

Non-academic readers and literature professors alike will be grateful to Cranston for providing so much information about the international development of Romanticism with such concision. True, the brevity of each chapter does not allow the author to expand on some of the sweeping statements he has made, and these are left open to debate. But of his succinctly expressed opinions, several are worth studying in greater detail. One is the obvious alliance between Romanticism and nationalism, which in several cases led to the foundation of new nations. Another is the relationship between literature and other arts, particularly music, which in several countries followed a parallel development. A third concerns the impact that both the sentimental and the historical novel had upon the literary renaissance that came to the Western world after the Napoleonic years. Cranston's book abounds with speculations on the origins of this literary school, with a clear focus on the rather heroic few who launched it in their respective countries.

Saad Elkhadem

Five Innovative Egyptian Short Stories / Khams Qisas Misriyyah

A Bilingual Edition: English / Arabic

Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1994. Pp. iv+25+22. \$9.95

Reviewed by A.F. Cassis

Five Innovative Egyptian Short Stories is a 1994 release of previously published works by Saad Elkhadem—all original, delightful, and masterly crafted. Short, compact, and sometimes technically demanding, the works—plausible, fascinating, and entertaining anecdotes of Egyptian life in mid-century—evoke in the reader who has had some contact with Egyptian life what the Irish critic and short-story writer Sean O'Faolain once called the "recognition of the familiar," a basic requirement for pleasure in the short story. The reader is also jolted and challenged by the seemingly innocuous anecdotes and recognizes the disturbingly social and moral implications behind these apparently innocent and coherent "slices" of life.

"Pigs," originally published in Arabic in 1967 and in translation in 1977, is the story of a sexually starved clubfooted intellectual. Though "cultured and educated," the young man has a feeling of inferiority because women shun him. His dedication to "principles and values" is finally confronted by the demands of the flesh, and in this conflict the male "macho" manifests itself in an apparent contempt for women. The story is narrated from the point of view of the protagonist, in the form of an indirect interior monologue, à la Virginia Woolf, except for the fully punctuated conversation, in ellipsis, which intrigues the reader.

"The Torpedo," an earlier version of which appeared in Arabic in 1967, was also published in translation in 1977. In this story, the attention of the reader is at first divided between the reminiscences of the persona of the writer as he revises the old manuscript of the story of Ahmad Effendi for publication. Ahmad Effendi's story, given in parentheses, gradually takes over center stage, but not before some insight is given the reader into the writer's penchant for self-criticism, especially his awareness that the manuscript in parentheses may have the elements of "tension and suspense," but little or no "deep significance."

"Nobody Complained," first published in 1989, takes the reader into what has become Elkhadem's stomping grounds: the experience of an Egyptian immigrant abroad (see, e.g., *From Travels of the Egyptian Odysseus* [1979]; *The Ulysses Trilogy* [1988]; *Trilogy of the Flying Egyptian* [1990, 1991, 1992]). In this short story, Elkhadem probes—with great insight and not without sympathy—the consciousness of Ibrahim Khalil, who has recently arrived in Canada, as he hunts for a job. The repressed anger, frustration, and exasperation of the unemployed Ibrahim Khalil are underlined.

An earlier version of "The Reader and the Glass of Milk" appeared in Arabic as early as 1966. The narrator is waiting for the arrival of a train, and, as he browses through a "childish" magazine, is at once drawn and repelled by Samirah's "old story." It is the story of a wife who does not love her husband and tries to get rid of him, abetted in her endeavor to poison him by her lover. As interest in the outcome of the anecdote grows, Elkhadem carefully underlines the criticism of the narrator for the "naive trick" at the end, à la O' Henry!

"Men," the last piece in the anthology, was first published in Arabic in 1967 but makes its first appearance in the anthology in English in Elkhadem's own translation. This is a dramatic narrative, a one-act play with several scenes, complete with stage direction (in italics) and dialogue. The dialogue carries the action and the narration. The fate of the pregnant Husniyyah is determined with remarkable sangfroid; the male culprit escapes punishment, but the woman pays. The Middle Eastern concern—or is it obsession?—with female chastity seems to know no boundaries. Elkhadem's sure knowledge of the psychology of country people, their superstitions and mores, is quite evident. The use of the mask in conversation is of special interest and significance; it is, in a way, in the words of J.A. Prufrock, an attempt "to prepare a face to meet the faces" that one meets. When the Hajj and his wife, or Mansûr and Urfân, speak, they put on the mask; when it is off, what they say is more of a dramatic monologue revealing their true selves. One wonders, however, why Saad Elkhadem decided to include this piece under the rubric of "short story."

Five Innovative Egyptian short Stories is a delightful anthology and a veritable study in pleasure well worth its price. The bilingual edition gives the reader who can read Arabic an opportunity to assess the closeness of the translations (three

pieces have been translated by Professor S. El-Gabalawy, and two by the author), and how they managed to retain the flavor and nuances of meaning in the original.

Patrick Colm Hogan and Lalita Pandit, eds.

Literary India: Comparative Studies in Aesthetics, Colonialism and Culture

Albany: State University of New York Press. 1995. Pp. 289. \$19.95

Reviewed by Uma Parameswaran

The current predilection among critics to make colonial oppression the axis around which all readings revolve has itself become oppressive, so much so that a volume which deals with non-colonial issues important to non-Western literatures is a welcome change.

The thirteen essays in this volume are categorized under six headings, and the objective is multicultural comparatism, or more precisely, "to consider a wider range of similarities and differences, interactions and reactions, in order to understand better both the artistic form and the social import of any literature" (xi). Patrick Colm Hogan addresses the biases that underlie the dichotomizing view of East/West. He urges that it would be more productive to trace commonalities and to identify and isolate the literary universals—the universal patterns of grammar, for instance. Hogan sets classical Sanskrit plays alongside classical Greek tragedies and the plays of Shakespeare. He shows that, contrary to Western perceptions of Indian literature, there has been as much transmutation of sources by Kalidasa as by Shakespeare, that the stylized formula of Sangam poetry has room for innovation, and that "deus ex machina" sequences in the classics of both Indian and European drama are not randomly imposed but work from within the structure through mimetic and symbolic unities. Hogan also lists various topics of possible comparative studies between Indian and European literatures, such as the practice of considering optimum length of lines.

Jeffrey Ebbesen dispels the misconception that the "pride of authorship exists only in the west" (48), and speaks of the various kinds of "signatures" used in Indian literature. V.K. Chari substantiates the perception that "literary criticism in Sanskrit is not predominantly a genre-oriented criticism" (63). W.P. Lehmann explicates the Hindu philosophy which sees an intimate connection between a word and its meaning, and the implications for the understanding of Indian literature resulting from the differences between Hindu philosophy and Saussure's "arbitrariness" of the sign (word). The Indian angle led to the sanctification of the sound, with society supporting the material needs of a select group (Brahmins) which was entrusted with the responsibility of transmitting all details of word/sound to each successive generation.