Women’s Gain and Challenges
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Yemeni women writers have played a great role in their society, which is under the poverty line and conservative. They discuss in their writings—such as poetry, short story, novels, and journalist articles—many sensitive issues in their society in general and women issues in specific.

I would mention, for example, the novelist Nabil al-Zubayr and her novel *It's My Body*, which won the Naguib Mahfouz Prize in Egypt and raised controversy in Egyptian literary circles because of its daring topic; however, it did not raise such controversy in Yemeni society, which instead accepted it as creative work. In the same path, I would mention the short-story writer and novelist professor Dr. Nadia Kokbani, who won the Suad Al Sabah Award for young writers in Kuwait for her short stories and novels *Aqeelat [Wives]*, which discussed the transformation of arranged marriage between two Yemeni male and female professors and writers to daily rape. Another woman writer of note is the journalist and short story writer Huda Alattas, who won the prize for creativity in Sharjah for her short story which bravely discusses sensitive issues about men and women in Yemeni society. Also, the short story writer Arwa Abda Othman, who was a cultural minster, and Aziza Abdullah, the former Yemeni vice president, who both discussed the patriarchal society and rebelled against polygamy.

In Saudi Arabia, a group of courageous writers have emerged. One in particular is the novelist and short story writer Zainab Hefni, who boldly discusses the nature of the Saudi conservative society and sensitive issues such as the homosexual relationship between Saudi women and the issue of Shiite and Sunni conflict in her novel *A Pillow for Your Love*, which features a prohibited love story between the protagonists, a Shiite man and a Sunni woman. This novel raises many sensitive religious, cultural and social issues.
Sudanese female writers have shown their presence strongly in Arab society by winning many awards. For example, TV/radio presenter and poet Rawdah al-Hajj was crowned the princess of poets for her talents in the formulation of the Arabic poem. She was also awarded the “Burda Okaz” in Saudi Arabia as the first woman who was given that Burda, the historical clock of poetry. Also, I would like to mention congresswoman and fiction writer Buthaina Khader Makki, who discusses through her stories many issues of Arab men in general and women in particular. Her novel *Hjul of Shuk [Ankle Bracelet of Thorns]* features two dark-skinned protagonists who got jobs in Saudi Arabia and endure many hardships as a result of racial prejudice in this conservative religious community.