

insights into the Framework, we can gain powerful insight into our own work in the field of language teaching and learning. The book is written in an easy-to-follow and accessibly style, with lots of headings, sub-headings, summaries and illustrative charts. The book will be of interest to all those concerned with second/foreign language teaching and learning including policy makers, language planners, syllabus designers, researchers, and language teachers.

Finally, it is hoped that the Common European Framework for Language Learning, Teaching, and Assessment, as illustrated in this volume, constitutes an incentive for a similar initiative or framework in the Arab World the objective of which is the learning and teaching of foreign languages at Arab universities, institutions and schools, as well as the teaching of Arabic as a second or foreign language.

***The Jordanian Novel 1980 – 1990: A Study and an Assessment* by Fahd A. A. Salameh, Ministry of Culture, Amman, 2000.**

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This book, published by the Jordanian Ministry of Culture in 2000, is Salameh's doctoral dissertation presented to the University of London in 1998. Among another reasons, the author's choice of this era is sufficiently convincing for being motivated by examination. No wonder, the term 'artistic' is extremely much less artistic works of the preceding periods. In Salameh's opinion, four Jordanian novelists merit such qualifications during the specified decade; these are: Ghalib Halasa, Mu'nis al-Razzaz, Ilyas Farkouh, and Ziyad Qasim, to each of whom he devoted a single chapter.

Chapter One is introductory; it furnishes the reader with background knowledge about the rise of the novel in Jordan starting from early attempts (1922 - 1948), moving through a period of transition (1948 - 1967), a period which witnessed three important works, viz. Tayseer Sboul's "You Are Since Today", Ameen Shinnar's "The Nightmare", and Saalim al-Nahas's "Memories of a Barren". These three major figures are believed to have had an impact on the development of the novel in Jordan. Moreover, the three novelists "received massive critical attention in both Jordan and the Arab world, because their works provide a vision that is based on ideology" (P. 32).

Halasa's novels are the subject-matter of Chapter Two, in which Salameh describes him as estranged and frustrated dreamer. Out of his seven novels and two collections of short stories, Salameh has selected three outstanding novels for discussion, viz. "Laughter", "The Khamsin", i.e., 50 days falling between "the cold, wet winter and the hot, dry summer" (P. 57), and "Lamenting the Ruins". References to the other four novels are utilized as supportive and supplementary arguments.

In the “Laughter”, Halasa portrays “a world of anxiety, fear and resignation” which is reinforced in “The Khamsin” and “Lamenting the Ruins”. Salameh sees that sex in Halasa’s works, unlike elsewhere, is functional, i.e., each sexual relationship is symbolic of contemporary political and social practices in the Arab world. What makes Halasa a true artist is his power in employing “a variety of narrative techniques” (P. 74) which enabled him to bring his fictional worlds closer to reality. Of these devices one is interested in are documentation, the manipulation of dreams, recollections, and stream of consciousness. And to Salameh’s list, I add ‘language variation’ pertinent to the nationality of Halasa’s characters. His works, however had “no impact on the production of the novel in Jordan during the 1980’s, as they were not available to the Jordanian reader because of censorship until the author’s death in 1989” (P. 84)

Chapter Three, Salameh examines the ‘experimental’ novel in Jordan as best represented by the works of Mu’nis al-Razzaz, Ilyas Farkouh and, to some extent, al’Ajlouni (cf. Sboul’s 1968). Generally, experimentation relates to the employment of new narrative devices, among which are the methods of narration, presentation of viewpoints and, above all, reciprocal relationship between themes and socio-political practices backed by prevalent ideologies. More specifically, as Salameh contends (P. 89), the new “narrative devices range from the absence of chronology, dispensation with the external characterization, the polyphonic dialogues, the use of ‘the Chinese Box’, i.e., a narrative within a narrative, intertextuality, parody and juxtaposition of opposites whether in ideology or life.”

In al-Razzaz’s four novels, “a world of political oppression, suppression through prisons, torture, sustained suffering and restriction of freedom, destruction, psychological and physical humiliation, rape and even murder” is seen “through the eyes of an educated outsider” (P. 91) His first novel (1982), viz. “Living Beings in the Dead Sea” is an exploration of an intellectuals psyche, a person who “tolerates all sorts of torture, deprivation and suffering” (P. 93), and is unable to “differentiate between reality and illusion, or between waking experiences and nightmares” (P. 95). This tragic end becomes more tragic in his second novel (1986), viz. “Confessions of Silencer” where a friend becomes a foe, and the foe, being made aware, becomes a suspect himself to the extent that he cannot make love to his wife at his own home.

In “The Maze of A’raab in Miragescrapers”, his third novel, al-Razzaz explores “the modern Arab individuals psychology.....[in] the form of journey through historical periods [being] the product of the past combined with the present age” (P 98). Salameh contends that such an individual is “an accumulation of layers form the deep past with a modern skin that hides the past beneath it” (P. 99). Like the first two novels, this one is a demonstration of conflict between individuals and political autocracy on the one hand and inner conflicts consequent of “the conflict between patrimonial legacy and the modern European concepts” [sic.]” (P. 103)

The fourth, viz. "Jum'a al-Qafaaree: Memories of an Unknown", is somewhat different from the former three. "It is a study of an ordinary, unknown human being, estranged in his own society, a theme that can be easily traced in Camus' "The Stranger" and the Sarter's "Nausea" (P. 103). In Salameh's view scarce appearance of the omniscient narrator "has no special significance and no justification" and the rush in ending the novel with "a very simple summary ... deprives the work of some of its potential artistic value." (P. 123). Despite such shortcomings, al-Razzaz's approach has influenced many Jordanian writers, notably Farkouh.

Ilyas Farkouh (1948 -), the subject-matter of Chapter Four, started his literary career as a short story writer before writing his first novel, viz. "Statures of Foam". In both his short stories and his novels, Salameh is of the opinion that Farkouh "presents a political reality in the Arab world as it has been experienced by the characters." (P. 131). This reality, he maintains, "is characterized by disappointment and frustration of individuals who in their quest for great achievements or in their expectations reached a peak of inflated hopes before the defeat [of 1967]". (P. 131). Farkouh employs a new device by means of which he relegates background information to references and footnotes, a device which "perhaps made the novel appear closer to three biographies of three individuals who have a common experience, while their lives reflect different approaches to it." (P. 132). Yet, Salameh says, "doubt and uncertainty permeate the whole work". Nothing is certain or concrete. Words are void of meaning and heroism is nothing but illusion. (P. 136). In short, "The characters have learned nothing out of their experiences nor have they acquired anything" (p. 136). And when the whole experience is put together, the general scene of the Arab situation prevalent during the 60's and 70's become comprehensible (cf. P. 138).

Farkouh is seen to have employed a dual discourse to express two different levels of awareness within the world of his characters, viz. The journalistic and the literary, whereby the former is written in italics, a device already employed by Faulkner, Joyce, and Kanafani but with qualitative difference and the latter is utilized to present characters, their thoughts and actions (see pp. 140 - 141). All in all, Salameh sees that Farkouh has achieved "a comparatively new outlook for the novel in Jordan which he later develops in his works produced in the following years. However, parallel to his experimental trend a more conventional production that attempted to emulate the 'realist' production of the Arabic novel in other Arab countries continued to be produced by some Jordanian novelists, like Ziyad Qasim." (P. 167).

After briefly surveying the works of contemporary authors with conventional techniques, Salameh introduces Ziyad Qasim's first novel, viz. "The Director-General", very briefly, then moves to his second work, viz. "Sons of Castle", which he discusses in length. Interestingly, this novel is "perhaps the first novel in Jordan whose setting and landscape are Amman with its heterogeneous population. It is a sort of social, historical, political, economic and cultural document that reveals the contradictions within the society whose history extends only seventy-five years." (pp. 174 - 175). More interestingly, this

landscape is a mirror – image of Jordan’s social structure. In Qasim’s words: “Even trees stand in unequal height and form.” (1990: 5).

The novel projects a period extending from the end of the World War II to the June defeat of 1967. In Salameh’s words, this span of time “constitutes one of the most unstable periods in the history of the region when the Arab world witnessed the rise of independent Arab states, national ideologies, revolutions and counter – revolutions, projects of pacts and mergers, conflicts, and disputes and ultimately wars and defeats.” (P. 177). No wonder, corruption is explored in almost every aspect of life and, hence, the defenselessness of the castle and the ultimate defeat of shattered sons. Qasim has carefully selected the names of his characters whose actions demonstrate counter – meanings to what they denote. Thus, while one name means ‘pride’, the person’s reality holiday that name expresses ‘shame’, and so on and so forth.

Salameh, concludes his book, written in formidable style [disregarding some infelicities here and there], by saying tat Halasa was the only Jordanian who, prior to the 80’s, had produced novels of high artistic quality (see P. 208). And because of this merit, which Salameh believe to be evident in the 1980 – 1990 novelists’ works discussed in this book, one is tempted to place such intellectuals, especially Qasim, “among the best novelists in the Arab world”. (P. 219).