

G

Ghallāb, 'Abd al-Karīm

'Abd al-Karīm Ghallāb (1919–2017), a Moroccan writer, intellectual, and journalist, was born in Fez. He pursued his studies at the Qarawiyyīn University in Fez before travelling in 1937 to Cairo, where he stayed until 1948, completing graduate studies. It was in Egypt that Ghallāb interacted with major Arab writers and critics, such as Tāhā Ḥusayn (1889–1973), Tawfiq al-Ḥakīm (1898–1987), 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-'Aqqād (1889–1969), and Muḥammad Mandūr (1907–65), among others. Because of his realistic style and representation of the transformation of Moroccan society in the twentieth century, he has been described as both “the Moroccan debtor of [the Egyptian Najīb] Maḥfūz, founder of the Moroccan novel tradition” (Parrilla, 79) and the representative author of the Moroccan novel in its fundamental form (al-Allam, 45).

One of the most prolific and academically influential Moroccan writers in Arabic, as well as a prominent journalist of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, he wrote more than seventy books, both fiction and non-fiction, on a variety

of subjects, including social criticism, national history, Islam, Moroccan politics, and democracy.

As an important Moroccan intellectual, his political affiliations and vision informed his career; his work traces the growth of nationalist ideology and the trajectory of the Istiqlāl party—the political party of independence that grew out of the resistance movement in the 1940s and 1950s. He served as a member of its central committee and was editor-in-chief of its newspaper *al-'Alam* until 2004. He was also one of the founding members of the Moroccan Writers Union and served as its president (1958–76). As an ardent nationalist, he often saw himself as a defender of both Arab identity and Islamic values; his works serve as illustrations of the thought of the Istiqlāl party and of its ideologue, 'Allāl al-Fāsī (1910–74).

Most of Ghallāb's literary work fictionalises historical events that trace the transformation of Moroccan society and politics from the colonial period to independence—especially from the 1930s to the 1950s. While in his first novel, *Sab'at abwāb* (“Seven gates,” 1965), Ghallāb explores the experience of political imprisonment