

“I argue that both texts are emblematic of the feminist motto ‘the personal is political,’ foregrounding the act of writing as praxis, and consequently subverting essentialist oppositions between the public and private spheres.”

“The storytellers love to dwell on the adventures of sons of kings, of political ministers, of wealthy merchants, of shopkeepers, artisans, water-carriers, and even ass-drivers; but they disdain to waste the efforts of their imagination upon anything of *fallah*, or rather of country origin. It is effective due to its use of listing individuals from a plethora of social classes, and the fact that he even says that writers mention some social classes similar to the *fallah*, but nobody ever wanted to talk about this specific section of the population.”

“Thus, throughout the nineteenth century, Arabic fiction and drama languished in a limbo of imitation. On the one hand it had no indigenous inspiration or traditional foundation upon which to build, other than the *Arabian Nights* and the *maqama*. The narrow confines of these extant Arabic genres, and the insularity of the Arab world then, prevented an evolution into more modern forms and themes. The denunciations of Arab traditionists and xenophobic attitude of the many Arabs who were opposed to the translation of Western fiction compounded this difficulty. In addition, the stubborn insistence of others who wanted indiscriminately to translate and use Western forms and themes solely for profit exacerbated the problem.”

“Literature is not, as superficial thinkers imagine, merely an instrument to amuse litterateurs. Nor are its tales merely a beautiful way of killing precious time. The fact is that a literature and a literary history are among the strongest identifying marks of a nation; serving to link its past generations with the present one, defining its particular character, and rendering it distinct from all others. And so, its personality is perpetuated through time, the area of similarities among its individual members becomes broader, and the bonds of solidarity among them grow stronger.” (Page 11)

“Munif uses the form of oral narration in a much more directed and purposeful way as a means of experimenting with narrative form. Formal innovation is no longer subordinated to political engagement, but has rather become the very means of that engagement”