

Arabic Short Stories

Editor, Mahmoud Manzalaoui^(☆)

This selection and compilation of thirty-three short stories by thirty authors, beginning with a foreword by Dr. Sarwat Okasha, UAR Minister of Culture, a presentation by G.E. von Grunebaum and an introduction by the editor Mahmoud Manzalaoui; is an excellent work of reference for a Western reader interested in Arabic literature and who cannot read the texts in the original language. It also serves as a textbook for a class in Arabic studies and literature, and should definitely be ordered by all universities and major public libraries interested in Arabic material.

The short story is an interesting genre of writing. Not only does it embody many important aspects of culture, but also a variety of fields -- Anthropology, sociology, Political Science, History, Women's Studies, Ethnology, Religion and others. It is written in a narrative form which captivates the reader.

The authors chosen are mainly Egyptian: Tawfiq el Hakim, Mahmoud Taymour, Mohamed Kamel Hussein, Yehia Hakki, Suheir el Kalamawi, Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz, Rashad Rushdi and many others. Hence, one of the criticisms which could be made of this compilation, resides in the choice of authors. The book presents the Arabic short stories of a majority of twenty-four Egyptians in a total of thirty authors. What about Lebanese, Iraqi, Syrian, or Sudanese authors to name a few?

Nevertheless, the richness of material and the excellent contribution of the book to literature compels us to recommend it to interested readers. ●

(☆) Book review written by Evelynne Accad