A Content Review of the Palestinian Novel from the Beginning of Twentieth Century Until 1948

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Extended Abstract
1. Introduction
Palestine literature is intensively political and affected by events happened in the country over the last century. Dominance of Ottoman empire on Arab countries including Palestine, being ruled by Britain, and then occupied by Israel have deprived the country from experiencing an independent era; all the country has gone through was fighting with foreigners. It is therefore normal for the literature of the country, especially for fiction, to have fighting and resistance as the main themes. The high status of the themes in fiction has to do with the nature of the fiction, as it attracts common people seemingly as it is close to real happening of the society. Fiction could have a direct relationship with daily events of society and reflect the real problems of society.

2. Review of Literature
Investigating related literature, the researches came out with no specific and independent work to focus on novels of Palestine in the era before 1948. The related works have huge limitations and are not deep enough. For example, Omar Shahin (1988) studied the historical trajectory of Arab novels from early 1900 to 1967. Vadi (1981) explored the same, but he focused on signs of novel formation from early 19th century to 1948. Abu Matar (1990) in a book that exactly deals with novel in Palestine investigates modern novel of Palestine from 1950 to 1975. He points out briefly to novel 1948 and identifies that the flourish of phenomenon is parallel in other countries. Yaghi as well on his works on Palestine literature, deals with poetry and prose of Palestine in contemporary period, He just deals briefly with novel in Palestine before 1948.

3. Method
This is a descriptive-analytical research. First, the political, economic and social situation of Palestine were studied. Then, we examined the factors leading to the literary movement. Finally, the history of development of Palestinian novel from 1900 to 1948 was explored.

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4. Results and Discussion
We could not see any novel that had been written in this period. Moreover, as there was disagreement about the first novel and its author, we could not do a precise analysis. There are some works that have studied Palestinian novel from 1900 to 1948, but this article explored all the novels, written from the beginning of the 20th century to 1948. The works show the responsibility of writer for his/her society, although most of them could not analyze the universal situation and colonial policies.

Outline of the discussion

A. Overall circumstances of the society and movement factors
Palestine was socially under Ottoman regime’s tyranny, in which Turkish was officially recognized and Arabic discounted. Since 1920, immigration of Jews to Palestine began, an event that changed the future of the Palestinians dramatically. Economically, at the time of the Ottoman’s ruling, more than 70% of the Palestinian people were engaged in agriculture. It was not industrially developed either. Cultural and scientific status was in bad conditions too. It was only Seminaries that managed to make an important step in learning, by changing their approaches in purely religious teachings to modern teachings. In spite of these circumstances, there were changes in the community that were considered as movement factors, including press publication by the intellectuals and promotion of simplification in writing, expansion of schools for teaching new sciences, getting to know western literature and style of writing by Palestinians using translations of western works and printing houses.

B. changing process in the content of the novels
The close link between fictional literature and people's life and understanding it easily along with factors such as: dominant political conditions, increased awareness and literacy of the people towards the past led to increasing acceptance on this genre of literature. The first half of the twentieth century in the Palestinian fictional literature is the phase of experimentation and testing, since at the beginning, this genre of literary work was the result of the activity of novice novelists who had responded to the influential external factors and were eager to transform the fictional literature. So that the first efforts began with the translation of the western works. Khalil Beidas, Ahmed Al-Shaker al-Karami and Jamil Al-Bahri were the first to introduce translated fictional literature by publishing magazines. They emphasized on paying attention to fictional literature and were pioneers of that. Non-translation works were devoid of the main and technical indicators of this genre of literature, and were mostly imitation. There is a controversy over the first Palestinian non-translation novel, but there is consensus that it started since 1320. The content of the various novels that have been written from 1920 until 1948 is generally about issues like Palestine, the need for caring about community, and Vigilance, concerning the Jews. But the frankness that emerged after 1948’s literature is not to be seen in the fictional literature of this era, which is perhaps due to the conditions of the political community governing the community. Because, on the one hand, the authors did not have much political analytic power to inform the society about what will be happen. On the other hand, the emphasis on inmitting them was arrested from their original mission, which is to focus the community on the reflection of the themes Social.
5. Conclusion

Not being independent as a state, disorganization of the independent government in the past in this region and not being able to profit from benefits like other Arab states are factors behind the lack of independence in the literature of this land. One of the characteristics that distinguishes Palestinian literature from other literatures is its relevance to time and place and addressing political issues. As the literature of this country is interwoven with politics, it is difficult to distinguish between literature and politics. But this is clearly the case of the twentieth century, especially after 1948. However, the same literature has its specific features. Content review of novels written before 1948 indicates that writers of this works were not familiar with political issues, superpower politics in the world, and how they interact with colonal, developing, and third world countries. The writers were satisfied with the superficial analysis in their works.

Key words: Novel, Palestine, Resistance, Nakba, 1984

References


