



Golden Saudi Literary Figures: Yahya Amgasim Readings in his Contributions (1)

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Abstract

This study offers an in-depth exploration of the literary contributions of Yahya Amgasim, a distinguished Saudi novelist and journalist whose work has significantly enriched the contemporary Arabic literary landscape. Central to this inquiry is his acclaimed historical novel, The Crow's Leg (Saq Al-Ghurab), a richly layered narrative set in the early 19th century during the period of the First Saudi State. Through this temporal and political setting, Amgasim constructs a compelling tableau that examines the intersection of identity, tradition, and social transformation within the confines of a small yet symbolically resonant village named Usayrah.

It, therefore, seeks to underscore Yahya Amgasim's literary artistry and intellectual significance, examining how his work contributes to the broader discourse on nationhood, cultural memory, and gender politics in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, it assesses his role in shaping a modern Saudi literary voice that is at once grounded in tradition and boldly forward-looking. Through this examination, Amgasim emerges as a pivotal figure in the evolution of Saudi literature—an author whose works challenge, preserve, and reimagine the narratives that define the region's past and present.

Keywords: Golden Figures, literary influence, Saudi literary pioneers, Saudi historical novel, Saudi literature, The Crow's Leg, Yahya Amgasim Sab'ai

Introduction

Humans, land, religion, relationships, power, and identity—all these powerful words resonate and influence the novel's narrative. The publishing momentum and the drive to write novels among young people is a healthy phenomenon, and it will provide the cultural scene, not only in Saudi Arabia but also in the Arab world, with important novelists (Al-Ittihad, 2015). Yahya Amgasim is among such young Saudi novelists who wrote an interesting historical novel called The Crow's Leg. The novel "is replete with extraordinary events and circumstances" (Dahami, 2025b). This "historical" novel, so to speak, encompasses many meanings and details. The events of the novel take place after 1800, as the author notes, during the First Saudi State, which was attempting to uproot many unhelpful roots so they could sow their seeds for growth and stability. The events simply take place in a small village called Usayrah, located in the southwest of the kingdom. People have their own customs and traditions, which they believe in and live with. Some of these we may marvel at, some we may find beautiful, and others unacceptable. Ultimately, this is a literary work with its own place. Women are strongly present, embodied often by the mother, "Sadiqiyah," who possesses hidden powers that enable her to

control events and predict what might happen. The readers find themselves fascinated by what this woman does, loving her at times and hating her at others.

Objectives of the study

As a literary investigation, it has to have some objectives as guides to help the author as well as the reader perfectly understand the goal of the work. There might be several objectives, some of which are to explore Yahya Amgasim's literary impact. This objective focuses on analyzing how Yahya Amgasim has contributed to shaping contemporary Saudi literature. It seeks to understand his contributions not only in terms of his writing style and in terms of themes, but also how he might influence other writers and the literary community in Saudi Arabia and the broader Arab world. By studying his works, we can better appreciate the evolution of literary voices in the region.

Another objective is to examine cultural and historical contexts as they appear in the novel. This objective aims to place Amgasim's novel, *The Crow's Leg*, within the historical and cultural framework of the First Saudi State. It involves analyzing the socio-political themes of the novel, such as the conflict between tradition and modernity, and how these themes reflect the historical realities of the time. This

exploration helps readers understand the significance of the events and customs depicted in the novel.

Research Methods

The study seeks to illustrate the contribution of the novelist Amgasim to the progress of Saudi literature in general and the novel in particular. It also seeks to briefly analyze character development. The focus is on the characters in *The Crow's Leg*, particularly the female protagonist, Sadiqiyah. This objective involves examining how Amgasim portrays women and their roles in a patriarchal society. By analyzing character development, the study seeks to uncover the complexities of identity, power dynamics, and societal expectations as represented through these characters. Furthermore, it attempts **to assess narrative techniques in the novel, particularly the usage of vernacular dialect famous in Jazan Region.** This objective looks at the literary techniques employed by Amgasim, such as his use of language, symbolism, and storytelling methods. By assessing these techniques, the study aims to evaluate how they enhance the historical authenticity and emotional depth of the narrative. Understanding these aspects will provide insights into Amgasim's artistry as a great novelist.

Results and Analysis

The Novelist: Yahya Amgasim

Yahya Amgasim, widely recognized by his local dialect name, is formally known as Yahya ibn Gasim Sab'ai. He is a distinguished Saudi writer, journalist, and literary critic with a deep-rooted passion for Arabic literature and cultural discourse. Throughout his career, he has contributed to the literary scene, publishing numerous thought-provoking texts in various Arab newspapers. His journalistic contributions have been featured in several prominent Saudi publications, including *Ash-Sharq* and *Al-Hayat*, where he engaged readers with his insightful analyses and critiques of contemporary literary and cultural issues. See more at (Areq, n.d.).

In 2010, Amgasim achieved a significant milestone in his literary career when he was selected as one of 39 writers from across the Arab world to participate in the prestigious Beirut 39 celebration. This initiative, organized by the British Hay Festival Foundation, aimed to recognize and promote emerging literary talents from the Arab world. The event was held in Lebanon as part of the official designation of Beirut as the World Book Capital, providing a platform for young authors to showcase their work, engage in literary discussions, and gain international exposure.

In an interview with *Okath Newspaper*, he says, I began writing my first work—a collection of short stories—under the weight of any beginning: the wildness of experimentation, the spark of attempt, and the influence of friends over the seed of what I possessed and that I was capable of. I was reinforced by the poetic language of Al-Sayyab and surrounded by the symbolic idea of the village (*Jikur*), and this collection never departed from the realm of nostalgia and discourse to my mother and the South since I left them to study law (Maki, 2017). His writing of this novel breaks with the modern norm. It draws from a deep heritage, cross-pollinating it, producing a

distinct, intermediate form between two literary cultures, with an Arab vision, as Latin American novelists have done (Al-Madani, n.d.).

"Several Saudi journals and newspapers contributed to widening the writing circle to broaden the kingdom's literary movement" (Dahami, 2025a). Beyond his contributions as a writer and journalist, Amgasim has played a pivotal role in representing Saudi literature on the global stage. He has led the Saudi delegation to numerous international literary forums and book fairs, including those held in Cairo, Casablanca, Tehran, Manama, Damascus, and Beirut. His participation has extended beyond book fairs to encompass a wide range of intellectual and literary gatherings and conferences focused on Arabic novels and storytelling traditions, as well as cultural festivals held in Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Cairo, Sana'a, Morocco, the Gulf States, and France. Through these engagements, Amgasim has helped fostering cross-cultural dialogue and promote a deeper appreciation of Arabic literature and heritage.

In addition to his literary and journalistic endeavors, Amgasim has pursued a parallel career in legal consultancy. Since 1999, he has been actively working as a legal advisor, providing expertise in various legal matters. His professional journey also led him into the realm of diplomacy, where he served in cultural affairs within the diplomatic service. In early 2007, he joined the Cultural Office of the Saudi Embassy in France, where he contributed to strengthening cultural ties between Saudi Arabia and the international community. Subsequently, from March 2011 until 2015, he took on the role of cultural supervisor at the Cultural Office of the Saudi Embassy in Beirut, overseeing cultural initiatives and fostering literary exchanges.

Novelist Yahya Amgasim masterfully constructs an escalating rhythm throughout *The Crow's Leg*, guiding the reader through a series of deeply symbolic and emotionally charged events. The novel opens with the depiction of a circumcision ceremony, a significant rite of passage in many traditional societies, marking a boy's transition into manhood. Amgasim paints this event in rich detail, not only illustrating its ceremonial aspects but also capturing the communal celebrations and the deep cultural meanings associated with it. Through this scene, he introduces the reader to the customs, values, and shared beliefs of the village, establishing a vivid sense of time and place (Al-'Anzi, 2022).

Moreover, the author's extensive research and imaginative reconstruction are evident on every page. His detailed depictions of life in Usayrah around the year 1800—more than two centuries ago—are so vivid and immersive that one might believe Amgasim lived among those people, wore their clothes, participated in their rituals, and absorbed their oral histories firsthand. His knowledge of their agricultural practices, religious observances, social norms, and interpersonal dynamics lends the novel a powerful ethnographic quality, without ever veering into academic dryness.

Yahya Amgasim does not write merely to entertain or document—he writes to preserve, to provoke, and to reconstruct. His novel does not fabricate events to appeal to the reader's curiosity; instead, every narrative thread and character arc serves a larger artistic and philosophical purpose. This deliberate artistry is what elevates *The Crow's Leg* beyond the confines of traditional historical fiction and situates it within the canon of literature that both celebrates and comments on the evolution of a people and a nation.

The Novel: The Crow's Leg

"وحدهم أجدادي،
نسألهم:

لا تموتوا أكثر" (Amgasim, 2009, p. 9).

Yahya Amgasim opens his novel with the haunting invocation, **"Only my ancestors, we ask them, 'Do not die anymore.'"** This poetic plea is far more than a sentimental overture; it is a literary mission statement. Through this singular line, Amgasim tasks his narrative with reviving the faded voices of his ancestral lineage—voices threatened by silence, erasure, and the unrelenting passage of time. The line resonates like a prayer and a protest, a call not just to remember, but also to resist oblivion.

This opening sentiment underlines the novel's deep engagement with **cultural memory and collective identity**, a theme explored by scholars like H. Alharthi in an in-depth semiotic study of Amgasim's *The Crow's Leg*. Alharthi observes that the author **"exhumed the individual and collective memory of the tribe,"** reflecting a literary strategy that elevates the untold and the repressed into the narrative foreground (Alharthi, 2021). Here, memory is not nostalgic—it is defiant, urgent, and semiotically loaded with resistance. Thus, when we say that Amgasim sets a goal for his novel in its first line, it is not merely to tell a story about the past, but to confront the mechanisms—historical, social, and psychological—that render memory perishable. His narrative does not seek to triumph over time in a conventional sense; it does not fossilize the past but **animates it**, allowing ancestral lives to speak through symbolic spaces like the village of Usayrah, which stands as a spiritual bastion against cultural erosion.

Critic Dr. Muhammad Mubarak pointed out that the novel "The Crow's Leg" tells the story of a rural community living in Jazan Region. It is located in the southwest of the kingdom, at a time well before that part of the Arabian Peninsula was incorporated into the new state system, unified by King Abdul-Aziz under the name of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Al-Madinah, 2012). Furthermore, Alharthi similarly notes that Amgasim's fiction functions not simply as historical fiction but as **"semiotics of the untold story,"** suggesting that what is significant is not just the events described but **how they are encoded in symbols, customs, and unspoken legacies** (Alharthi, 2021). Moreover, this resistance to time's erasure is paralleled in other Arab literary traditions, as seen in studies on cultural memory and exile, such as those analyzing Mahmoud Darwish's work. There, too, **he tackles the challenges of cultural memory to realize the ideals of**

home and identity (Khan, 2018, p. v). Furthermore, "the cultural memory shapes persons and social communities who remember, memorize, and react by expressing their acceptance or resistance to social phenomena" (Kovačević, 2024). In essence, the spirit of the narrator—by reviving Usayrah, challenging the silence imposed by time, and expressing dissatisfaction with the present—calls for **a literature that becomes a living archive**. The past is not idealized for its own sake but deployed as a lens to analyze the present and imagine alternative futures.

This novel, which can be classified as "historical" in a broad sense, carries multiple layers of meaning and detail. It is not merely a recounting of past events but an artistic reconstruction of a pivotal moment in history. The setting of the novel, as the author notes, is the period after 1800, a time of great change and upheaval. This era coincides with the rise of the First Saudi State, a political and religious movement that sought to establish stability and enforce its vision by eradicating old customs deemed incompatible with its ideology. The narrative subtly weaves the tension between tradition and transformation, illustrating the struggles of a society caught between the past and the future.

One of the most striking aspects of the novel is its portrayal of women, particularly through the character of Sadiqiyah, the mother figure who wields an almost supernatural influence over events. Her presence in the narrative is commanding, embodying the silent yet powerful role of women within traditional societies. She is not merely a passive figure confined to domestic life; rather, she emerges as a force of intuition, wisdom, and foresight. Through her ability to predict outcomes and manipulate circumstances, Sadiqiyah represents the hidden power women often possess in patriarchal communities—power that operates behind the scenes yet shapes the destiny of individuals and families.

عندما اختلف الرجال على أماكن تخزين الحبوب بعد أن عرف كل منهم حصته،
إذ صعب جمعها بطريقتهم المعتادة وذلك برص أكياس الحبوب على خشب الدوم
لشكّل مخزن «الديم»، وكانوا يخشون السرقة كونهم في العراء، فهم لم يُقيموا
حواجز تُشبه قواطع منازلهم في القرية حتى تحجب المخازن عن الرؤية، كما
يخافون نهبيها من قبل الغزاة لو وصلوا لمكان نزوحهم وتركوها غنائم ساحة
لسلبهم، وعندما لم يجدوا حلاً مقنعاً لكافة أعيانهم، أعلن شيخ شملهم عبارته
المعروفة كلما اختلفوا في أمرهم : (الحل عند صديقية . . .)، فمتى شق عليهم
الأمر قرّروا أن خلاصهم بيد الأم.

في المساء كان نفر من الرجال هم خاصة الشيخ ينتظرون غير بعيد عن مقر
العجوز، وبعد لحظات استدعت بعضهم بالاسم، ثم اكتفت من الخاصة بثلاثة فقط
وغادر البقية؛ ليشكّل الثلاثة المصطفون نصف دائرة حول مجلسها الذي ضمّ
أيضاً ابنها الشيخ وحفيدها (خمود)، وراح الجمع يتلقّى - في سرية تامة أرائها
عن قصد - خطة التخزين التي رأت جدواها في ظل هذه الظروف الراهنة (ص
53).

When the men disagreed over where to store the grain after each of them knew his share, it was difficult to collect it in their usual way, which was stacking the grain sacks on Ad-Doum¹ wood to form the *Addamim* storehouse (مخزن الديم). Being in the open, they feared theft. They hadn't erected barriers similar to the partitions of their village homes to

¹ Ad-Doum tree, also known as As-Sidr or An-Nabq tree.

obscure the storehouses from view. They also feared that invaders would plunder them if they reached their place of displacement and leave them as spoils ready to be plundered. When they couldn't find a solution that satisfied all their notables, their sheikh announced his well-known phrase whenever they disagreed: "The solution lies with Sadiqiyah..." Whenever the matter became difficult for them, they decided that their salvation was in the hands of their mother.

In the evening, a group of men, the sheikh's confidants, were waiting not far from the old woman's headquarters. Moments later, she summoned some of them by name, and then confined herself to only three of her confidants, and the rest left. The three lined up to form a semicircle around her council, which also included her son, the Sheikh, and her grandson (Hammoud). The group began to receive - in complete secrecy, which she had deliberately wanted - the storage plan, which she saw as feasible under the current circumstances (Amgasim, 2009, p. 53).

Sadiqiyah's character is compelling and complex, evoking a spectrum of emotions in the reader. At times, her strength and cunning make her admirable; she is a woman who navigates a world ruled by men with intelligence and resilience. Yet, her ability to control and manipulate may also make her unsettling, even fearsome. The reader may love her for her devotion and wisdom but also resent her for her sometimes enigmatic and forceful actions. In this way, the novel does not present a one-dimensional depiction of womanhood but rather explores its depth, contradictions, and immense influence.

The novel, *The Crow's Leg*, transports the reader to the Crow's Leg region in the southern part of Saudi Arabia, a land rich with history, tradition, and cultural depth. This novel does more than just recount the past—it immerses its audience in the intricate social fabric of a bygone era, painting a vivid picture of village life with all its nuances. Through meticulous storytelling, the novel reconstructs the customs, values, and daily routines of the people who lived in this remote yet vibrant community, offering a window into a world shaped by deeply rooted traditions and a strong sense of collective identity. The historical paragraph is the core of the distinctive narrative. Sharifa Al-Warith divides the work among the girls and picks the ears under the leadership of Alia Hadi, who is ahead of them in this task. Sharifa saves the seeds for planting next year, keeping them in mind, and works alongside Zahra to gather the ears of corn and bundle the reeds (Taher, 2020).

At its core, the novel provides a detailed historical and cultural account of the region, presenting an almost ethnographic depiction of the village's customs, particularly in moments of great significance such as marriages, communal celebrations, and important seasonal events. Wedding ceremonies, for example, are not merely personal affairs but grand, communal gatherings that reinforce social ties and uphold generational traditions. The novel delves into the intricate rituals surrounding marriage—ranging from the matchmaking process to the elaborate festivities that mark the union of two families—revealing the weight of customs in defining social roles and relationships. Similarly, occasions of

joy are explored, displaying how the community comes together to celebrate, grieve, and preserve its heritage through song, dance, and storytelling. "Alia Hadi used to lead them in this special party for women, and when the time for the dance of the dinner comes, the girls come out to participate with men" (Alharthi, 2021; Amgasim, 2009, p. 120).

The Crow's Leg is more than just a historical novel; it is a tribute to a past era, a detailed chronicle of life in a rural Saudi village, and a testament to the enduring power of tradition and communal bonds. Through its rich descriptions and deeply human characters, it offers a profound exploration of how people lived, worked, and celebrated life two centuries ago, making history come alive for the modern reader.

One of the novel's greatest artistic strengths lies in its restraint and purposeful composition. Characters are not introduced arbitrarily or exaggerated for dramatic effect. Each figure plays a meaningful role in developing the novel's broader themes, particularly the tension between resistance and collapse. For example, the character of *Sharifa* embodies dignity and endurance, yet also reveals how internal decay and moral fragmentation can undermine a community from within—foreshadowed by the betrayal or weakness represented by *Hamoud Al-Khair Abu Hashfa*. This symbolic conflict highlights how a society's disintegration often begins not with external forces, but through the erosion of its own values and cohesiveness.

One of the most remarkable features of Amgasim's writing is his masterful use of language. The narration is distinguished by its reliance on classical Arabic, lending the text a sense of formality, poeticism, and historical weight. This choice of language reinforces the novel's connection to literary tradition, elevating it beyond mere storytelling into the realm of refined artistic expression. At the same time, the dialogue between characters is written in the colloquial dialect native to the region, an essential element that breathes authenticity into the conversations and interactions within the story. By preserving the natural speech patterns of his characters, the author effectively conveys the culture, mindset, and social dynamics of the environment he seeks to portray. The dialect not only enhances realism but also serves as a cultural bridge, allowing readers to step into the daily lives of the villagers and experience their world as it truly was.

Structurally, the novel demonstrates a high level of worth, with a coherent and well-organized narrative that unfolds seamlessly. The artistic framework is solid, ensuring that each event, character, and setting contributes meaningfully to the overarching themes of the work. There is a deliberate balance between historical accuracy and literary creativity, allowing the story to feel both authentic and engaging. Yahya Amgasim's meticulous attention to detail ensures that the plot progresses logically while maintaining an element of suspense and emotional resonance. Each scene is carefully constructed to flow naturally into the next, creating a narrative rhythm that sustains the reader's engagement. The cohesiveness of the storytelling reflects the writer's skill in structuring a work that

is not only informative but also compelling, drawing the reader into a world that feels fully realized and immersive.

The use of dialect in dialogue is not merely a stylistic choice—it is a necessity for maintaining historical and cultural accuracy. Had the characters' spoken words been rendered in classical Arabic, the dialogue would have lost its credibility, sounding unnatural and disconnected from the time and place the novel seeks to represent. Everyday conversations, casual exchanges, and moments of emotional intensity require the rhythms and idioms of the people who actually lived in that era and setting. Amgasim's linguistic approach ensures that the dialogue retains its vibrancy, preventing it from becoming stilted or artificial.

The Saudi novelist and renowned literary figure Ghazi Abdul Rahman Al-Gosaibi offers high praise for *The Crow's Leg*, recognizing its significance as a literary achievement that goes beyond mere storytelling. He describes it as "an artistic narrative record of a region and period in our history, unknown to the public, a work worthy of praise, not for its artistic excellence alone, but for being a pioneering work in historical fiction, unprecedented in Saudi fiction to date." Al-Gosaibi's endorsement highlights not only the novel's artistic merit but also its groundbreaking role in Saudi literature. Keeping in mind that "the prosperous literary achievement of Ghazi Al-Gosaibi, which is represented by his vast and creative authorial legacy in both its novel and poetic parts and what was associated with them or revolved around them, is the fruit of literary life experiences that extended the length of Al-Gosaibi's entire life" (Dahami, 2024a). By shedding light on a lesser-known chapter of Arabian Peninsula history, the novel serves as both a creative endeavor and an important cultural document. Its significance lies in its ability to preserve and present an overlooked aspect of the past, offering readers a rare glimpse into the traditions, struggles, and daily lives of people in a time that has rarely been explored in fiction.

This is not merely a work of fiction but a historical novel that captures and immortalizes a crucial period in the history of the Arabian Peninsula. The story unfolds in the remote village of Usayrah, a place encircled by rugged mountains that shape both the physical and cultural landscape of its people. One of these imposing natural formations is *The Crow's Leg*, from which the novel takes its title. The presence of these towering mountains is not just a geographical detail; it serves as a metaphor for the isolation, resilience, and endurance of the village's inhabitants. The natural environment is deeply intertwined with the community's way of life, influencing their customs, beliefs, and interactions. Life in Usayrah is shaped by its surroundings, where every peak and valley holds a story and where the land itself seems to bear witness to the passage of time and the unfolding of human destinies.

The novel has been widely acclaimed by literary critics and writers alike, who recognize the literary figure Yahya Amgasim's ability to bring history to life with remarkable detail and authenticity. Through his masterful storytelling, he takes readers on an immersive journey into Usayrah, delving

deep into its physical setting, the vast nature surrounding it, and the everyday existence of its people. Amgasim paints a vivid portrait of a world that is at once simple and complex—where people live in harmony with the land, yet are bound by deeply ingrained traditions and social norms. The simplicity of the villagers' lives is contrasted with the richness of their cultural practices, revealing a society that is both tightly knit and governed by an intricate web of customs, expectations, and unwritten laws.

One of the most striking aspects of Amgasim's work is his unflinching portrayal of the rigid social customs that defined this era and region of Saudi Arabia. The novel does not shy away from depicting the often harsh realities of village life, where tradition dictates behavior, social hierarchy is strictly upheld, and deviation from the norm can have severe consequences. These customs, though sometimes difficult for modern readers to comprehend or accept, are presented with careful historical accuracy. Amgasim does not judge; rather, he observes and presents, allowing the reader to form their own impressions. The narrative brings attention to the struggles faced by individuals—especially women—who navigate the confines of these social structures while trying to carve out their own paths.

From this ceremonial beginning, the novel transitions smoothly into one of the most deeply rooted themes of the era: revenge. In a time when personal and familial honor dictated much of social life, vengeance was not merely an impulsive reaction but a structured and almost obligatory act within the tribal system. Amgasim does not present revenge as a simplistic or barbaric concept; instead, he delves into its complexities, exploring how it is interwoven with ideas of justice, duty, and survival. This theme gradually unfolds, revealing the emotional and psychological burdens it places on individuals and their families. The weight of vengeance lingers over the characters, shaping their decisions, interactions, and ultimately their destinies.

As the story progresses, the theme of sacrifice emerges, bringing with it layers of meaning that challenge the characters' beliefs and values. Sacrifice in the novel takes many forms—whether it is personal sacrifices made for family, the village, or even for abstract ideals such as honor or love. Amgasim portrays this theme with sensitivity, allowing the reader to see both its nobility and its harsh consequences. It is through these sacrifices that the characters evolve, and it is through their struggles that the novel gains its emotional depth.

Murder and revenge continue to play a crucial role as the narrative unfolds, further intensifying the dramatic tension. These elements are not merely sensational but are deeply tied to the historical and social fabric of the time. Violence is presented not as an isolated act but as part of a cycle—one that characters either submit to or attempt to break free from. Through this exploration of blood feuds, Amgasim highlights the moral dilemmas faced by individuals caught between personal emotions and societal expectations.

Because of the novel's emotional depth and intricate storytelling, it can be said that it was written in the words of a lover—someone who not only understands the historical period but deeply feels it. Every sentence is infused with care, and the novel's finest details are woven together with great precision. Amgasim's mastery of linguistic and narrative tools is evident in every passage, as he seamlessly shifts between storytelling and historical reflection. His writing is poetic yet unembellished and profoundly accessible. Despite the novel's blend of classical Arabic in the narration and colloquial Arabic in the dialogue, Amgasim ensures that the language remains fluid and natural, never feeling forced or overly complicated. This balance between linguistic beauty and narrative clarity is a testament to his talent as a writer. He avoids unnecessary embellishments, keeping the prose elegant yet direct, allowing the story to shine in its purest form.

Beyond its literary quality, *The Crow's Leg* sheds light on a geographically forgotten yet historically rich region. The novel revives the memory of a place that, while overlooked in contemporary discourse, played witness to the same upheavals, struggles, and transformations as other, more widely documented areas. Amgasim immerses the reader in this world, making the village of Usayrah and its surrounding landscapes come alive through his descriptions. He does not simply recount history from an external perspective; rather, he transports the reader inside the village, revealing events through the eyes of a character who lived through them. This internal perspective grants the narrative an authenticity and intimacy that might not have been achieved through purely historical retelling.

One of the novel's most distinctive qualities is Amgasim's ability to use language as a form of enchantment. His words are carefully selected, ornate yet deliberate, imbued with a poetic sensibility that elevates the storytelling. His descriptions are not merely visual but atmospheric, painting scenes that evoke emotions and immerse the reader in the time and place he recreates. Whether he is describing the rugged beauty of the mountains, the tension in a moment of conflict or the quiet resilience of a character, his language carries a rhythm and elegance that enhance the reading experience.

As for the characters, they each possess a distinct brilliance and appeal. Amgasim does not create one-dimensional figures; instead, he breathes life into them, making them complex, flawed, and deeply human. Their struggles, desires, and fears feel real, allowing the reader to connect with them on an emotional level. Each character plays a significant role in shaping the narrative, their actions interwoven with the historical forces at play. Through their voices, the novel captures not only individual experiences but also the collective spirit of the time. This literary work might express "the problems and challenges facing the nation and may discuss issues of social justice" (Dahami, 2024b), customs, values, and daily routines. For such privileges, *The Crow's Leg* "is a narrative that should be performed" (Dahami, 2023).

Discussion

There are several criticisms of the novel, as the author fails to establish certain behaviors typical of the villagers, such as sexual freedom. This society, located deep in the Arabian Peninsula, has not shed its conservative character, like all villages and cities across the Arabian Peninsula, nor has it shied away from its traditionalism. If the society that lived in this residential area was not conservative in its adherence to Islamic teachings and good customs and traditions, it was not free in the sense described in the novel. However, the novelist Yahya Amgasim has mastered his narrative in various styles. With a superior perspective, aware of all beginnings and endings, and with a unique language he has woven to construct his world of discourses that contain poetry and mythology that harmonize with the nature of that amazing, magical world. He has designed his novel into a multi-faceted genre. It is a novel that responds greatly to anthropological readings without denying other readings (Abjjad, n.d).

In *The Crow's Leg*, Amgasim masterfully weaves personal and collective histories, using his deep knowledge of regional dialects, customs, and oral traditions to paint a vivid picture of a society on the cusp of historical change. At the heart of the narrative is Sadiqiyah, a profoundly drawn female character whose story becomes a lens through which the author interrogates the complexities of gender, power, and resistance in a deeply patriarchal and tribal context. Sadiqiyah is not merely a literary figure but a cultural symbol—her experiences reflect the silent endurance and subtle defiance of women who navigate a world dictated by rigid social norms and historical forces beyond their control.

Amgasim's narrative style is marked by its lyrical prose, nonlinear chronology, and intertextual references, which collectively contribute to a textured storytelling approach that blurs the lines between history and fiction. His ability to evoke a sense of place and a shared cultural memory positions *The Crow's Leg* not only as a novel of historical reconstruction but also as a poignant commentary on the evolving identity of the Arabian Peninsula.

Conclusion

Yahya Amgasim's *The Crow's Leg* stands as a pivotal work in the realm of Saudi literature, merging historical depth with compelling storytelling. Through his vivid characterizations and intricate narrative, Amgasim successfully encapsulates the cultural essence of a bygone era while addressing themes of identity, tradition, and societal change. This study concludes that Amgasim's work not only enriches the literary canon of Saudi Arabia but also serves as a vital cultural document that preserves the collective memory of the Arabian Peninsula. *The Crow's Leg* stands as a remarkable literary achievement, blending historical depth with artistic excellence. It is a novel that does more than tell a story—it resurrects a forgotten past, giving voice to those who lived through it, and presenting their world with both honesty and poetic beauty.

Recommendations

"The Crow's Leg" is undoubtedly a great novel. In my opinion, the reason it has not received the attention it deserves stems from several reasons, the first of which is its symbolism and the limited understanding of what the author intended to convey. This is similar to what happened with Sudanese author Tayeb Salih's "Season of Migration to the North." To this day, some say it is a sexist novel, trivial, and not literary. All of this is said because readers have not been able to understand it. While few in the Arab world truly appreciate it, we find that in the West, after its translation, it is ranked among the top 100 literary works in human history. Perhaps translating "The Crow's Leg" into English will give it the momentum it deserves. Furthermore, investigating the potential for translating *The Crow's Leg* into other languages could open up discussions about its global reception and appreciation. Understanding how the novel might resonate with international audiences can shed light on its universal themes and cultural significance.

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