

MUNIF: POETICS OF A LIFE

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH*

Translated by
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- ‘Abd al-Rahman Munif was born on **May 29, 1933** in Amman to a father from Najd and a mother from Iraq.
- He spent his first years with his family that travelled between Damascus, Amman and some Saudi cities.
- His secondary schooling ended in the Jordanian capital with the beginning of his political activism and his membership in the newly founded Ba’th party.
- He enrolled in the Faculty of Law in Baghdad in **1952**. With the signing of the Baghdad Pact in **1955**, Munif together with a large number of Arab students was expelled to the Republic of Egypt.
- He continued his studies at Cairo University to attain the degree in law.
- In **1958**, he pursued his graduate studies at Belgrade University, Yugoslavia, where he obtained a doctoral degree in economics in **1961**, specializing in the economics of petroleum.
- He went back to Beirut where he was elected a member of the Ba’th party’s pan-Arab command for a few months.
- In **1962**, his organized political affiliation with the Ba’th party ended after the conference of Homs which was marked by differences in practice and vision.
- In **1963**, he was stripped of his Saudi passport by the Saudi embassy in Syria, taking his political affiliations as pretext, and it was not even given back to him after his death in **2004**.
- In **1964**, he returned to Damascus to work in the field of his specialization in the Syrian Company for Petroleum, “Company for the Export of Petroleum”. Afterwards he worked as director for the marketing of Syrian raw petroleum.
- In **1973**, he settled in Beirut where he worked for a few years in the journal al-Balagh.
- In **1975**, he left Beirut for Baghdad where he worked as a petroleum expert. He was in charge of publishing a journal that dealt with oil economics, “Development and Oil”, which had a big echo. He stayed until **1981** when the Iraqi-Iranian war broke out.
- He left for Paris where he devoted himself exclusively to writing novels. The first volumes of *Mudun al-milh* (Cities of Salt) were the most important outcome. He returned to Syria in **1987**.
- In **1987**, he settled in Damascus to continue writing, going back and forth between Beirut and Damascus until his death on **January 24, 2004**.

‘ABD AL-RAHMAN MUNIF

NOVELS

- (1973). *al-Ashjar wa-igbtiyal Marzuq*.
- (1974). *Qissat hubb majusiyya*.
- (1975). *Sharq al-mutawassit*.
- (1976). *Hina tarakna al-jisr*.
- (1977). *al-Nibayat*.
- (1979). *Sibaq al-masafat al-tawila*.
- (1982). /Jabra Ibrahim Jabra. *'Alam bi-la kbhara'it*.
- (1984-1989). *Mudun al-milb*.
 1. (1984). *al-Tib*.
 2. (1985). *al-Ukhdud*.
 3. (1989). *Taqasim al-layl wal-nahar*.
 4. (1989). *al-Munbatt*.
 5. (1989). *Badiyat al-zulumat*.
- (1991). *al-An ... huna aw sharq al-mutawassit marra ukbra*.
- (1999). *Ard al-sawad*.
- (2005). *Umm al-Nudhur*.

SHORT STORIES

- (2006). *Asma' musta'ara*.
- (2006). *al-Bab al-maftuh*.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING

- (1994). *Sirat madina*.
- (2001). *Sirat madina*. Introduction by Marwan Qassab Bashi.

LITERARY AND ART CRITIQUE

- (1992). *al-Katib wal-manfa. Humum wa-afaq al-rivaya al-'arabiyya*.
- (1995). (ed.) *al-Qalaq wa-tamjid al-hayat. Kitab takrim Jabra Ibrahim Jabra*.
- (1996). *Marwan Qassab-Bashi: Rihlat al-hayat wal-fann*.
- (1998). *Law'at al-ghiyab*.
- (2000). *Jabr ... Musiqah al-alwan*.
- (2001). *Dhakira lil-mustaqbal*.
- (2001). *Rihlat al-daw'*.

SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

- (1975). *Mabda' al-musharaka wa-ta'mim al-bitrul al-'arabi*.
- (1976). *Ta'mim al-bitrul al-'arabi*.
- (1992). *al-Dimuqratiyya anwalan, al-dimuqratiyya da'iman*.
- (1997). *'Urwat al-Zaman al-Babi*.
- (1998). *Bayna al-thaqafa wal-siyasa*.
- (2003). *al-Iraq: hawamish min al-tarikh wal-muqawama*.

TRANSLATIONS

English:

- (1988). *Endings*. Translated by Roger Allen. London: Quartet; republished by Interlink Books in 2007
- (1989). *Cities of Salt*. Translated by Peter Theroux. New York: Vintage.
- (1993). *The Trench*. Translated by Peter Theroux. New York: Vintage.
- (1994). *Variations on Night and Day*. Translated by Peter Theroux. New York: Vintage.
- (1998). *Story of a City. A Childhood in Amman*. Translated by Samira Kawar. London: Quartet.

French:

- (1985). *A l'est de la Méditerranée*. Translated by Kadhem Jihad and Marie-Ange Bertapelle. Paris: Sindbad.
- (1996). *Une ville dans la mémoire*. Translated by Eric Gautier. Paris: Sindbad.

German:

- (1995). *Östlich des Mittelmeers*. Translated by Larissa Bender. Basel: Lenos.
- (1996). *Geschichte einer Stadt. Eine Kindheit in Amman*. Translated by Larissa Bender and Hartmut Fähndrich. Basel: Lenos.
- (2000). *Am Rande der Wüste*. Translated by Petra Becker. Basel: Lenos.
- (2003). *Salzstädte*. Translated by Magda Barakat and Larissa Bender. Kreuzlingen/München: Hugendubel/Diederichs.

Italian:

- (1993). *All'est del Mediterraneo*. Translated from Arabic by Monica Ruocco, preface by Goffredo Fofi. Rome: Jouvence.
- (1996). *Storia di una città*. Translated and with an afterword by Maria Avino. Rome: Jouvence.

Norwegian:

- (2004). *Sandvidder*. Translated by Geir Skogseth. Oslo: Pax Forlag A/S.

* This sketch was translated from Arabic with permission from Munif's family. It is available on www.munif.org