

In an interview, he revealed that he wrote when provoked, usually politically, and that the literary existence of his characters was tied to specific events and people. Or that when he played with narratives intertextually, and especially from the centuries-long Arabic tradition, he did this "intentionally, cold-bloodedly," to "give information from our heritage to the new generations, in order that they will respect it" (Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas, "Literature and Politics: A Conversation with Emile Habiby," *Mundus Arabicus*, 5 [1992]: 11-46). Politics and pedagogy aside, the sense of play was always there in Habiby's numerous narratives, from drama to novels and short stories.

Habiby's most publicized novel was translated into English as *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist: A Palestinian Who Became a Citizen of Israel* (Translated by Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Trevor LeGassick. New York, 1982). The pessoptimist in his own modern picaresque way is a most unforgettable hero who can bring at once laughter and tears to his reader's eyes. But he is a hero deeply embedded in Palestinian and Israeli history and culture. Years before Habiby's death, I stood on a pier at Acre, staring at the Mediterranean, as Emile pointed to the spot where Saeed's creatures from outer space landed. The narrative had never been so alive for me as it was at that moment. *Ikhtayyi*, the novel, was an ode to Haifa, to the old Haifa that Habiby knew as a child, to the Haifa that was not polluted, as it is now. Anyone who reads that text should not be surprised that Habiby wanted his tombstone to read: "Emile Habiby - Remained in Haifa."

The fact that Habiby had difficulty writing in January 1996 should have been a sign. In an earlier interview, he talked about writing: "We writers think that this is the way to overpower death." He even related a conversation with the famous Palestinian poet Mahmūd Darwīsh, in which Darwīsh asked him about death. Habiby adds: "I told him that I don't want to die. How will one not die, I said. I want to be remembered by my writings." FEDWA MALTI-DOUGLAS

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RAPHAEL PATAI (1911-1996) died on July 20th in Tucson, AZ. Perhaps best known in modern Middle East studies for his *Golden River to the Golden Road: Society, Culture and Change in the Middle East* (1962) and his controversial *The Arab Mind* (1976), Patai authored over three dozen books on scripture as folklore, on ancient and modern Jewish identity, on Jews in Hungary, where he was born, as well as *The Seed of Abraham: Jews and Arabs in Contact and Conflict* (1986) on Israel-Palestine.

Patai was an original in what for many is a receding prehistory of contemporary Middle East anthropology. Born into a scholar's family and brought up in the rabbinical culture and Zionist politics of eastern Europe, he earned a doctorate and qualified as a rabbi at the University of Budapest. Like Bronislaw Malinowski and others from Franz Boas to Ernest Gellner who were rooted in the scholarly and intellectual traditions of Mitteleuropa, Patai "migrated" both physically and intellectually into then-new fields: in his case it was not to

London or New York or Chicago where modern cultural anthropology was forged but to interwar Palestine, where he received the first PhD from Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1936 and directed a center for Palestine research. When war following the establishment of Israel cut short this research, Patai moved to the US, where he taught at colleges in New York and Philadelphia and at Farleigh Dickinson University.

Patai's works were searches for metanarratives focused on culture rather than by the methods of then-professionalizing anthropology. His roots in folklore scholarship, and in its 19th-century programs to retrieve and relive a collective "mind" as metaphorical author, were demonstrated not only methodologically but also in a sense and a talent for story-telling. To the anthropology that was becoming a social science, his "mind" metaphor and penchant for sweeping generalization were anachronistic in their own time. *The Arab Mind* (1976) became, for anthropologists rooted in social science and modern linguistics, the negative example, since assimilated to "orientalism," instead of a point of departure. Still, the attempt to infuse more, and more diversely motivated, life than only that of intellect into "culture" was part of the broad movement across many disciplines to the everyday and from the Annales school to postmodernists. Beyond a broadened notion of culture, and of *anthropos*, such as had inspired Malinowski and many since, and beyond conceptions of continuities across time and space such as had inspired Franz Boas (or Braudel), what came through such parsings was a retold story by a master of the story-teller's art, even more in *The Golden River to Golden Road*.

Patai's style was more a dialogue with sources than an interrogation of them in the manner of a Rankean historian. One senses the rabbinical tradition at work and a sense of personal engagement before narrative became suspect to post-modern minds grappling with their own encounters with dialogue and its ever intractable ambiguities.

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