Jackie Pascale Abstract

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| It can be wholly beneficial for a reader to understand a writer’s cultural and historical background while analyzing a text. Even more, it is useful for readers to apply biographical and historical approaches while comparing two texts. Specifically, it seems worthwhile to use the biographical contexts of Palestinian writer, Laila Al-Sa’ih, while comparing her poem, “Intimations of Anxiety,” to French writer, Jean Follain’s poem, “Face the Animal,” because both writers construct their poems in a way that highlight postwar emotion. For starters, Al-Sa’ih was born in 1936 in Palestine (Cooke 16). According to one of her written biographies, “‘Intimations of Anxiety’ taken from her latest work, Roots That Do Not Depart (1984) is her poetic diary about the 1982 Israeli invasion of Beirut” (16). Similarly, Follain’s poem, “Face the Animal,” also includes historical influence from war in France. Follain was born in Normandy, France, living from 1903-1971 (*Poetry Foundation*). Living through both World Wars where France was a world power, it becomes clear that “Jean Follain’s work is inextricably linked to Canisy, the small Normandy town where he was born in 1903… World War I changed the social patterns and the psychic landscape of Europe beyond recognition” (Bankier 28). Therefore, both Al-Sa’ih and Follain infuse their poetry with personal and historical context from their respective cultural experiences in their respective countries. However, “Intimations of Anxiety” and “Face the Animal” are comparable in themes of anxiety and fear while also different in terms of the poems' tone and outlook. |
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