
 grew  
 I asked the bright moon about you

And in the morning I go to the meadow  
 to confide in the poet nightengale

The beloved in this poem is the same woman we were told of  
 in "Ya shadhahunna". He addresses her now as he inhales the  
 fragrance of a rose:

It reminds the enamoured one of that fragrance

do you remember the lover who remembers?

He continues, complaining of the unfairness of love, and ends by distaining complaint, suggesting that if he was just an ordinary poet, rather than an inspired "magic" poet, he would not suffer as he is suffering:

And he complained to me and I to him  
the atrocity of love, and the forsaking, and the  
forsaker

And a planet that heard my sigh  
spent his time with me, a distracted sleepless one

I drove even the sleep from my eyes  
and I don't care about the complaining scold

O I wish that I was a walking proverb  
like the popular expressions say!

Finally, in "Ta'ālī", the poet builds on an idea already suggested on in "'Arūs al-jamāl"; that love lives within the province of nature:

Love wants us to laugh, so let us laugh with the dawn  
And to run - let's run with the brooks and the river  
And to shout together with the nightengale and the moon

Come in, before the beautiful blackbirds fall silent  
in the meadow

and further, that love was created by God just as nature and humans were created. Therefore freedom is not a sin as traditions or religions claim but rather a fulfillment of what has been created:

Come in to free our souls from the prison of traditions

Challenge the greybeard and what he classified  
Isn't it for the brook to flow and for the rose to  
spread its perfume?



God wanted us to love deeply when he created beauty  
 He cast love into your heart and also into mine  
 His will wasn't without meaning  
 If you love, what is your sin? And if I love, what  
     is my sin?

It may be that this poem was written some years before 1925 and only published when the times were more accepting of such ideas. But whether these poems are direct expressions of Abu Madi's own experiences or simply meditative reflections of ideas about freedom that developed after his arrival in the United States, is not in the end so important as his introduction of such thinking into modern Arabic poetry. The poet was still a young man when he came into contact with new ideas, and his poems on love no doubt had a similar attraction for young readers throughout the Arab world. What he offers them is not a mass revolt against cultural norms so much as a new view of freedom, both personal and universal, and sensitivity to the realities of humans in a created world.

Jayyusi finds poem 16 "al-Kamanja al-muhattama" (The Broken Kamanja) one of the few examples, in her mind, of a case where Abu Madi's poetry is the outcome of a personal experience, a psychological crisis.<sup>108</sup> She is certainly correct that it is; the poem is laden with a sadness and a despair that can be understood on two levels, the personal level of the poet and the national level of the poet's

homeland.

A reading on the national level is appropriately examined first, as it describes the emotional context within which we find the personal crisis. The years immediately preceding the publication of this poem in 1925 had seen the dark night of the Turkish occupation ended in 1918, and a long-awaited nationalist government, opposing sectarian rivalries and religious discrimination, committed to modernization within an Arab context, installed in Damascus. This heartening situation was to last only two years - the French occupation of Syria commenced in 1920 to re-establish French hegemony in Lebanon and to implement French plans for permanent domination of Syria.<sup>109</sup> The Syro-Americans of this generation felt strongly their Arab identity and had retained close ties with families and events in the homeland. In this context, the "broken kamanja" can be seen as an image for the homeland itself, the pride and strength of her glorious history forgotten by her own people she is left with no champion against the new aggression:

She was forsaken like an ostracized ship  
her past hidden behind the seashore

It was as if she was in her silence perplexed  
that she can't see any who care about her cry

The poet affirms his identity with the homeland, the place of his birth and early consciousness:

The promise of God passed for me in her shadow

I cry for it and sometimes make her cry

It is as if her limbs joined with my limbs  
and my secret emotions were in her

Then I drank until I couldn't control human  
intoxication  
with wine, and I drank the glass of her Saki

And you saw me in a magic garden  
none who has seen it is satiated with its beauty

I glimpsed the dream of the youths, in a parade  
it appears before me and passion walks with it

O my friend! In my breast and in my limbs  
despair crowds the soul, and bleeds it

Like a city that fate pounded hard upon  
and encoffined its inhabitants with silence

He attributes the disaster to fate, and seems to hear the  
wind elegizing the kamanja, the homeland enshrouded in  
abandonment:

There is no surprise in the wilderness in the moaning  
of the wind  
and its crying, indeed the wind elegizes her

If you both hear this whisper flowing  
it is like magic in the souls that attract her

Then you would know that fate killed her  
so she does not reveal the secrets still living  
inside of her

Of his personal role in light of this national tragedy  
Abu Madi shows himself utterly in despair and looking for  
solace in nature, where his personality found sympathy and  
reinforcement thanks to his universal outlook:

Then the sweet melodies of the birds alone  
make a barrier to protect my feelings

How many times the soft melody shakes me and my soul  
                   falls down  
 troubled, near to crisis

The only trace of Abu Madi's usual steadfastness is in the second line of the first bayt, when he first sees the broken kamanja:

I saw her like a dead one in its shroud  
 I was suddenly speechless, except for an admonition  
                   to sow

All that the poet personally can do is to make the most of his life and his talents, and not to forget the kamanja:

How often I heard the footfall of the ghosts of  
                   sadness  
 with the evening, by moaning pleasing it

Finally there is a poem, number 26, that must be included in any talk relating Abu Madi's poetry to his life, emphasized by its autobiographical title "Ana". First published in 1919, this poem is a direct successor to the classical idea of fakhr, the poet boasting of his own virtues and capabilities. It is a tribute to Abu Madi's great sense of humanity that what he finds worthy of praise in himself is his sense of justice:

Indeed I became angry for the generous one berated  
 by a lesser one, and I blame he who doesn't get angry

And I love each polite one, even if he  
 is my opposer, and I am compassionate for each  
                   impolite one

My heart refuses to stoop to harm  
 the love of harm is from the scorpion's mood

As for me, I reflect back offense for offense

even if I accept lightening without a downpour  
his perception of human character:

The view of the mistaken one is his feeling and his  
words  
in his secret: O I wish I was not guilty

his faithfulness to his fellows:

Indeed if disaster came down on my fellow  
I defended him with my teeth and my claws

And I see his mistakes as if I don't see  
and I see his excellence even if it isn't written

I blame myself before him that errs  
and if he hurts me I don't reprimand him

and his faithfulness to his own soul for which he suffers  
and is misunderstood:

Because of my conscience I live in a prison  
through myself I am walking in a crowd

And if the stupid one sees me lower than him  
it is like you see the shadow of planets in the water

This is Abu Madi's view of himself in 1919, a year  
before he married. The marriage was followed by a period of  
poetic hiatus - relatively few poems were offered by the  
poet until after the birth of his second son early in 1924.  
Of the forty-six poems in al-Jadawil the original  
publication dates for some thirty-five are known; of these,  
twenty-three were first published during the period 1924-  
1927. So it seems that the ideas of Abu Madi in response to  
the stimuli of al-Rabita incubated for some time in the  
warmth of domestic life. That he found attractive qualities

in these new ideas is clear when we look at the eventual outpouring of poems that now comes to us as al-Jadāwil. Yet the conflict in Abu Madi of his Arab background with the innovative al-Rabiṭa ideals and the social situation in the land of exile are frequently visible.

One poem from this period of incubation directly expresses Abu Madi's awareness of this inherent contradiction. Poem 9 "Rīh al-shamāl" (The North Wind) opens with the poet questioning the wailing north wind as to the reason for its crying:

Whatever destination you rush to  
isn't there a resting place, a refuge?

How you wail and how you shout  
like a small bird terrified by something new

Do you lament your lost hopes?  
Does the wind hope like mortals?

Does a huge army pursue you?  
Is one like you frightened by a huge army?

And he accuses the wind of disrupting nature itself: the trees lose their leaves, the brook is disturbed, the mountains want to run away, and even the nightengale is disoriented. Here the image of the nightengale in "'Arūs al-jamāl" should be recalled; in that poem the bird is an image of the poet pursuing beauty in his art. With this in mind, the images of nature here, particularly of the brook, come into focus as symbols of the new poetic current with which the poet is experimenting. The wind is causing a disruption

of the new currents and disorientation of the poet himself:

The bough has cast its leaves  
from fright and from the disturbance of the brook

And it lost its way to the nest  
so the nightengale wandered aimlessly

Distraction covered his face in distress  
like the fearful disarmed one secludes himself

So what is this north wind? On the one hand it is the Arab literary tradition which is being lifted in the pursuit of change and on the other hand it is the cultural heritage of the Arab poet:

In the night a caller replies  
you were wrong, so what is this north wind?

It is the ancient ones  
touching the homes, and they don't come down

The ancient ones are in all that we drink  
and they are in the food that we eat

They are in the air which surrounds us  
and in what we say and what we do

This is that same heritage on which the poet, in "Barridi ya suhub", relies for the way to compatibility with life despite its troubles. Abu Madi is expressing as well the situation of living in exile, where the social environment is so often at odds with traditional Arab thinking and attitudes. Where he had opened the poem confidently in the role of the avant-garde poet, that poet, humbled by the recognition that the strong tradition to which he has intrinsic emotional response is omnipresent, concludes with

the realistic outlook to which he is also heir. He acknowledges that if the Arab man and poet cannot separate himself from the influences of the exile, neither can the avant-garde poet separate himself from his Arab character.

And that Arab character which is so strong in Abu Madi includes a nationalist facet which, although it does not directly show itself often in al-Jadāwil, was seen in "al-Kamanja al-muhattama" where Iliya's despair at the abandonment of Syria to an imperialist-designed fate was seen.

There is no doubt that events in Syria and Lebanon continued to affect the psychology of the immigrant poets. Abu Madi's own brush with the Ottoman occupation occurred in 1911 when he left Egypt, where he had been living with his uncle since 1900, to visit Lebanon for a few months. While there, the young poet joined with the political opposition, producing a poem of protest. It was after this that Iliya fled to the United States to avoid Turkish authorities.<sup>110</sup> The poet of al-Jadāwil was not a voluntary exile, searching in America for a better livelihood, but a political exile by virtue of his poetic truthfulness. al-Na'uri mentions that while in Egypt Abu Madi had written many political poems that were not published in his first diwan<sup>111</sup> for political reasons.<sup>112</sup> The scarcity of political or nationalistic poems in al-Jadāwil is most likely because of the more



universal tinge encouraged in the al-Rābiṭa poets, but it has been noted that Abu Madi's next diwan al-Khamā'il contains many nationalistic poems. Perhaps the priorities of the poet as he grew older concentrated more along the line of his Arab heritage and homeland than on the romantic universalism of the al-Jadāwil period. Or, to follow Jayyusi's thesis, the challenge of al-Rābiṭa having been met successfully, the poet lost his interest in the innovative concepts and returned to more traditionally Arab modes in poetry. It is very likely that, in response to the ever-worsening political climate in the homeland in the 1930's, Abu Madi re-focused his talents to speak more directly to the situation in the Arab lands.

In any case the only real nationalistic poem found in this diwan is poem 45 "Matā yadkuru al-watan al-nauma?" (When will the Homeland Remember Sleep?) which projects simultaneously an angry cry at the injustice of the Arab political situation and expressed bewilderment at those countrymen who play while occupation threatens the homeland. The opening abiyāt of the poem find the anguished poet recalling the tyranny and hypocrisy of the great powers towards the Arabs:

I sat while the careless slept peacefully  
musing on our past and the future

And how the tyrants ruled despotically over us  
and how they committed outrage on aged and young alike

I remembered the wars and their calamities  
and what the sword and the canon did

And how nations of the greatest honorability  
commit outrage on themselves

They demolished what they had erected  
of the edifices of science and its secrets

and he speaks of the horror and irrationality of war, and  
the unfair results:

Women generously grant their sons to death  
and death is not merciful

Soldiers generously grant their livers  
to the earth, and the earth doesn't comprehend

The birds come and go among the fallen bodies  
and if they are thirsty, the drink is blood

In each place there is mourning  
the young women rend their garments

The wolves and the quarrelers were satisfied  
the houses and the animals were devastated

He remembers the humiliations under the Ottoman rule, and  
the apparent inability of the nation to defend itself:

Her heroes and her men of letters were forced  
to the execution place as sheep are forced<sup>113</sup>

Each person who doesn't die from humiliation  
they killed with the sword of starvation

Injustice is not enough to move their pride  
and seeing the blood is not enough to rouse their  
anger

The people and the stars change  
and their circumstances were unchanged

He envisions the creatures of nature who strongly defend  
their homes, from the lion to the ant to the shaker-bird,

and he observes:

So not the predatory female beast, not the lion  
nor the sheep recommends its own butcher

He is frustrated, anguished that some countrymen have no  
concern for the fate of the homeland, and indeed encourage  
the aggressors:

I wondered at the playing laughing one  
while his people are between lances and swords

And at those who clap for the killer  
while his loved ones are drinking death

and concludes wondering when there will be a just peace in  
his native land:

When will the homeland remember sleep  
like the birds remember their nests?

The date of composition of this poem is unknown. Abu  
Madi's view of political warfare shows that the poem pre-  
dates the advent of the Arab nationalist party  
governments<sup>114</sup>:

Is it for one individual to escape from danger  
that the blood is splashed everywhere and the thousands  
die?

And the father plants his sons  
for the swords' blades to harvest them?

while several later abiyāt indicate that the poem was  
written after the commencement of the French aggression in  
1920:

As a bird is killed in a garden  
and the deet is hunted in the desert

Like that my nation was murdered

without a reason and with no motive

So for what is it taken by force?  
It is taken by revenge, and it does no wrong

As noted earlier, it is not certain that "Matā" was included in the original diwan al-Jadāwil in 1927. All that can be said is that it seems, on superficial examination of the historical context, that the poem was probably written during the period of the French occupation, sometime between 1920 and 1946.

And so we have part of the picture of the life of Abu Madi from the poems he offered. Six poems have been considered as related directly to specific events in the life of his family. Others express romantic ideas about beauty and love.

Four other poems contribute to our picture of the poet's psyche, to his Arab core and to his adaptations to the conditions of exile and the resulting complications. That the poet strongly felt his Arab essence is evident, and it is interesting when al-Na'uri notes, in recollecting the occasion when Abu Madi finally returned to Lebanon in late 1948, that the homesick poet found himself also homesick for his second home, where he had left his family and work, the theater of his struggle.<sup>115</sup> And so the closing bayt of "Rih al-shamāl", written in 1921, proved prophetic:

So he who expects to live in one world or the other  
He is a man with a distorted intellect!

#### 2.4 Abu Madi's Journalistic Inclination

Iliya Abu Madi the poet supported himself and his family for more than forty years as a journalist, associated with Arab-American publications in New York. He went to New York City in 1916 to work as an editor for al-Mujalla al-'arabiyya.<sup>116</sup> In 1918 he began at Mirāt al-gharb as an editor<sup>117</sup> and in 1924 it was reported that he had also become an agent for the Cairo journal al-Muqtataf in America.<sup>118</sup> Abu Madi resigned the editorship of Mirāt al-gharb in July of 1928; by April of the next year he had issued the first number of al-Samīr, his own bi-monthly magazine.<sup>119</sup> al-Samīr became a daily paper in November 1936<sup>120</sup> and continued so until it ceased publication in the spring of 1957, only months before the poet died of heart failure in Brooklyn.<sup>121</sup>

Nu'aymah downplays Abu Madi's journalistic career, stating that his editor's pen was seeking livelihood, not like his poetic pen with which he sought to release his yearning soul.<sup>122</sup> But two others who wrote about Abu Madi's poetry see the journalism, albeit a practical pursuit, not alien to the poet's thinking and interests but as a vocation that in some ways paralleled certain aspects of his poetry.

'Isa al-Na'uri acknowledges that prose was not the forte of Abu Madi, but that he was forced to write it in

journalism and he became a successful journalist in his exile.<sup>123</sup> He points out that Iliya was very active in the preparation of his paper - that it required of him a working mind, unceasing activity and a limber pen absorbed in all aspects of daily life, politics, news, society and so on.<sup>124</sup> He finds that in Abu Madi's journalism, poetry is no more than the dessert, only supporting the prose.<sup>125</sup>

The writing that Abu Madi regularly contributed to al-Samīr was its opening article, and in it he treated many social affairs and Arab and world political problems.<sup>126</sup> He defended the Arab nation and contributed to its progress on many occasions, but also used these editorials to treat literary matters or humanistic and general social issues including pieces in which he addressed problems that were contributing to the difficulties being experienced by the underclasses of Arab society.<sup>127</sup> But these pieces shared some common roots with his poetry, for, as al-Na'uri goes on he affirms that one could fill books with Abu Madi's valuable treatments of sensitive subjects, guided by his soul and his emotions, filled with passages of eloquence and linguistic power.<sup>128</sup>

George Salim takes the subject of Abu Madi's journalism closer to his poetry, stating that all five of the poet's known diwans show an interest in journalism from as early as the Alexandrian days. Perhaps it was here that his intellect

was opened to the role of journalism and its scope and influence on opinion; perhaps it was here that the heart of the poet was opened to journalism and he dreamed of his own pursuit of it as a profession.<sup>129</sup>

Many of the poems cited by Salim are not contained in al-Jadāwil and so are beyond the limits of this paper. It should be noted, however, that the poems from the Egyptian period (1900-1911) reveal Abu Madi's call for a free press, an interest which he shared with the writers and poets of the nationalist movement in that period.<sup>130</sup> And from the Egypto-American period, the years 1911-1919 which saw Abu Madi's establishment in the United States, Salim finds only one poem<sup>131</sup> which mentions journalism, in which Abu Madi portrays the situation of the Mahjar journalism at the beginning of the second decade of this century.

In exile by age 22, Abu Madi concentrated his professional energy on journalism and reached an honored position in its ranks. Salim reproduces the text of a moving address made by Abu Madi in 1952<sup>132</sup>, after he had put in almost forty years of struggle in the field of journalism, on the occasion of the death of another Mahjar journalist, the owner of al-Hudā, Sallum Mukarizil. In this piece the poet declares the journalist to be a soldier of thought who, compared with the soldier of the sword, is not drafted but is a volunteer, and serves not for a period of conscription

but for all the years of his life, not expecting any compensation for his service.<sup>133</sup> And he makes the responsibility taken by this soldier of thought, the Mahjar journalist, clear; it seems to be a double-edged duty. On one side, the Mahjar journalist is the long hand that keeps the compassionate embers blazing in the hearts of the emigrants from the original home. On the other, it is the vehicle that transmits the accomplishments of the genius of the Mahjar, the messenger of the new free thought that awakens the consciousness and inspires the souls and liberates the minds, directing the people to truth and beauty and generosity in life.

So it seems that Abu Madi's view of the journalist is not so different from some aspects in his view of the poet. In al-Jadāwil only one poem directly addresses the issue of journalism, number 33 "'Id al-nahy" (Festival of Prohibition) which was composed late in the period during which Iliya worked for his father-in-law Najib Musa Diyab as an editor of "Mirāt al-gharb". It reflects what Salim calls the sincere seriousness of some of Aby Madi's abiyat dealing with journalism and journalists. In this poem, which acknowledges and honors those contemporary ideas and movements in the Arab world that are proscribed by popular tradition and anti-nationalist political entrenchments, the poet places a high value on journalism:



In a journal, the light of the eyes is its black  
and its white is of the purity of the race-horses

A spring of knowledge and a skeleton of wisdom  
and a container of politeness and a treasure of  
integrity

and salutes the Egyptian nationalists who show appreciation  
and respect to their journalists and other writers:

If you are generous to the shaykh of the press, you are  
generous to the highest orb in the sky of the Arab

Youth awarded Egypt a shawl  
like the spring on the meadows and valleys

The most valuable gifted ones and intellects I saw  
residing in palaces of parchment and ink

He introduces himself as an appreciative Arab writer from  
the exile:

To you and your land, from a poet who is inconvenienced  
ever supporting you and considering your enemies his

and acknowledges the shared goal of journalism, to brighten  
the dark night of ignorance:

It is still imposing its light on ignorance  
until it shortens the bully night

The role of the journalist is that of a compatriot in the  
process of building a nation on the foundations of its own  
history and culture:

In the reality recalling the warrior Khaled  
causes the master of the sword and the soldiers to  
be forgotten

If not for the genius of the powerful ones it will  
not spread  
on the earth, the recollection of the greatest  
powerful leader

No nation surmounts the difficulties in the paths of  
 nobility  
 except with the power of a reformer or guide

Perhaps in light of his bayt quoted above, desiring the elimination of ignorance through a responsible press, we find the intellectual context for a poem in al-Jadāwil, first published in the month after "'Id al-nahy" appeared, that conveys the poet's response to a simple news item, the notice of the unveiling of a statue of some public figure.

The poem "al-Tamthāl" (The Statue) could at first glance fit easily into the stream of Abu Madi's daily editorials in "al-Samīr" as al-Na'uri has described them to us above. The poem pre-dates the first of those articles, however, by three years and the subject is rightfully couched in verse rather than prose as it steps beyond journalistic commentary to a poetic endorsement of natural powers greater than men. The poet introduces his subject, the viewing of a new statue of some public figure. The viewers interviewed give their reasons for the commemoration of this man: we want to immortalize his portrait in recognition of his excellence and his generosity; he lived to defend honor with his strength. The poet then proceeds to discredit each reason, showing each to be insignificant against the magnitude of the eternal natural world: the excellence is in the marble stone, the generosity is in the rain, the strength is in fate. At this

point the poet questions the wealth, courage and goodness of the commemorated man and the commemorators themselves. In these abiyāt he shows a realistic understanding of the guilt which is often mistaken for gold in human society:

If he was rich or strong then indeed  
he became rich with your money and he gained your  
strength

So he doesn't love you and you don't care about him  
as you imagined, rather it is benefit and harm

And you don't raise the statue for courage and  
goodness  
but a weakness that is hidden in yourselves

You don't love the rich one if he becomes poor  
and you don't love the strong if he is defeated

I saw you, you don't come by the meadow  
if there is in the meadow neither shade nor fruit

And you don't feed the sheep except to fatten  
yourselves  
and you don't have horses except for travel

but concludes that, if true excellence is worthy of recognition and if one makes no mistake, the recognition should be of the excellence of nature:

Then what is the matter with you, you aren't generous  
to the night or the day  
And you don't erect a statue for the sun and the moon

We are reminded of another al-Jadāwil poem, number 13 "Fī al-qafr" (In the Wilderness) published in the same year, where the poet, bored by life in society, lists in his grievances against society the situation seen in "al-Tamthāl":

My soul was weary of the life with people  
it was bored even with intimate friends

And boredom walked in that life until  
it became dissatisfied with their food and drink...

And with the standing ones as idols  
and with the ones praying to the idols

It is clear that Abu Madi's scornful view of those individuals around whom society flows, who are often treated as demi-gods in the society, was intended to awaken critical thinking. And this critical thinking, which he sees as an individual struggle, is what Abu Madi encouraged in both his poetry and his journalism. This is expressed in two abiyat from "'Id al-nahy":

Indeed the truths you who published its articles  
at one time science was like atheism

The people became miserable when they became miserable  
in their ignorance  
and became proud when they became proud as individuals

Abu Madi was successful as a poet and as a journalist because he felt in both endeavors a drive to lighten ignorance, to improve the quality of life for his people. While al-Na'uri was correct in his observation that Iliya's journalism did not stand on the poetry<sup>134</sup>, rather, the relationship between poetry and journalism in Aby Madi's work in both spheres can be found in his keen perception of human character and his impulse to use that vision to guide his readers toward, on one hand, a pragmatic philosophical position from which to handle the difficulties of life, and

on the other toward a compassionate responsibility for fellow human beings based on an awareness that transcends differences of social position or economic rank. And this impulse, thanks in part to the imperatives of al-Rabiṭa al-galamiyya, is transmitted through the poems of al-Jadawil in a language that is not specific to the Arab world and can be appreciated not only by Arab readers but by the readers of the other nations also.

### 3.1 The Past: Contemporary Response to al-Jadawil

It has been mentioned that certain ideas of Jibran and Nu'aymah exerted great influence on the group of men who called themselves al-Rabita al-qalamiyya. Demonstrating "his revolt against the established modes of thought in social, religious and literary spheres"<sup>135</sup> Jibran emphasized freedom, human brotherhood and spiritual progress to combat social conventions and outdated literary taboos. Jayyusi observes that by the early twentieth century the Arab people had already entered on an age of adventure, had laid themselves open to ideas from all corners of the world, provided they did not openly challenge religious dogma".<sup>136</sup> In such a climate, she continues, the ideas of Jibran must have been infectious and stimulating to the Arab creative mind, of which Abu Madi showed himself to be a talented component.

The literary expressions of the northern Mahjar writers have been seen as resulting from, in part, their Christian backgrounds, and in the contribution of a Christian trend to Arabic literature.<sup>137</sup> Abu Madi, however, is seen as the least basically "Christian" of these innovators, and, in mood, tone and general attitude, the most basically "Arab" among them.<sup>138</sup> This essential "Arabness" in his works is probably the secret of his great popularity with the Arab

reading public. Reasons for the great positive response of the Arab reading public to Abu Madi's innovative poetry have been elucidated by a number of writers. Abu Madi walks, with his poetry, within limitations and objectives that spring from his society<sup>139</sup> and we have seen that outside the small circle of al-Rabita fellows and other Mahjar journalists, his society is the Arab society at large. While he could be novel and express new attitudes, he never shocked his readers by overstepping the boundary of acceptability.<sup>140</sup> Jayyusi finds several other more specific reasons for the persistently enthusiastic response to Abu Madi's poetry.<sup>141</sup>

She notes that from the classical period up to the 1950's Arab poetry exhibits a certain dogmatism<sup>142</sup>, a direct portrayal of "truths" and firm conclusions, and that Abu Madi strongly confirms this stand. There are plentiful examples in al-Jadāwil of these short, concise statements, from "al-Sajīna":

So how much the virtue in life suffers  
and how often the wrong flourishes

And how often the quality of beauty lived as faults  
to avoid its mischief

and from "al-Tīnah al-hamqā'":

Who is not generous as life is generous  
indeed is foolish: by avarice he commits suicide

Another broadly appealing aspect of Abu Madi's poetry is his choices of allegorical symbols. His use of familiar

objects, mostly from Nature, as subjects for his parables, demonstrates the inspiration derived from popular culture and village life. All seven of the parables or allegories in the diwan<sup>143</sup> are expressed through such symbols: the frogs, the donkey, the small stone, the fig tree, the moon, the fox and the lion, the spring-pond, and the crow and the nightengale. Outside the allegories, other poems abound with natural imagery of meadows, forests, mountains and wilderness as well as imagery of the solar system: sun, moon, planets, stars and galaxies. Certainly themes of the power and beauty of nature had been woven into Arabic poetry since at least the days of 'Imru al-Qais. Jayyusi points out that in the classical tradition nature was treated as an external phenomenon, whereas, beginning in the Mahjar with Jibran, the emotional and spiritual relationship of man with nature, the mystical unity achieved through a sensitive response to the natural world is viewed as a philosophical ideal.<sup>144</sup> The familiarity of such symbolism must have made the abstract conceptual themes favored by al-Rabita as transmitted to readers by Abu Madi in al-Jadawil immediately comprehensible, facilitating sympathetic reception of the poems and appreciation of a new concept of literature.

The philosophical steadfastness of Abu Madi, rooted in his culture and carried by him through the difficulties of his exile, has been discussed. Naturally and as if in



homage, he offers it back to his fellow countrymen, to the homeland, as a remedy that has been tried and found true. As Jayyusi says, "his poetry often shows a strength of spirit and optimism greatly needed by a frustrated nation needing to muster all of its spiritual resources".<sup>145</sup> The abiyāt from "Barridī yā sahab" have been mentioned:

I am of a nation who, when they got tired  
found melodies in their sadness

And when a desire had difficulties  
they ease it by lifting what is difficult

al-Dafādi' wa-al-nujūm (The Frogs and the Stars)

presents this spiritual strength and optimism in an expressive parable not dissimilar in concept to the old tribal poetry. In this story the tribe succeeds in defeating a great enemy, and proudly lauds its victory. The the victory, over the night stars, was inevitable with the coming of the dawn, is not the point so much as the solidarity that was inspired in the frogs in the defense of their territory and the unity and pride resulting from their success. Five abiyāt from poem 20 "al-Zamān" (Time) illustrated the realistic outlook of Abu Madi. He warns that the joys of this life are ephemeral, but allows that dreams enhance appreciation of life. Finally, he advocates an accepting approach to the future:

Who doesn't laugh when the morning is rosy  
wouldn't be upset when the morning was not rosy

No matter the dreams I saw in the globe  
I have them and the things in my hand

I am in time as a wave in the sea  
I am in it whether it foams or not

No matter how the sea crashes it will not drown me  
nor will it be my relief or my destruction

But oh! I desire and I don't fear tomorrow  
Do I hope for and fear what doesn't exist?

So here is the key to Abu Madi's popular appeal. He called for facing life with a smile, and this is a theme whose threads continue into al-Jadawil from his earlier diwans. Much of the intent of the poems is to console the unhappy, advise the straying, promote hope in the pessimistic and bring calmness and peace to the fearful.<sup>146</sup> In al-Jadawil Abu Madi accomplished this intent through a contemplative philosophical mood that aims to enlighten, for the poet's soul is human like the souls of his readers, and his resolutions of the difficulties of life are advanced with hope.

Beyond favorable popular acclaim, critical response to Abu Madi seems also to have been very positive with a notable exception.

Mikha'il Nu'aymah, the critic, wrote his own poetry during the same period during which the al-Jadawil poems were composed.<sup>147</sup> Thus his influence on Abu Madi: as poet-pioneers in al-Rabita they advanced together along a path indicated by Nu'aymah's ideas about the need for evolution

in Arabic poetry. Thus it is natural that Nu'aymah was one of Abu Madi's most enthusiastic critics. He wrote the introduction to the original edition of al-Jadāwil where he hailed the flexibility of the talented but hitherto traditional poet.<sup>148</sup>

The majority of the Arab men of letters found in Abu Madi a literary nobility of great poetic value.<sup>149</sup> A small group divested him of all merit, and al-Na'uri explains this as a misunderstanding of the Mahjar poets' basic perspectives. For example, one criticism, advanced by an Iraqi professor Najd Fati Sufwa in 1945, was that philosophically Abu Madi was a sceptic, a pessimist, an Epicurean. A reading of al-Jadāwil makes it difficult not to agree with al-Na'uri that, although Abu Madi is not an optimist, he is a "cheerful pessimist" who doesn't deny the injustice and sufferings of life but takes refuge in every opportunity for happiness to arm himself against the injustices of the day and the inevitable trials of the future.<sup>150</sup>

The single great exception to the favorable critical response to al-Jadāwil came from the established sheikhs of literature in Egypt, headed by the great Taha Hussein, who took a stand against the Mahjar poets generally.<sup>151</sup> These men had themselves issued a vigorous call for innovation in Arabic poetry, yet were put off by the progressive,

imaginative solution that was independently flowing out of the Exile. Their actual criticisms were couched in their own terms, the aspect of language and its limits, and they chose to discredit or disregard the richness of the new expressive forms, the creative and humanistic meanings, the harmony with the times, and the fresh approach in attitude.<sup>152</sup>

The reluctance of the Egyptian arbitors to accept the innovations of the Exile poets was perhaps due to a sort of regional pride, among other factors. al-Na'uri points out that the perspectives of critics generally can be influenced by a proscribed point of view, be it personal taste or regional sensitivity, as well as political and social orientations, social environment and sometimes unjust moods of selfishness, suspicion and envy. He says this as he cannot understand in any other way the negative response from the Egyptian critics to the Mahjar poets.<sup>153</sup> Jayyusi also feels that Taha's criticisms of his contemporaries was often swayed by personal feuds or prejudices, or marked by excessive pedagogical attitude.

Abu Madi himself, in a letter to Taha Hussein, expressed his belief that the great critic's provincialism, the prejudice against innovation from outside of the sphere where he reigned, blinded him to the philosophical and poetic concepts that made al-Jadawil a wonderful contribution to the development of Arabic poetry. He defends

the charge of "foreign" influence with appreciation of the absolute freedom he enjoyed in the United States, pointing out that his earlier diwans also were the products of his life, in Lebanon and in Egypt.<sup>154</sup>

Two of the al-Jadāwil poems were singled out for specific attacks that seem to be totally unfounded. For example, Abu Madi was accused of stealing the poem "Hiya". Abu Madi's response was to point out that indeed he had said in the opening abiyat of that poem that he was narrating a story told to him by someone else.<sup>155</sup> The evidence is in the poem:

I narrate to you from a poet  
whose enchanting story is praiseworthy

Another incident caused years of controversy and ended in a broken friendship. Through a series of incidents at first unrelated to Abu Madi personally, the poem "al-Tin" (The Clay) also became the focus of an accusation as to its origins. The reasons for the resulting accelerated argumentation appears to be more in the nature of jousting between personalities than of literary substance.<sup>156</sup>

So al-Jadāwil was well accepted both by the Arab reading public and the literary establishment generally. Abu Madi, during the al-Rabita period in which he wrote al-Jadāwil, displayed a purity of phrase, a warmth, a far-ranging imagination and a sensitivity for beautiful images

taken from nature, as well as a sense of honesty which he applied to both individual and collective social life.<sup>157</sup> One can perhaps summarize the success of the diwan by suggesting that the portrayal of the exile and the assimilation of innovative influences into the established tradition are so response to the needs of the people in the homeland.

### 3.2 The Present: Views Since the Death of the Poet

The influence of the al-Rabita poets on Arabic literature was great, bringing greater flexibility of language, meter and rhythms, and a new tone of personal directness<sup>158</sup> that freed Arabic literature to survive, to breathe in freedom. Abu Madi's poetry was a source of inspiration for the following generation of Arab poets. His modern sensibility in al-Jadāwil, his presentation of ideas in suggestive, often oblique manners such as allegory, pictorial images or narrative incorporated a good sense of organic unity of a type not previously emphasized in Arabic poetry. Thematic continuity, the yearning to the homeland and distress at separation from it in the Exile, is the main current in al-Jadāwil. It is expressed symbolically in "Hiya" where love for the mother also represents love for the homeland with the context of the Exile. In "The Dumb Tear" the death of the poet's sister can be equated with the shock at the western aggression against Greater Syria, and in "al-Yatīm" the responsibility of the nation to raise a population of committed and useful people is placed in the hands of the people themselves. The love poems also symbolize the poet's yearning for the beauty and people of the homeland. His poem "al-Masā'" demonstrated strong thematic unity and fluidity of style within an atmosphere of

gentle melancholy and soft musical tones.<sup>159</sup> Fadwa Tuqan, also a poet, considers that Arabic poetry knows none equal to Abu Madi: he has a power of influence that shakes the soul and produces magic in it; his poetry has characteristics that no other Arabic poet has.<sup>160</sup>

If one considers the function of literature at the level of the culture in which it is created, it is found to deal with problems of social structures rooted in the political and cultural traditions and established political realities. In this sense the literary offerings of specific cultures can reflect realities and possibilities within the given social framework. In the case of the northern Mahjar literature, produced by men exiled from the beloved homeland that so dominated their hearts and minds, a choice seems to have been made to incorporate some new patterns into the literary tradition to mark a turning point in social and personal mentality. The turn of the century found the Arab creative mind not in a religious mood, Christian or Muslim, but rather in struggle for identity both as individuals against society and as individuals in society facing a stronger and often hostile world.<sup>161</sup> Traditional solutions, under the specific conditions of the Ottoman occupation, had lost their power to inspire the cultural personality necessary for development and modernization within an Arab framework. A new stimulus was needed. The literature from



the Mahjar, in its more universalized themes and its more personal style, served to challenge the stagnating social and political status quo both from above and below, from the broader universalized perspectives on the human condition and from the level that emphasized the value of the individual, his contribution and position. al-Jadāwil is rich in applications of this concept.

One poem epitomizes the concept of portraying the universal to conserve and serve the humanistic aspirations of the Arabs. Through its approaches to the universal condition of all people, "al-Tīn" became one of the best-known poems of al-Jadāwil. In it the poet challenges the norms of social distinctions, advocating love, responsibility and equality toward and between human beings regardless of their social or material stations. The poem opens with a reminder that men, with their too-often quarrelsome natures, have forgotten that their common origins are from clay, and that silk clothes do not justify the posturing of any one human over the other:

You didn't make the silk that you wear  
nor the pearls that adorn you

You in your elegant clothes are like me  
in my ragged clothes, you also despair and find  
happiness

Are all my desires dust  
and yours are of gold?

You like me are of the earth, and will return to it  
so why my friend the quarrelsomeness and opposition?

He emphasizes that, in the eyes of nature, an individual no  
matter how wealthy or powerful in society, is relative:

Don't you have a palace full of armed guards  
and a strong wall surrounding it?

Don't you forbid the night to extend its dark  
corridor over it, and the fog to gather?

Look how the light enters without asking permission  
why is he not being expelled?

that the poor man is his equal as a created being:

The flowers do not scorn my poverty  
and do not beg to be close to you for your wealth

The personal directness of the poet's message to his  
readers asserts the value of the individual, his  
contributions and position in society, with the intent to  
reinforce the personality necessary to organize and liberate  
an oppressed society. A beautiful allegory, "al-Tīnah al-  
hamqā'" comments on the results of failure by an individual  
to share his unique abilities with his community. The fig  
tree, feeling that its fruit, its shade and its shelter are  
only useful to others, birds and people, refuses to produce  
its leaves and fruit, and in its stinginess commends itself  
to being uprooted and burned. This commentary on the fig  
tree's refusal to produce ends succinctly; because she did  
not see that in her production was comfort and life for  
others and a reason for her own existence:

Who is not generous as life is generous  
indeed is foolish: by avarice he commits suicide

If people are encouraged to give unselfishly toward the good of the community or society, the rewards are great for both society and the individual, seems to be the poet's message. In another well-known poem "al-Talāsīm" Abu Madi demonstrates his inclination to share his own satisfying solutions to those abstract enigmas of life that can distract from happiness and usefulness. The poem is a compilation of meditations inquiring into the meaning of life and the truths and realities of human existence. al-Na'uri sees Abu Madi as a teacher only pretending confusion on these issues, guiding his reader to solve the puzzle via the same path that he himself had followed.

For Abu Madi is one of the skillful sons of life, not naive, who searched his soul and came to a realization, and satisfying opinions and happiness enter his soul, a happiness which is not complete unless he shares his solution. And this solution is that the highest justice is the true equality between all of the sons of life, distinguished by their common humanity.<sup>162</sup> And he recommends in the end acceptance of ambiguity, and says

Don't debate with those who allege: Indeed  
I don't know

### 3.3 The Future Aspect: Contribution of al-Jadāwil to World Literature

At the world level, the best of the literary offerings of any culture can serve as a guide not only to that culture but in a universalized application that encourages better understanding between peoples and their respective societies. This understanding arises from the recognition of a common humanity and appreciation of the way the intelligencia of any given society lead the people to a higher awareness of their common condition as individuals in the human society.

The literatures of the various cultures are like the seas and oceans, which meet and intermix despite the land barriers that separate them; all of them together serve the life of this globe. And if literature is the sea then poetry is the river that feeds the sea and is fed by the sea, and al-Jadāwil means "the brooks", the streams of poetic artistry and inspiration from the pen of Abu Madi into the river of poetry. And in this way the poet makes his contribution, which finds its way into the oceans of universal literature, the world literature that unites in the common continuity, the existence of the human being at the universal level.

Universalism in al-Jadāwil is achieved substantially through the use of natural imagery to stir the reader to

harmony with nature, to recognition of Abu Madi's view of nature as an ideal of beauty, purity, directness and truth. Nature is like a living being, to communicate with and from it draw strength to see beyond the suffering and injustice of society, and so try to draw the reader into his solution for change through the magic of harmony with nature and the awareness of being one of its living creatures. And all that are in nature are living creatures, trustworthy in their expressions of their feelings, so his poetry pulses with them and his reader feels that indeed he lives in a life filled with rising suns, fragrance and flowers, erected by beauty and flooded by melodies and pure music.<sup>163</sup>

In his poem "Fī al-qāfr" some of these images illuminate the universal scope of Abu Madi's concept. Speaking first of his weariness with life in urban society, the poet is drawn to the open spaces of nature:

And the darkness of the night is my monk, and my  
candles  
the falling stars, and the earth my mihrab

And my book is the universe, I read in it  
suras I never read in any book

And my prayer is that which the small streams say  
and my songs the voice of morning in the jungle

And my glasses the leaves the sun glistens on them  
like the melting of the snow at sunset

And my nectars what drip from the eyes of the dawn  
on the grass as melted sweets

To let the hand of the evening kohl my eyelids  
and to let its dreams embrace my eyelashes

One hour in the open area is better than all stages of  
life  
spent in the enclosed space

He expresses the contentment and peace found in nature, away  
from the bustle of urban life:

And we spent a lovely time in the jungle  
beside the springs and green grasses

Sometimes we feel joy as if a breeze in the valley  
and sometimes like a flowing brook

The reference to "the jungle" (al-ghab), translated by Jayyusi as "the forest" in deference to Arab landscapes,<sup>164</sup> is an image crystallized by Jibran and Nu'aymah, and a central idea in the Mahjar romantic poetry. Abu Madi uses it toward the notion of escaping from established norms and expectations, toward an idealized existence in harmony with natural life, inspired love and perpetual beauty. It has been pointed out however that for Jibran the forest was a symbol not of escape but to be used to solve the problems of human differences through an all-embracing love.<sup>165</sup> Nu'aymah, following Jibran, found nature evocative of emotional and spiritual yearnings. Abu Madi's directness compels him to admit to escape, with the intimation of purity found, and inspiration, but his poem concludes with a surprising and honest confession: freed as he desired from the bustle of city life, he finds that he also becomes

discontent, trapped in his solitude in the wilderness:

Indeed my self which was bored with the buildings  
was also bored in the silence of the jungle

I am in it free and independent  
yet it is as if I am moving slowly in a tunnel

He concludes with the realistic comment that he is no  
different than any other human being, and, Jayyusi suggests,  
that life cannot bring a true solution to man on earth<sup>166</sup>:

In the wilds life taught me that  
wherever I live I am on the soil

And because I am in the cage of clay I will remain  
a slave to desire and a prisoner of my wishes

In the wilds I imagined myself alone  
but indeed all of the people are in my clothes

The genius of Abu Madi's poetry is that he found his  
true inspiration in his people and in nature, and through  
his imagery transfers to his readers the atmosphere which  
inspired his determination to face life with cheerfulness  
despite its injustices and sufferings, and to struggle  
against them. In the end, the common base of all world  
literature is humanism, and the importance of the literature  
of any nation is that it offers its own perspectives about  
the common human condition - the response to struggle, war,  
history, tradition, hopes, suffering, love, lamenting,  
yearning.

Arabic literature offers its contribution from its own  
proud history and long stages of development. It offers

prose and poetry. The Arabic word for poetry is shi'r derived from shu'ur (feelings), indicating the most sensitive feeling, a sentimentality with its origins in the culture. Poetry is the main pillar in the literature. More publically "of the people" than perhaps in any other culture, poetry is part of the life of the Arab people. It is a sensitive string whose tone strikes a responsive tone in the soul of the reader. Its objectives are to build and direct the ardor of the people in times of crisis and to strengthen their determination.

The political conditions in the Arab land, the oppression under Ottoman rule, followed by the western aggression and the resulting French and British occupations, forced many into Exile. The Syrian men of letters who gathered as al-Rābīta al-galamiyya established literary reviews and daily newspapers as forums in which they voiced opinions and indicated their response to the political and social situation in the homeland, and united their aspirations to introduce into Arabic literature an innovative literary experiment. In the Qanūn of al-Rābīta, written by Nu'aymah, they called for a new spirit in literature aimed at the emergence of literature from rigid imitation (al-taqlīd) of the classical tradition. The desire was not to cut links with the excellent poets and thinkers of the tradition, but to avoid being fenced in by the



limitations that came with the tradition in terms of structure and language. The men of al-Rābiṭa were very successful in translating these ideals into beautiful poetry that has influenced the style, approach and imagery of modern Arabic literature ever since. The ever-present imagery of the homeland, symbolized by the mother, the sister, the orphan, the broken kamanja, acknowledges the yearning that was always with them in the Exile. And the parables and narratives like the small stone, the spring-pond, the foolish fig, the chatterbox god, and so on were designed to reinforce the qualities in the people that must be strengthened to throw off the occupation that oppressed the Arab society. The love of homeland and its people were ever-present in the works of Abu Madi and the other al-Rābiṭa poets and writers. Improvement of the situation their was their high goal, and the al-Rābiṭa group made their contribution to that goal through their literature and journalism. Abu Madi became the most celebrated poet of that group.

al-Jadāwil of Abu Madi may mark the turning point out of the classical tradition into modern poetry. The poet Nazik al-Mala'ika, in an article published in al-Shi'r (Poetry) magazine in 1958 stated "perhaps it is not fair to say that Abu Madi was the only innovator in Arabic poetry in the sense that we know innovation [al-tajdid] today, but

with him the literary critic is able to date a new period in Arabic poetry."<sup>167</sup> al-Jadāwil means "the brooks", the stream of poetry that flowed from Abu Madi to the people. In it he expresses a strength of purpose, through the situation of his own exile, in a universalized language of natural imagery that can be understood in both the Arab context of its time and since. The genius of Abu Madi's poetry is that he found his inspiration in his people and in nature, and through his imagery transfers to his readers the atmosphere which inspired his determination to face life with cheerfulness despite its injustices and sufferings, and to struggle against them. Abu Madi in al-Jadāwil is a poet and a philosopher. He spent his poetic life with a pen dipped in his heart, searching toward truth and a way to alleviate the social and political suffering of his nation. And so he expressed the humanistic contribution of the Arabs: he spoke of the value of each human being, and of tyranny, which he criticized with the rationality of the wise philosopher, and he spoke of equality, and justice. And because of his deep humanistic concerns and his use of natural imagery, the poetry of al-Jadāwil is as inspiring to non-Arab readers as it was to the Arab readers in the exile and in the homeland.

## APPENDIX

List of the Poems of al-Jadawil

1. al-Fātiha (The Opening Poem)
2. al-`Anqā' (The Phoenix)
3. al-Sajīna (The Prisoner)
4. al-Dafādi` wa al-nujūm (The Frogs and the Stars)
5. al-Samā' (The Sky)
6. Barridī yā suhub (Cool O Clouds)
7. al-`air al-mutanakir (The Wild Donkey)
8. Ta`āli (Come In)
9. Rih al-Shamāl (Wind of the North)
10. al-Hajar al-saghīr (The Small Stone)
11. al-Tīn (The Clay)
12. al-Tīna al-hamqā' (The Foolish Fig)
13. Fi al-qafir (In the Wilderness)
14. al-Timthāl (The Statue)
15. al-Masā' (The Evening)
16. al-Kamanja al-muḥaṭṭima (The Broken Kamanja)
17. Zahra `uqhuwān (The Camomile Flower)
18. al-Asrār (The Secrets)
19. al-`Umyān (The Blind Ones)
20. al-Zamān (Time)
21. al-Yatīm (The Orphan)
22. al-Majnūn (The Crazy One)

23. Qaṭra al-Ṭall (The Drop of Dew)
24. Nār al-qiran (Fire of Hospitality)
25. Ibn al-lail (Son of the Night)
26. Ānā (I Am)
27. al-Ilah al-tharthar (The Chatterbox God)
28. al-Ashbah al-thalātha (The Three Ghosts)
29. al-'Ullaiqa (The Thorny Bush)
30. Hiya (She)
31. La anti wa-la ānā (Not You nor I)
32. al-Nāsika (The Devotee)
33. 'Id al-nahy (Festival of Prohibition)
34. Maut al-'abqarī (Death of the Scholar)
35. al-Ghadīr al-tamūḥ (The Inspired Spring-pond)
36. al-Talāsīm (The Enigmas)
  37. al-Bahr (The Sea)
  38. Fi al-dair (In the Monastery)
  39. Baina al-muqābir (In the Cemetery)
  40. al-Qasr wa-al-kūkh (The Palace and the Hut)
  41. al-Fikr (The Thought)
  42. Sirā' wa-'irāk (Struggle and Quarrels)
43. al-Dam'a al-Kharsā' (The Dumb Tear)
44. Kam tashtakī (How Often You Complain)
45. Matā Yadhuru al-watan al-naum? (When will the Homeland Remember Sleep?)
46. 'Arūs al-jamāl (Bride of Beauty)

47. Ibnat al-fajr (Daughter of the Dawn)
48. al-Ghurāb wa al-bulbul (The Crow and the Nightengale)
49. Ya shadhāhunna (O Fragrances)
50. Min adab al-zunūj (From Negro Literature)
51. Gharamiyya (The Enamoured One)
52. al-Faqīr (The Poor One)

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1. Iliya Abu Madi, al-Jadawil, 7th ed. (Beirut: Dar al-'ilm li al-malayin, 1968). It should be noted from the onset that the corpus of poems of al-Jadawil is considered to be those included in this edition. In the preface to the 1967 edition, of which I believe this to be a reprint, the publishers point out that Abu Madi had, after the initial printing of the diwan in 1927, re-published some of its poems in his succeeding diwan al-Khama'il, and vice versa in later editions of al-Jadawil had included some poems of al-Khama'il. The 6th edition (1967) attempted to correct the situation by re-collecting only poems belonging originally to al-Jadawil. The original 1927 edition was not available for this study.

On the other hand there is good evidence from two sources indicating that the original al-Jadawil did not contain the last ten poems listed in this Appendix. George Salim (n.2 below) cites only the first thirty-six in his list of al-Jadawil poems. And al-Na'uri (n.5 below) mentions that without two poems which he considers weak, al-Jadawil would still contain thirty-four great poems, a treasure to make Abu Madi eternal (al-Na'uri 104).

2. The poems "al-Faqir" and "Ibnatu al-fajr" appear in this 1919 diwan, according to George Dimitri Salim, Iliya Abu Madi (1889-1957): Dirasat 'anhu wa ash'aruhu al-majhulah (Cairo:

Dar al-ma'arif bi masr, 1975 (?)) 164 and 168. See note 1 above for comment on Abu Madi's penchant for touching up and republishing some poems associated with particular diwans.

3. Salim 172-5 lists the original publication dates of these al-Jadawil poems, and the papers that published them.

4. To my knowledge there existed no English translation of any poem in this collection, prior to my work in preparation of this thesis, with two exceptions. For some lines of a few poems translated by Jayyusi in her encyclopedic English language work, see Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry, 2 vols. (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1977). The first five stanzas of the group called collectively "al-Talasin" can be read in both English and Arabic in Mounah A. Khouri and Hamid Algar, An Anthology of Modern Arabic Poetry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) 34-37. I do not know of translations made to languages other than English, if such exist.

5. 'Isa al-Na'uri, Iliya Abu Madi: Rasulu al-shi'r al-'arabi al-hadith (Beirut: Manshurat 'awaydat, 1977), pp.18-9, based on information given by Abu Madi to Muhammad Qara 'Ali.

6. A sketch of the life of Abu Madi can be found in George Salim's neat chronology, see Salim 174-185. See also 'Isa al-Na'uri 13-18, who summarizes the reasons and sources for some minor inconsistencies in the dating of Abu Madi's birth (1889, 1890, 1891 or 1894), his emigrations from Lebanon to Egypt (1901 or 1902) and from Egypt to United States (1911 or 1912), along with his dismay at the refusal of the poet to see any significance in his biographical details, considering them "nothing that deserves publishing" (al-Na'uri 17).

7. However, two branches of Arab literary criticism were in fact considered at this point.

Classical Arabic criticism, as Khouri and Algar, 4, point out, examines a work in terms of four equally-weighted aspects: word and meaning; word and meter; meaning and meter; and meaning and rhyme. This clearly is an approach to be handled by a linguistically-oriented study and is in the main outside the purview of this thesis.

The more recent views of Mikha'il Nu'aymah, the Syro-American literary critic, poet and compatriot to Abu Madi after our poet's arrival in New York in 1916, were not considered comprehensive enough to form a framework for a study of Abu Madi's work (See Nijland 93 who observes that although Nu'aymah's views are unsystematic, they had influence on the nascent Arab literary theory. That the latter's



iconoclastic views did affect the poetic development of Abu Madi is undoubted, however, and these effects will be discussed in a later section of this paper.

8. Wilfred L. Guerin et.al., A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 191.

9. Guerin et al. 191.

10. Jerome J. McGann, Social Values and Poetic Acts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

11. McGann 124.

12. McGann 119.

13. McGann 115.

14. McGann 105.

15. Ibid. 126. "...the idea that poems are simply verbal structures has to be emphatically discarded. Poems are materialized in far more complex structures than simply verbal ones."

16. McGann 104.

17. Alan Swingewood, Sociological Poetics and Aesthetic Theory (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1986), 3-7.

18. Swingewood 3.

19. McGann 4.

20. McGann 130.

21. McGann 130.

22. McGann 124.

23. McGann 125.

24. M.M. Badawi, Modern Arabic Literature and the West (London: Ithaca Press, 1985), 3, summarizes the view that a long period of decadence in Arabic literature extended from the sixteenth century [the advent of the Ottoman rule (1520), approximately following the expulsion of Arabs from al-Andalus (1492) in the west] to the mid-twentieth century.

Zuhair Mirza, Iliya Abu Madi: Sha'ir al-mahjar al-akbar, with a Forward by Sami al-Dahhan and an Introduction by Jibran Khalil Jibran (Dara'un: al-Matba'atu al-ta'awuniyyah al-lubnaniyyah, 1963) 15 states: Four centuries of Turkish rule (1516-1918) in the Arab country killed literary talents and intellectual activity.

25. Jayyusi 39.

26. Khouri and Algar, 4, present the view that classical poetry has four major aims (aghrad): panegyric (madih), satire (hija'), love (nasib or ghazal) and description (wasf).

27. al-Na'uri 31-32.

28. Mikha'il Nu'aymah, Fi al-ghirbal al-jadid (Beirut: Mu'wasasah nawfal, 1978) 139.

29. Ibid. 145.

30. Jayyusi 123.

31. These traditionally structured poems are: 1-7,9-14,16-18,20,21,23,26,27,29-31,33-35,43,44,47-49,51 and 52. Note that to save space in these notes poems are referred to by the order in which they appear in the diwan; this listing can be found in the Appendix.

32. The eleven stanzaically arranged poems are: 8,15,19,22,24,25,32,32,36,45,46 and 50. All of the six poems within "al-Talasin" follow the same arrangement as the title poem.

33. Poem 28. This can be considered a simple stanzaic structure.

34. Jayyusi 133.

35. The 34th poem was written on the occasion of the death of the man of letters Sulayman al-Bustani. Not unexpectedly it begins with thoughts about the inevitability of death, then praises the scholar's accomplishments and declares that he will be lamented across the Arab world. Two others are less expected in presentation. 43 opens with the shock of sorrow at the death of a young girl, moves to lovely, optimistic visions of rebirth and the natural world, but concludes with reality and bitterness setting in, as unavoidable as night and death. 47 is a beautiful elegy with a poignant perspective; the poet

takes the view of a dead youth addressing his young wife, assuring her of his love and describing the dignified, loving way she will mourn for him.

36. Poem 30, the tribute of a young man to his mother.
37. Poem 27, which focuses on what the poet sees as the hubris of mankind.
38. Poem 6. Bayts 6-8 challenge Abu Nawas' famous description of a wineglass.
39. Poem 14 and, possibly, 24 and 33.
40. Poem 31.
41. Khouri and Algar, 4. Quote is from Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, Kitab al-'Iqd al farid (al-Qahira, 1940-1965), V, 269.
42. Ibid.
43. Poem 26, "Ana".
44. Mirza 26-28.
45. al-Na'uri 7, from the introduction to his book by Fadwa Tuqan.
46. al-Na'uri 24.
47. al-Na'uri 21 recalls two stories of the foundation of the group. According to an account by Abu Madi, al-Rabita was founded in 1914. By the account of Nu'aimah it was not until after WWI, in 1920. al-Na'uri finds Nu'aymah's story more likely, and Abu Madi's as referring to an earlier meeting of some of the group.
48. Jayyusi 85.
49. Jayyusi 69,123; al-Na'uri 21.
50. Jayyusi 151.
51. Jayyusi 67, 85.
52. Jayyusi 152, 156.
53. Jayyusi 157.

54. Jayyusi 67-69.
55. Khouri and Algar 9.
56. Ibid.
57. Jayyusi 85.
58. Mirza 37.
59. Mirza 39.
60. Mirza 23.
61. Jayyusi 122.
62. al-Na'uri 73.
63. Mirza 38; Jayyusi 69, 121, 125.
64. Mirza 41-42.
65. Mirza 41.
66. Mirza 42.
67. Badawi 3.
68. Jayyusi 126.
69. Jayyusi 125. She refers to the diwans al-Khama'il (1940) and Tibr wa-turab (1960), respectively.
70. Jayyusi 127.
71. Jayyusi 124.
72. al-Na'uri 34.
73. Mikha'il Nu'aymah, al-Ghirbal (al-Qahira: al-Matba'a al-'asriyya, 1923) 51.
74. Nu'aymah, al-Ghirbal 28.
75. Nu'aymah, al-Ghirbal 86. Badawi's excellent translation of the passage has been used here (Badawi 115).
76. Mirza 47. The poem is from the collection Diwan Iliya Abu Madi, Part 2.

77. Badawi 116.

78. Badawi 117.

79. Khouri and Algar, 12, elaborate on this: The disastrous political situation in the Arab nation - the intrusive presence of the French in Syria, Lebanon and North Africa and of Britian in Egypt, Iraq and Palestine - surpressed the Arab struggle for complete independence and frustrated their national hopes. This period coincides not accidentally with the period when the Romanticism developed by the Diwan Group and the Mahjar poets reached its height, the 1930s.

80. Badawi 117,126.

81. Jayyusi 71.

82. Nijland 2,9.

83. Jayyusi 85.

84. Badawi 117.

85. al-Na'uri 24.

86. Nu'aymah, Fi al-ghirbal al-jadid 148.

87. Jayyusi 25/n.70.

88. Jayyusi 126.

89. al-Na'uri 22.

90. al-Na'uri 22.

91. Nu'aymah, al-Ghirbal 20-21. Interestingly, the disapproving Egyptian critic of Abu Madi, the great Taha Hussein, seems also to have seen the role of critic toward young writers as more the mentor than the detached observer. See Jayyusi 149.

92. al-Na'uri 22.

93. Analysis of stylistic features of Nu'aymah's poetry, with examples, can be found in Nijland 29-37.

94. Poems 2,5,11,13,26,29,31,36-42,43,44,46, and 52 all contain some type of enumeration in word, phrase or theme.

95. Jayyusi 10: al-Rabita allowed the poet considerable freedom from the rules of prosody, as has been noted.

96. al-Na'uri 34: the truthful poet is a messenger teaching life...

97. Poem 46, originally published in Diwan Iliya Abu Madi. Jayyusi 129 criticizes this poem for its "relapse to flatness [of structure]" of Abu Madi's earlier poems. It is, however, an early poem in the context of al-Jadawil, where most poems were composed 1924-27. Its inclusion in this diwan is more to be attributed to its content than to its form.

98. See Section 3.3 where the universalism of Abu Madi's poetic contribution is emphasized.

99. Both of the following poems were first published 9 February 1925 in al-Sa'ih al-mumtaz of New York. See Salim 174-175.

100. Jayyusi 132.

101. See Section 2.2, the discussions of the poems "al-Faqir" and "al-'Umyan", as well as the last two lines of "al-Fatiha" where the poet admits that his world of concern is not the world of wealth and gaity.

102. See Section 3.3.

103. Salim 11-12.

104. Salim 12.

105. Salim 176-185.

106. Jayyusi 128.

107. Jayyusi 130, 134.

108. Jayyusi 127.

109. Tabitha Petran, Syria (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972) 57-63.

110. Salim 176.

111. Salim 176. Diwan tadhkar al-madi was published in Alexandria in 1911.

112. al-Na'uri 16.

113. Jamal Pasha, Commander-in-Chief of the Ottoman Fourth Army stationed in Syria, executed thirty-four eminent Syrian Muslims and Christians in 1915 and 1916, depriving the fledgling national movement of its foremost political leaders and giving it its first martyrs. (Petran 54-55). One of these executions took place in al-Marjah Square in Damascus.

114. After the French withdrawal from Syria in 1946. See Petran 79ff.

115. al-Na'uri 27-28.

116. Salim 177.

117. Salim 178.

118. Salim 179.

119. Salim 180.

120. Salim 181.

121. Salim 184.

122. Nu'aymah, al-Ghirbal al-jadid 140.

123. al-Na'uri 25-26.

124. al-Na'uri 25.

125. al-Na'uri 25.

126. al-Na'uri 25.

127. al-Na'uri 25 and 26 where he brings the example of an editorial directed against a notice in an Arab paper advertizing for a young girl less than 14 to work as a maid. Abu Madi asserts that such a girl should be in school, not working in a strange house away from her family for wages of only room, board and clothing.

128. al-Na'uri 26.

129. Salim 95.

130. Salim 96.

131. Salim 97.

132. Salim 101. The article is from "al-Samir", the daily newspaper owned and edited by Abu Madi. The day and month of publication is not given.

133. See al-Na'uri 27: Abu Madi himself had been awarded, in Lebanon and in Damascus in 1948-1949, high medals of honor for his poetic and journalistic contributions.

134. al-Na'uri 25.

135. Khouri 11.

136. Jayyusi 98.

137. Jayyusi 92 ff.

138. Jayyusi 133.

139. al-Na'uri 34.

140. Jayyusi 132.

141. Jayyusi 133-134.

142. Jayyusi 133 attributes this to the old Badu ways of life with their well-defined attitudes.

143. The parables and allegories of al-Jadawil are numbers 4,7,10,12,25,35, and 48.

144. Jayyusi 97.

145. Jayyusi 134.

146. al-Na'uri 55.

147. Jayyusi 118: Nu'aymah wrote poetry during the short period 1917-1926.

148. Jayyusi 125 and n.359. The text of this introduction was not available for this study.

149. al-Na'uri 105.

150. al-Na'uri 105, 107.



151. al-Na'uri 114. Exceptions to this opposition were the Egyptian critics al-Aqad and al-Mazini, both of the Diwan group.

152. See al-Na'uri 115-116.

153. al-Na'uri 106.

154. Salim 110.

155. al-Na'uri 103. See also Nijland 62 where Nu'aymah is shown to have used a similar narrative technique in his prose.

156. See al-Na'uri 123-141 and Salim 112 for the details of this sad story.

157. al-Na'uri 23.

158. Jayyusi 122.

159. Jayyusi 125.

160. al-Na'uri 9.

161. Jayyusi 98.

162. al-Na'uri 88.

163. al-Na'uri 65.

164. Jayyusi 126.

165. Jayyusi 96.

166. Jayyusi 126.

167. Salim 113, n.6.