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In - The Name Of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful

Image Of The Hero : A Bildungsroman Interpretation Of M.A.Yamani's Novel, *A Boy From Makkah*

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In contemporary Saudi literature the novel is a recent genre. Looked upon as an extension of the short story, this newcomer remained on the sideline for many years. Even though its existence was generally ignored, it was persistent enough to take roots and, slowly but surely, enforce its recognition as a viable literary form. Its rise to prominence is more remarkable since it had to grow overshadowed by poetry.

From pre-Islamic times up to the first three decades of the twentieth century, poetry dominated the literature of the Arabian Peninsula, particularly the southern part. Arabs were not only famed as skilled poets but as a people that loved and appreciated good poetry. For largely illiterate nomadic people, such as the Bedouins, poetry is an ideal literary form. Memorized and orally transmitted from generation to generation, it has survived calamities and the onslaught of time.

Over half a century ago, the nomadic people settled down in villages and towns and established schools and universities. Illiteracy declined in the same proportions as the demand for reading material increased. No longer satisfied with foreign novels in translation, the Saudi reading public clamored for Arabic novels. At first, Egyptian novels filled the bill. Although written in Arabic by Muslim authors, they aired Egyptian problems that were not always relevant for Saudi people. Saudi readers longed for novels that tackled Saudi subject matters, voiced Saudi concerns and depicted local scenes. Answering the public's call, the Saudi novel was born.

Among the pioneers in the Saudi novel are Abdul Qudous al-Ansari with *Al-Taw'aman (The Twins)*, a novel published in 1930, Mohammad Ali Maghraby who wrote *Al-Ba'ath* in 1948, Ahmad Assiba'ei with *Fikrah* (1948), and Hamid Damanhoury the author of *Thaman al-Tadhia*, a novel that made its appearance in 1959. Encouraged by the success the Saudi novel achieved during its formative period, more writers tried their hand at this new genre. As this literary form continued to prosper, especially after the 1960's, authors became too numerous to be listed. Hamza Bogari, Abdullah Jeffry, Esam Khogeer, Ghalib Abul Faraj, Sameera Khashugji, and

Mohmmad Abdu Yamani are just a handful of the younger generation of novelists.

Local color seems to be the most outstanding characteristic of Saudi fiction. Since Saudi writers are very much attached to their environment, their novels use deserts, oases, villages and modern cities as their settings and deal mainly with social issues and matters pertaining to family, tribe and traditions. They also struggle with the question of identity.

Islamic identity was one of the grave issues that preoccupied and worried almost all Saudi novelists, such as Dr. Muhammad Abdu Yamani especially in the modern time. Born in 1939 in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, Dr. Yamani is a geologist by profession and a novelist by vocation. He wrote novels in Arabic as well as in English, short stories, books and essays on various topics like the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), history, geology, space science and social issues. As a former Minister of Information and a former rector of King Abdul Aziz University, one of the leading universities in the eastern province, Dr. Yamani has a wide array of experiences to draw upon. Islamic identity plays a major role in Yamani's oeuvre. Published in 1981, his novel *A Boy From Makkah,* is a *bildungsroman* of Ahmad, the hero. It presents a panoramic view of the society of Makkah, Islam's holiest of holy cities, in the 1960's. By

mentioning the names of actual places and streets such as Al-Zahir Hospital and Al-Beban street, he created a sensible picture of the town and its inhabitants. The account is so vivid that the reader hears the voice of the Muezzin, smells the incense, tastes traditional sweetmeats, enters busy shops and strolls down crowded streets. Habits and life-styles of that particular period materialize in front of the reader when the author takes him to the small cafes where passers-by can eat, drink tea or coffee and smoke the 'nargiles,' the customary water pipe or hubble-bubble. Another reminder of bygone days lies in the reference to Ta'if, a mountainous area where people used to spend their summer vacation. The architecture and interior design of some Makkan houses is painstakingly described. For instance, Sheikh Abdul-Hamid's dwelling is called a "perfect specimen of the traditional Arab mansion with imposing gates and a vast orchard" (27) while sheikh Tahseen's abode is singled out for its "Arabian style hall, ... the sweet aroma of gum and musk that perfumed the air inside." (78)

In fact, it is through the character of Ahmad that Yamani draws a bright picture of an ideal Muslim youth whose heart is full of love for God. One of the most beautiful episodes of the novel describes Ahmad's feelings when he beholds the Holy Mosque for the first time. Awestricken, he realizes that:

This is the house of God. It was like a revelation: I seemed to forget everything around me, even my very self, and melt into the spectacle. I could see nothing but Mecca. The Grand Mosque with its high minarets and tall buildings, and the House of God, in its midst, in all its awesome splendour. The image passed into my soul forever. I felt I was getting lighter and lighter, that I soared into space, bird-like, beat my thrilled wings over that shrine. A mysterious sense made me almost ecstatic and, unconsciously, tears began to trickle. (2)

The moving narration of Ahmad's experience entices readers to visit the Holy Mosque in the hope that piety and heartfelt prayers may cleanse them and make them soar as high and as free of daily worries as the novel's hero.

Parental guidance is exemplified by Ahmad's father who uses every available opportunity to teach his son good manners. Fully aware of his responsibility as a father, he explains to Ahmad the importance of correct behavior and makes sure that his son understands as many of the Islamic instructions as possible. On entering the Grand Mosque, Ahmad tries to recite little prayers as "a reverential rite". His father stops him and points out to him that at the Grand Mosque one performs one's "reverential rites" and additional duties by going around the Ka'abah. Step by step, Ahmad's

father familiarizes his son with the various procedures a visit to the Grand Mosque requires and sees to it that he meets his obligations satisfactorily. Not only does the author show parents how children should be brought up, but he also provides so many in-depth details about the Islamic way of life that his novel may be considered a guide for people who are new to Islam and its culture.

Yamani's preoccupation with the concept of Islamic identity is embodied in the character of Ahmad bin Ida, the hero of *A Boy From Makkah*. Like in any 'Bildungsroman', the reader accompanies Ahmad through his formative years and watches him grow from a boy into a well-educated and highly qualified professional. With *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, (1795), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) created a new literary genre later termed 'Bildungsroman.' Although literary trends have changed tremendously since Goethe's novel first appeared in print, the Bildungsroman not only survived but also acquired new luster. According to Richard Barney, one reason for this longevity as well as

> for the increase of such stories [Bildungsromane] during the last two decades, especially in popular culture, is that in a world of increasingly apparent and frequently exacerbated cultural differences,

narratives of development promise the ability to explore origins, consider the viability of social roots, and reassess the prospect of social cohesion. (Barney, 361)

Bildungsroman is also referred to as 'a novel of education,' 'a novel of formation,' 'an apprentice novel,' 'a story of development' and 'an artist novel' if it relates to the life of an artist. By citing all those different cover names, Cuddon demonstrates that that Bildungsroman a term extensively used by 'German critics,' is a magic hood that camouflages a wide range of fictional aspects. Yet, so says Cuddon, the Bildungsroman or any of its pseudonyms must give "an account of the youthful development of a hero or heroine" and describe "the processes by which maturity is achieved through the various ups and downs of life." (Cuddon,88)

For Ahmad, traveling with his father from Bani Fahm, a small village south of Makkah, to the Holy City itself, represents one of the "ups" in his young life. Taking the bus, a conveyance he used to see from afar when it rumbled through his village, visiting the Grand Mosque and savoring traditional Makkan desserts for the first time, are highlights that qualify as "ups." But the 'ups' are short-lived and followed by a series of "downs" beginning with his first job. It was customary for wealthy Makkan families

to employ house-boys to perform a variety of menial tasks. Usually, house-boys were recruited from villages surrounding Makkah. Destitute farmers and sharecroppers needed their sons' wages to supplement their meager earnings. As the first born son of a very poor family, Ahmad has no choice but to enter the work force at a tender age to help his father support the family. Like any dutiful son, Ahmad submits to his father's wishes and accepts the older man's apologetic justification that he has to go to work because he is "the eldest, the most mature [and] the most intelligent." (7) To put his father at ease and dispel any doubt about his readiness to shoulder his responsibility, Ahmad asks two rhetorical questions: "Did you think I would disobey you? Did you think I could even go against your will?"(8) He then launches into his first job, his first encounter with reality and the first "down" he had to face all by himself.

According to M. Bakhtin's division of the many types of the novel that are variations of the Bildungsroman,

> the "biographical novel" has a plot that is constructed precisely on the basic and typical aspects of any life course; birth, childhood, school years, marriage, the fate that life brings, works and deeds, death...that

is exactly those moments that are located before the beginning or after the end of a novel of ordeal. (Bakhtin, 17)

In Ahmad's case, his having to go to work cuts short his childhood and precedes his school years. It is his bad luck that Sheikh Salah, his employer, happens to be a heartless man who does not treat servants as people. The moment his father bids him farewell and returns to their village, Ahmad envisioned "a sudden precipice opening before me. What was my future life to be? I could, the nine year old boy that I was, see it all: separation from father, family and village, and a new life upon which I was suddenly being launched... feeling more and more like a sheep being driven to a slaughter house." (11,13) Ahmad's premonitions came true. In Sheikh Salah he had a stern master who "never showed any interest in me as a person-as a human being introduced into the 'real world' through the back door." (15) Nor do the members of Sheikh Salah's family show any concern for the little boy's agony and helplessness. Contrary to the Islamic principles that call for mercy for and sympathy with society's underprivileged, Sheikh Salah and his entire family ignored the little boy's existence and shamefully neglected his emotional needs. Their callousness was so ingrained that they did not

think it necessary to address Ahmad by his name. For the house boy, any derogatory appellation is good enough.

In spite of his youth, Ahmad has a critical mind and a racer sharp judgment. Coming from a boy as ignorant of the world as a newly born lamb, Ahmad's shrewd evaluation of Sheikh Salah is amazing. The moment Ahmad laid eyes on Sheikh Salah, he "did not like him. I cannot explain it but I really felt I could never love that man." (14) Unfortunately, his first impression of his new master verifies itself in the cruel treatment Ahmad receives from Sheikh Salah as soon as he enters his service. Although inexperienced and naïve, Ahmad is wise enough to follow his instincts. His natural defense mechanism tells him to rebel against cruelty and abuse by neglecting his work. It did not take long for Sheikh Salah to become enraged and fire Ahmad. Thanks to this clever maneuver, Ahmad freed himself from the shackles of a tyrant and regained his self-respect. A helpless little boy, abandoned in a strange city without friends, relatives or financial resources, was able to slay a giant. For once, justice and humanity seem to have triumphed over wrongdoings. Ahmad recalls his bittersweet victory as follows: "Though the words were offensive, they sounded more like a key to the prison door that I had been conscious of throughout. I sprang to my feet

wiping my tears and shot through the door, aimlessly running, in one street after another." (16)

This incident lets Ahmad come to grips with the real world and its unpredictable shifts in fortunes. Yesterday, he was "a boy used to an uneventful and peaceful existence" and today, "he had suddenly been thrown into a turbulent city life mixing with different people." (19) His revolt against tyranny was successful, yet it had left him without a roof over his head or food in his plate. Forced to fend for himself, Ahmad has to work for another master who, though less harsh and cruel than Sheikh Salah, was still not an ideal employer. As a sign of maturity, Ahmad begins to "adjust physically and mentally to [his] new position as a boy in service." (22) After several tries, Ahmad finally finds a master who looks upon him as one of his children and with whom he feels very much at ease. But good fortune does not always last. When the mistress of the house dies, the master leaves for another city. Once again, Ahmad is deprived of someone he loves and he suddenly finds himself abandoned. Like any good Muslim, Ahmad trusts in God and accepts with patience and resilience whatever the Almighty has in store for him. Looking for another job thrusts him into "social mobility" a mode that Patricia Alden calls "a psychological quest for identity and a spiritual quest for freedom." (Alden, 42) Ahmad's seeking "material

advantages" is interpreted by Alden "as a means to growth and self-development." (Ibid, 42)

A Boy From Makkah falls into the category of "Apprentice novel" because it "shows the development and civilizing of a young person as he matures," (Turco, 59) just like Pip Philips in Dickens' masterpiece, *Great Expectations*. The enthusiasm with which Ahmad shows himself into the task of finding yet another employment highlights how much he has grown mentally. Furthermore, the fact that his last master was pleased with him and had praised his diligence in the performance of all tasks, filled him with satisfaction and gave him self-esteem and confidence. In the process of maturing, Ahmad acquires fortitude and self-reliance. Endowed with two important weapons of spiritual strength, Ahmad is bound to gain the approval of his new master, Sheikh Abdul-Hamid.

Working for Sheikh Abdul-Hamid is a crucial milestone in the hero's life. This event, one of the "ups," marks an advance significant enough to let Ahmad realize that he is "in effect taking [his] first steps not to a house but to a new way of life! It was the beginning of the change that made me what I am today, having started as a boy in service. The details of the events of that day, though quite ordinary in the beginning, remain indelible in my mind." (27) Although Ahmad's disclosure is made in retrospect and "with the

benefit of hindsight,"(27) it prepares the reader for the happy interlude that is about to take place. Sheikh Abdul-Hamid's household is small. Apart from the master himself, there are his wife, their little daughter Aziza and her faithful nanny. For once, he is considered a member of the family and is allowed to partake in all their activities.

Engaging with Aziza in games and activities for amusement and recreation gives him great solace because it makes him feel and enjoy "his real age". Due to his family's poverty, he has been deprived of his childhood and this hardship brings him to the conclusion that "loneliness affects people in the same way, be they masters who give orders or servants who obey them." (29) In a flashback, he juxtaposes his early childhood at his home village to the one he is experiencing now with Aziza and discovers that there is a big difference. All of a sudden, and in a moment of rather reaching manhood --much earlier ahead of its time-- and as a man who is fully aware of his own status and may experience adult stages of conflict and self-struggle, Ahmad becomes aware of the social gap that separates him from Aziza. It is at this point that his inner conflict starts because "she was the daughter of my master ...and I was a mere 'boy' that had come to serve in her house. Playing with her was a duty- a kind of 'work'- since I was

ordered to do it by my master." (30) Here is "the psychological double bind" that the hero encounters on the road towards "upward mobility". (Alden, 10)

In due time, "[his] loneliness, [his] sense of loss, of being lost fell away from [him]. I was once more a child enjoying a comfortable life, contented and secure". (32) On the one hand, Ahmad delights in his new surroundings while on the other hand, he feels guilty. In retrospect, he is "ashamed to confess" that the pleasure he took in his good fortune "made [him] nearly forget [his] family and [his] village- all that had made up [his] former world which, [he] thought, [he] couldn't exchange for anything else". (32) This vacillation between past and present whose cause seems to be fickleness rather than indecision is a set feature of the Bildungsroman. It occurs when the protagonist pursues "his aspirations at the expense of connection to family and community, feels guilty for breaking with a class to which he is already uncertainly related by virtue of those aspirations," (Alden, 43) another step towards an early stage of manhood with its worries, conflicts and frustration. Fortunately, Ahmad's attempt to submerge the past into the deepest crevices of his mind is unsuccessful. As soon as he beholds his father, he comes to his senses and "all the old memories of the village" are "again awakened." The reunion with his father helped Ahmad to a more harmonious self. He recalls that "it was as if his face and eyes reflected

images of a past I had thought I could slough off, a past I nearly forgot." (34) Even though Ahmad had gained balance and stability by acknowledging his origin with pride, he nevertheless remains plagued with his inferiority complex until the end of the novel.

While in its "upward mobility" mode, *A Boy From Makkah* introduces the theme of education as a means to reach one's goals. This new twist allows critics to categorize the story as a "Novel of Education," another subdivision of the Bildungsroman. It is to Sheikh Abdul-Hamid's credit to worry about Ahmad's future with as much concern as if he were his son. Like any anxious father who has the welfare of his child at heart, Sheikh Abdul-Hamid advises him that he should be "moving in the right direction" and "start a new phase in [his] life." (39) Thanks to his innate intelligence, Ahmad "vaguely realized the change that education could effect in [his] social standing and the new scope it could give [him]. To pursue this end was the least [he] could do to be worthy of her, ..the mere dream, or thought, or memory of her." (42) Here, the reader becomes aware that Ahmad is not a scheming fortune-hunter but an honorable young man who strives to raise his educational and instructional standards to be worthy of Aziza, his beloved. In his desire to better himself through education, Ahmad differs

from the protagonists of the Bildungsroman who tend to marry rich and influential women to gain prestige.

Amply supported in his efforts by Sheikh Abdul-Hamid who "busy as he was ..., still could find, a time to worry over the future of a mere hireling in his household," (40) Ahmad succeeds in graduating from primary and then from secondary school. Although Sheikh Abdul-Hamid "found the means to advance [him] in life and opened up for [him] new vistas of hope." (40) Ahmad could not rid himself of his inferiority complex. While he struggles to overcome "the external obstacles to self-development,... it is the inner weaknesses which appear to be the character flaws" (Alden, 12) that hold him back. According to Alden, "movement up is a fraudulent, self-compromising process" that very often is associated with fear of failure, guilt, loss, and estrangement from any class. (Alden, 12) Noteworthy here is that the title of the Arabic version of this novel is *The Lowly Hand* to highlight the "double bind" the hero finds himself trapped in. He is motivated by his love for Aziza and at the same time, he is held back by his inferiority complex. The following passage describes his torment:

> I had the urge, the drive to be somebody, yet felt that no matter how far I got I would never make a suitable husband for her... I would

always remain ...a house boy... a mere servant. I belonged downstairs, in the servants' quarters. Mine would always be the humble lowly hand, no matter what I did or how high I climbed in life. I had to school myself into never raising my eyes above my base station in life. (47)

A Boy From Makkah seems to fit the mold of "the novel of ordeal," a type of Bildungsroman that, according to Bakhtin "is constructed as a series of tests of the main heroes, tests of their fedility, valor, bravery, virtue, nobility, sanctity and so on." (Bakhtin, 11) By struggling to suppress his feelings for Aziza while battling "for survival –at study or at work." (48) Ahmad lives this ordeal every waking hour. Afraid to be labeled a social climber who wants to better himself by marrying his employer's daughter, Ahmad refrains from verbalizing his feelings for Aziza. Instead, he tries to become worthy of her by being an outstanding student. The moment Ahmad obtains his Secondary School Certificate, Sheikh Abdul-Hamid pulls some strings to get him a scholarship to study at the school of medicine because he is convinced that his protégé has the potentials to become an excellent physician. Aziza is proud of Ahmad's achievements but he interprets her encouragement as charity, not as sign of affection. Although Ahmad has

gained his "individual selfhood through growth and social experience," (Alden, 1) his "self" withstood the deformation that, as Alden insists, sometimes occurs during this educational process. Far from suffering any ill-effects, Ahmad's individual self prospers and grows more and more reliant. True to the "bourgeois humanism associated with the Bildungsroman," Ahmad is the genre's poster-boy for "faith in progress" and "value of the individual." (Alden, 1)

Deep down in the innermost recess of his psyche, Ahmad is the same loyal and grateful individual who acts within the norms of his social and religious principles. Hence, he behaves towards Aziza as decently and as respectfully as any Muslim male should. He asserts, "What they appreciate in me are my purity, my impeccable behaviour and my moral scruples. Was it worth losing their good opinion in a foolish, pointless, attempt at raising myself in the world?" (64)

Furthermore, Ahmad is as devoted a son as he has always been to his own people. He does not deracinate himself from his own family. When he gets the offer to start his education, the first thing he decides to do is to ask for his father's permission. Before he leaves the country for his higher studies, he goes back to the village to bid them farewell and when he decides to get married, he asks for their approval and blessings.

There in Bani Fahm, his birth place, where the setting is completely different, Ahmad broods upon the ten years that have passed after he left at "the age of nine, naïve and illiterate". He is amazed at the change that has taken place in his life, the development and the maturity which are all the outcome of God's mercy on him. He summarizes all those years in one sentence when he describes to his family "the arduous progress from night classes to the present juncture in [his] life." (67)

In the Bildungsroman writing, the change in social status can be indicated by the use of one short word. Upon returning from his village, Ahmad is greeted by nanny Go'ma's saying: "Mr. Ahmad!" Surprise renders him speechless, he recalls, "The words sounded strange to my ears. It was the first time anyone had called me 'Mr.' I had always been the 'boy' or 'the young man' – the servant who addressed others as masters!" (68) A change of class is evident here. This has a great impetus on his personality that he expresses so beautifully by saying:

> I set out firmly determined to make a success of my mission and realize the hopes pinned on me by everybody, especially those who have helped me to take this road: in short, success had come to be an

obsession. From that moment on, it became my destiny to feel at home only when I was fighting some battle. (69)

With that determination and that goal in mind, he goes to Egypt for his medical college and immerses himself in his studies. Success lures him to work even harder over the seven years until the sad news of Sheikh Abdul-Hamid's death come. He reproaches himself for neglecting to visit or at least ask about them. He immediately returns to Makkah and the first thing he does is to visit his master's grave. In a scene charged with emotions and grief, Ahmad remembers Sheikh Abdul-Hamid's favors and good deeds. He prays for him heartily and yearns for his being there to witness his success and to harvest the fruit that he has planted. Overridden with guilt, he starts looking for Sheikh's family only to be met with the bad news of the lady's death several years ago, and of Aziza's being sick and hospitalized. He is stricken by a sense of shame and helplessness for not being there when they needed him most, whereas, they have always been there for him. His inferior feelings pinch him once again. He admits bitterly,

I found myself again in the same impotent, subordinate, subservient position, unable to render help of any kind. I was cheated out of the

chance to pay my debt of gratitude to the family that had supported, assisted and loved me so well. ... It seemed as though I was doomed always to take, never to give, always to be at the receiving end. (77)

He goes on fluctuating between reprimanding himself for neglecting Aziza all those years of his "pursuit of self-advancement" and justifying that by his desire to make himself worthy of her, "I had schooled myself to bear the pangs of separation for a purpose: I had wanted to rise up to her level so that one day I might ..." (81)

Now Ahmad's line of justification and interpretation, and often, misinterpretation take a different channel. He finds another reason for feeling inferior and for not disclosing his affection to Aziza. He is worried that he may be misunderstood for taking advantage of her illness and loneliness after loosing her parents. Therefore, he feels it is immoral to make any advances towards her. He explains,

To propose to her now when she was ill and lonely would be an unmitigated exploitation of her weakness and a cheap one at that. If she accepted... I would be plagued by the suspicion that she was forced to it by her helplessness. If she turned me down, it would be a

slap on the face. It would deprive me of the sacred flame that had fed my determination and which was responsible for my speedy and surprising progress. (87)

Those contradictory, nerve-shattering thoughts go on and on. "Would she marry her father's servant? Was it possible that she loved me but was ashamed of it?" (92) But this pious young man turns to God for help and guidance and God does not turn him down. Rescue comes through nanny Gom'a, the old, illiterate servant in the house!

In an interesting article entitled, "The Novel of Formation as a Genre," Marianne Hirsch proposes certain generic models of the novel of formation, of which some can be safely applied to *A Boy From Makkah.* She argues that the other characters in the novel are there

> to fulfill several fixed functions: educators serve as mediators and interpreters between the two confronting forces of self and society; companions serve as reflectors on the protagonist. ... [It is also a] didactic novel; one which educates the reader by portraying the education of the protagonist" (Hirsch, 298)

Ahmad's 'educators' are his father and his philanthropic master Sheikh Abdul-Hamid from whom Ahmad and the readers as well, get to learn a lot about life and moral values. In fact, the hero is the writer's mouthpiece through whom he could air his views about the importance of education, benevolence, sympathy and support for the less fortunate in the society.

The hero's moment of illumination comes after a long lecture from nanny Gom'a, his 'companion' who makes him realize the fallacy that he has imprisoned himself into for several years. She calls his attention to the Islamic teaching that all people are equal before God --depending on their good deeds-- deriving a good example from our prophet Muhammad -peace be upon him. Ahmad finally comes to terms with himself and overcomes his problem, but he never regrets that he has acted like any pious, decent youth.

In her discussion of how the early form of the Bildungsroman was well suited to serve the interests of its bourgeois audience, Alden believes that "By celebrating the individual's potential for development and by projecting a final harmony between self and society, it promised a sunny end to an economic revolution." (Alden, 3) Ahmad gets his "sunny" future and a concord between him and his society is achieved. Alden tends to agree with Georg Lukacs's description of the "Bildungsroman as the highest form of prose fiction" because

it guides us toward a model of fruitful interaction between the individual and society, an interaction which redeems the loneliness of the dreamy idealist and the sterility of his subjective world, restoring significance to the conventional, objective world. (Lukacs, 136)

In conclusion, one finds that the hero presented in this novel, *A Boy From Makkah*, fits the image of the "ready-made hero" that Bakhtin described as prevalent in most of the Bildungsroman novels where "all movement in the novel, all events and escapades depicted in it, shift the hero in space, up and down the rungs of the social ladder: from beggar to rich man, from homeless tramp to nobleman." (20) Ahmad as a person, remains the same although he could attain some of the goals that Bakhtin summarized as "the bride, the victory, [and] wealth". It is the events, Bakhtin asserts, that change the hero's "destiny, change his position in life and society, but he himself remains unchanged and adequate to himself. (Bakhtin, 20)

And in dealing with the Bildungroman the Islamic style, Yamani did a very good job. The hero achieves his maturity, prosperity and social mobility not only through utilizing opportunities offered to him, but also, and most

importantly, by attributing his success to God. The writer presented a hero who possesses Islamic ideals and acts upon them. As a matter of fact, through that hero, the writer could nail his colors to the mast about various moral and social issues, which was the concern of that generation of writers.

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