

mother and her wicked stepmother have much in common. In the best fairy-tale tradition, they are versions of the same person with the negative characteristics displaced on to the stepmother.

Welty's anger is neither absent from her fiction nor totally repressed; in fact, it is expressed strongly, albeit covertly. When she says that she located herself in fairy tales, it is often in the daughter figure of Snow White, whom the stepmother tries to poison, deprive of breath, and ultimately of life. Such a line of exploration would, I think, have proved more fruitful for Mortimer than her extended comparison of Welty with Faulkner. Her use of Faulkner as the masculine counterpart to Welty sets up a false dichotomy and perpetuates a system of binary oppositions.

Saad Elkhadem

*Wings of Lead: A Modern Egyptian Novella /*

*Ajnihah min Rasâs: Qissah Misriyyah*

Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1994. Bilingual edition. Pp. iv + 23 + 21

Reviewed by Hussein Kadhim

The experiences of the Arab student in Europe have provided the subject matter for a relatively large number of modern Arabic fictional works. Among popular treatments of this theme are Tawfiq al-Hakîm's *Bird of the East* (1938), al-Tayyib Sâlih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966), and Yahya Haqqî's *The Saint's Lamp* (1944). *Ajnihah min Rasâs*, which was published in Cairo (Dâr al-Ma'ârif) in 1971, has been translated into English by the author and appears here for the first time in a bilingual edition; it is undoubtedly one of the most significant additions to this "sub-genre" in Arabic literature. More similar treatments are likely to follow as the incidence of displacement grows in response to worsening economic conditions and increased political and social repression throughout the Middle East, and as writers attempt to come to terms with their experience of exile. As a matter of fact, Saad Elkhadem himself has written two more works that deal with the same subject matter: *The Ulysses Trilogy* (1988), and *Trilogy of the Flying Egyptian* (1990, 1991, 1992).

Access to the world of *Ajnihah min Rasâs* is gained exclusively through the voice of its first-person unnamed narrator. From his fragmented narrative the reader gleans that he feels rejected by his native Egypt, having been denied admission by universities there because of his poor grades, spurned by the girl he loved, and mistreated by his domineering older brother, who receives preferential treatment from his parents.

Like many of his compatriots, the protagonist of the novella looks to the West for an opportunity he could not find in his native land; he goes to Europe "to quench his thirst for freedom, knowledge, and love" (8). He ends up in Vienna, where he attempts to enroll in a medical school. However, his hopes of becoming a medical doctor prove short lived; poorly prepared, confused, and unable to concentrate, he fails to meet the admission requirements of Austrian universities.

Moreover, his quest for love and freedom is implied by the inhibitions and feelings of self-doubt which he carries with him from his former life, his heavy "wings of lead." For example, although he wishes to form friendships and intimate relationships with European women ("I would be the happiest man on earth if one of them agreed to marry me" [7]), whenever an opportunity arises, he bungles it by appearing ill at ease and intimidated, and by acting in a clumsy manner—a pattern of destructive behavior that intensifies his sense of alienation, isolation, and emotional dislocation. He comes under intense pressure to remain loyal to his traditional Muslim culture and at the same time to observe the norms of the European secular society in which he now lives. He cannot placate the one without violating the norms of the other. Each pulls him in a different direction. This clash between two different (and in many respects irreconcilable) cultures—traditional Arab-Islamic versus secular Western—pushes him to the brink with tragic consequences.

Earlier Arabic treatments of the theme of the East-West encounter and portrayals of exilic experiences have been relatively sketchy, presenting mainly two-dimensional characters. This novella, notwithstanding its brevity, is an exception. It provides a vivid portrayal of the harsh realities of exile as experienced by the protagonist (and by the growing numbers of Arab and other Middle Eastern people). *Ajnihah min Rasâs* is undoubtedly one of the most sophisticated treatments of the theme of displacement in modern Arabic literature to date. It also represents one of the most sustained attempts to utilize the stream of consciousness technique in that literature. The writer makes extensive and skillful use of this technique as he probes the tormented mind of his protagonist. The result is a highly artistic and gripping literary work.

Paul Delany and George P. Landow, eds.  
*Hypermedia and Literary Studies*  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991. Pp. 352

George P. Landow and Paul Delany, eds.  
*The Digital Word: Text-Based Computing in the Humanities*  
Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993. Pp. xii + 362

Reviewed by Michael Groden

The computer revolution is still only beginning. Word-processing programs have dramatically changed many scholars' writing habits and routines, but for the most part these programs are basically extensions, even if powerful ones, of pens, pencils, and typewriters. It is in such areas as data storage and retrieval, alternative systems for composing text, and hypertext and hypermedia that the computer can bring about greater changes, and most humanities scholars are only starting to investigate these potentials. Books such as *Hypermedia and Literary Studies* and *The Digital Word* are good introductions to the technology's possibilities, and curious investigators who consult these two essay collections should find ample provocation to think about ways in which the projects described here and the vi-