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Volume 9 (1988) of *Al-Karmil* opens with Joseph Sadan's article 'The Epistle on Ugliness by Güzelhisari and the Writers Who Preceded Him in Describing Ugliness and Deformation.' Ugliness and physical defects of the human body are not suitable subjects for historiographers. Yet in medieval Arabic historiography one can find some interesting lists of lame and bald people. There are even special collections of biographies of blind personalities. Philologists and *Belles Lettres* (*adab*) writers were always interested in the exact terms, in pure old classical Arabic, for all the limbs and organs in the human body, as well as the defects relating to them. *Belles Lettres* writers play with the rich philological, narrative and anecdotal elements, and try to create, out of all this, suitable reading materials for the intellectuals ('*udabā'*). Al-Jāhiz, in the ninth century, pleads for the ugly and the deformed. On the other hand, when he intends to mock people he does not refrain from describing their physical ugliness. A special section in Joseph Sadan's article is consecrated to *adab* writers who inserted paragraphs, or whole chapters, on ugliness and deformation into their anthologies: mockery, balanced sometimes by the 'merits' of the ugly and the deformed. This section leads us to Güzelhisari of the Ottoman period, who was a Turkish scholar writing, in Arabic, on matters of religion. His *Epistle on Ugliness*, written in richly ornate prose, has a rhymed form without rhythm, but it is an exception among all his works (which are of a legal-religious nature). Did he decide to write this exceptional composition because of his *own* ugliness? In the last section of Sadan's article the reader will find the text of the *Epistle on Ugliness*, in an annotated edition, published here for the first time from the Istanbul manuscript.

In the second article, Sasson Somekh discusses the structure and language of *Yāsīn and Bahiyya* (1964), a 'novel in verse' by the Egyptian poet Najīb Surūr (1932-1978). This work, apparently produced under the influence of Pushkin's *Yugene Onegin*, is written in the style of 'free verse' (*shi'r hurr*), and its narrative scenes are composed in the *ramal* metre. In these scenes, the language is simple *fushhā*, interspersed with colloquial expressions, while the dialogue (also

composed in the *ramal* metre) is entirely in the Egyptian dialect. In both form and language, Surūr's work is an innovation in the context of Arabic narrative poetry, although its 'mixed' language bears a clear affinity to the prose fiction of Egyptian realists of the 1950s and 1960s.

In the third article of this volume, 'A Voyage Through the *Basīṭ* Metre,' David Semah concentrates on one of the metres of Arabic poetry. As early as in the pre-Islamic period, Arab poets used to divide by means of internal rhymes some lines in their poems so as to produce the rhyme scheme aaaB, cccB, etc. This technique was mainly used in poems based on the *basīṭ* metre. Abū Nuwās had a *basīṭ* poem entirely structured upon this technique. *Basīṭ* was also the metre used in the earliest known 'popular' (or non-classical) poetry in Arabic. David Semah tries to highlight the prominent role played by the *basīṭ* as a vehicle for innovation, and for composing poems that deviate in many respects from the canons of traditional poetry. It is also shown that the division of lines by internal rhymes results with unfamiliar prosodic combinations, leaving the readers with the false impression that the lines conform to foreign metric systems. Semah refers to a group of Andalusian strophic poems which have been claimed to be based on Roman stress-syllabic prosody, and tries to show that these poems have in fact *basīṭ* lines divided by internal rhymes, exactly like the famous poem of Abū Nuwās.

In the seventh volume of *Al-Karmil* (1986), Rafi Talmon dealt with the 'Zunbūriyya Question,' the most celebrated scholarly debate between the Basran and Kufan grammarians described in the medieval and contemporary Arabic literature. His conclusion was that its substantive details were nothing but literary fiction. In the present volume Talmon supplies further evidence for his thesis that this literary fiction was based on the meticulous comparative study of the writings of Sibawaihi and Farrā', made by the following generations, who were anxious to isolate points of difference in the teaching of the admired scholars of the past and polarize them as if they had been living controversies between the two schools of Kufa and Basra.

Next comes Ibrāhīm Ṭāhā's article 'Stream of Consciousness: a Study of a Story by Yūsuf Idrīs,' which deals with the short story *Li'ann al-Qiyāma lā Taqūm*. The theoretical framework of the study is based on Dorrit Cohn's distinction between three different styles of the stream of consciousness, namely, quoted monologue, narrated monologue and psycho-narration. The story in question employs the last two of these styles. The approach adopted in Ṭāhā's article requires that a practical study of the various styles of the stream of consciousness should be carried out together with a close analysis of character,

narrator, pronoun (point of view) and tense. There follows a detailed examination of these elements as found in Idrīs's story. Ṭāhā concludes his article by explaining why the psycho-narration style has a greater part than the narrated monologue in this story.

Under the title 'Form and Content in the Stories of Zakariyya Tāmir,' Yāsīn Kattāna examines the language and literary techniques used by the Syrian writer Zakariyya Tāmir, who began his career in 1956 when he published his first short story, and whose fifth collection of stories appeared in 1978. As for the subject matter, there was a shift of focus in Tāmir's work: the preoccupation with universal themes related to the existential concerns of mankind as a whole gave way to the treatment of the specifically Syrian or Arab scene. Kattāna sets out to discover and analyse the ways in which language, point of view and structure develop in order to meet the requirements of the changing content.

Sadok Masliyah's article, 'The Egyptian Short Stories on the October War,' attempts to bring forth, discuss and evaluate the literary merits and shortcomings of these stories. The author concludes that only a score of October stories combine skillfully political messages and artistic features, as the majority resemble military reports, press interrogations and speeches. The overall effect of the ensemble of images is cumulative and adds weight to whole only in a small number of plots. Yet, the writers have produced stories which reflect the feelings of the Egyptian people, stressing the fighters' victories, courage, pride, confidence, sacrifice and taking revenge. Feeling committed to the national cause, these writers compiled works of political ideology which has been promoted by the vast majority of Arab men of letters and the press. In this respect these stories may be regarded as an additional source of Arab outlook on the October 73 war.

This volume's book review section is devoted to recent publications dealing with modern Arabic poetry. Rubin Snir writes on two books. The first is the Arabic translation of Samuel Moreh's book *Modern Arabic Poetry, 1800-1970*. This translation appeared in Cairo in 1986 under the Arabic title *al-Shi'r al-'Arabī al-Ḥadīth, 1800-1970, Taṭawwur Ashkālīh wa-Mawḍū'ātīh bi-Ta'thīr al-Adab al-Gharbī*. The second is 'Abdallah al-Ghaḍḍāmī's book *al-Ṣawt al-Qadīm al-Jadīd, Dirāsāt fī al-Jūḍūr al-'Arabiyya li-Mūsīqā al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo 1987). There is also a review of another book by 'Adnān al-'Awwādī, *Lughat al-Shi'r al-Ḥadīth fī al-'Irāq*, which appeared in Baghdad in 1985, by Sulaymān Jubrān.