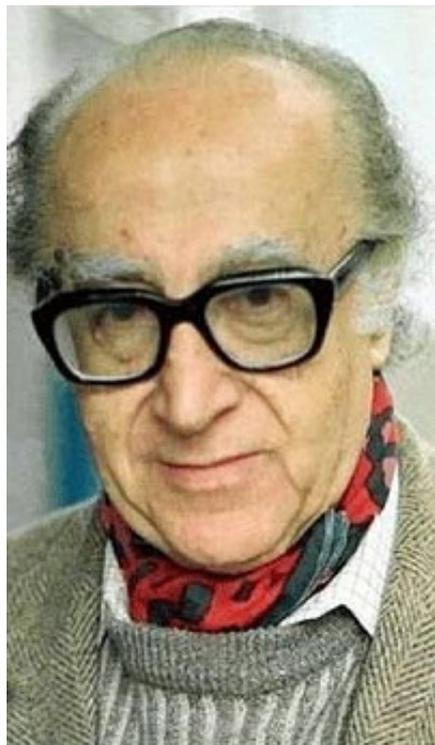


Jabra Ibrahim Jabra



Personal Info

Years in active : From 1948 To 1994

Country of resident : Iraq

City : Baghdad

Gender : Male

Date of birth : 10/10/1926

Information

Palestinian author of Syriac-Orthodox origin born in Bethlehem at the time of the British Mandate.

Educated in Jerusalem and, later, at Cambridge University, he settled in Iraq following the events of 1948.

Poet, novelist, translator and literary critic, he has also translated some English works into Arabic, including James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and some of the work of T. S. Eliot. He has produced around 70 books consisting of novels and translated material, and his own work has been translated into more than twelve languages

The motive behind Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's translation project and literary criticism is to enlighten the Arab audience with the creative works of world known authors. Jabra's translated texts to Arabic, excluding the Shakespearians, were relatively limited. He translated Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* which had a vast impact on the theater in general, specifically on the frivolous theater genre. This play had also aroused numerous intellectual questions regarding the positive and the metaphysical realities. Jabra, being the first among Arab intellectual pioneers, supports modernity. He is the only author to translate William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and in the introduction he concluded

his point of view on Faulkner's complicated works. He deconstructed the novel to make it more comprehensible to most audiences who find difficulties in understanding it. Palestinian novelist Ghassan Kanafani's *All that's left to you* was influenced by Jabra's translation of this novel. Jabra also translated 12 American and English novels and mounted them in one book named "July without Rain" including a glossary about each author. In addition, he had a great passion for prose dedicated to children, therefore, he translated two of the most famous literary works that of Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, and French novelist La Fontaine's story collection. The common feature of Jabra's translated works is philosophical and creativity.

Some other works that he translated are: *Pre-Philosophy* by Henry Frankfurt and Others; *Sight and Insights* by Alexander Elliot; *The Author and His Profession* by 10 American critics; *The Life in Drama* by Eric Bentley; *The Myth and the Symbol* by several critics; *Axel's Castle* by Edmund Wilson; *Articles* by 14 American critics about poet Dylan Thomas; *Albert Camus* by Germen Perry; and *The Tower of Babel* by André Barot

Achievements and Awards

Jabra's massive contribution is dedicated to the translation of Shakespeare's works which are equivalent to that of Russian translator Boris Pasternak's translation. Such works are that of Hamlet's tragedy; King Lear, Macbeth, Coriolanus, the Tempest, Twelfth Night and Sonnet 50. Jabra not only translated Shakespeare's work but also exclusive studies and bibliographical works on these tragedies such as Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, John Dover Wilson's *What's happening in Hamlet* and Janet Delone.

Due to the fact that he referred back to previous incorrect fossilized translation, Jabra faced many problems during his translations. Although Jabra added notes in the beginning indicating these errors, he chose to keep the widespread incorrect translation such as that of Khalil Motran's

translation of Othello's name to Ateel but changed insignificant errors such as the incorrect translation of the name Dedmona to Desdemona. Moreover, Jabra added notes explaining sentences that do not fit the general context of the text such as Hamlet's mother's description of her son as a fat person.

Jabra explained that during one of his plays, Hamlet took the role of a fat person who was Queen Elizabeth's favorite role. Yet Jabra could not escape critics such as Gali Shukri, a well known critic in the Arab world, who implies that in some cases Jabra's translations were not so accurate. And Iraqi poet Sargon Boulus criticizes Jabra for removing one of Othello's sentences "...the circumcised dog." In Boulus's opinion, Jabra removed this line because it may provoke the Islamic community.

In other cases, Boulus claims that Jabra can not present the Shakespearian spirit in the sonnets. The general reader may sense that Jabra's translation is closer to the English spirit when using parallel sentences whereas Boulus' translation is closer to the Arabic Abbasite texts.

Information provided courtesy of www.allforpalestine.org