



Research:

To Strengthen Culture
of Knowledge

Programme's 4th Edition

Researchers' Summary 2017

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The ideas and opinions presented in the research summaries contained within this booklet do not necessarily reflect Ettijahat- Independent Culture's point of view.

About *Ettijahat- Independent Culture*

Ettijahat- Independent Culture is a cultural institution promoting independent cultural productivity in Syria and the wider Arab Region. Ettijahat stimulates growth and development of independent culture by maintaining strong, mutually beneficial relationships between cultural actors and supporting, enabling, and encouraging greater creative and artistic output from Syria and the Arab world. Ettijahat strives to reflect the priorities of Syrian cultural producers and beneficiaries and always maintains a high standard of independence and direct response to local, regional, and international developments in the fields of Syria's current situation, and cultural policy as a whole.

The organization has delivered a wealth of opportunities to talented young artists, academics, and initiatives under its diverse range of programs. In doing so, Ettijahat hopes to shift the conventional notion of culture (from part of the Syrian service sector) gradually towards a greater understanding of culture as part of the development sector.

Vision

We look towards a plural and diverse Syria that is intellectually productive, artistically genuine, and where culture is the inalienable right of every citizen.

Mission and General Objectives

Ettijahat- Independent Culture is a Syrian cultural organization founded in the end of 2011. *Ettijahat* seeks to activate and render the role of independent culture and arts more positive, in the process of cultural, political, and social change. *Ettijahat* tries to achieve that by supporting artists and undertakers of cultural initiatives, enabling young researchers, working to build consensus and alliances between individuals and cultural institutions, promoting the arts and artists through regional and international platforms, and helping Syrian communities wherever they are have access to culture and arts.

Our general objectives include:

- To improve the general environment for cultural practices in Syria, including the development of cultural policy, the general directions for culture and arts, and the diversification of funding resources and methods.
- To support young artists and the independent cultural sector by providing opportunities to produce, network, and develop skills, knowledge, and experience.
- To integrate creative and cultural work with social change through cultural initiatives that contain a dimension of development and aim to improve living conditions, especially amongst the most marginalized groups of people affected by the political developments.

About Research: To Strengthen Culture of Knowledge

This annual capacity-building programme aims to provide an opportunity of full-time devotion for young researchers to research within the field of cultural studies. The research aspect of the programme is directed towards young researchers, university graduates in the fields of culture and urban geography, participants in the arts and creative and social fields, research institutions, regional and international cultural institutions, and all other Syrian cultural activists. The programme seeks to enhance the researchers' skills, giving them guidance and access to accomplish their research project. The project will probably be their first other than their academic studies. Experienced cultural researchers, who constitute the scientific committee of the project, will directly supervise the projects. The programme's annual edition will last for 12 months and consists of three key phases: 1) Selection of young researchers and preparation of training curriculum, 2) Training and skill enhancement, and 3) Completion of actual research supervised by experienced researchers.

The programme will focus on current topics in cultural research that are relevant to the situation in Syria, especially changes in the perspectives of Syrian artists about their relation to the society and the transformations it is witnessing.

At the end of the programme, a selection committee of experts and experienced researchers will be formed to evaluate the research, writing a report that will provide guidance and advice to the young researchers about their work. In accordance with their assessment *Ettijahat- Independent Culture* will electronically publish a selection of researches and extracts of all the research translations in a booklet. This activity will completely depend on the scientific committee's assessment of the quality of the completed research.

Objectives

- To build the capacities and knowledge of 10 young researchers in different fields of cultural research.
- To complete 10 innovative research pieces to be used as primary indicators of social change, and which will remain as valuable historic commentaries of that time in years to come.
- To design and implement a rigorous and constructive training programme, led by an expert Scientific Committee, who will also supervise and guide the participants in the completion of their research.

Donor

Mimeta - Centre for Culture Sector Development and Arts Cooperation – focuses on supporting the service providers to the arts- and creative sectors in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We are aiming at strengthening structures through organization, information and advocacy, through platforms and mobility and through the development of creative economies.

Mimeta strongly believes in securing and fostering the moral and material interests of country's cultural production and expressions. These interests constitute a significant part of every nation's assets and may represent a major contribution to development, to human rights and democracy, and to the eradication of poverty.

Mimeta's main priorities are:

Democratization: Foster improvement in structures and the organizing of the arts sector.

Mobility: Foster intercultural cooperating of the arts sector.

Creativity and Economy: Foster cooperating between culture and the business sector.

This programme was accomplished with Mimeta - Centre for Culture Sector Development and Arts Cooperation

The Selection Committee

Faten Farhat

Farhat is a researcher in the field of cultural policies and the Director of the Palestinian Observatory for Cultural Policies established under the National Task Force for Cultural Policies, Palestine – Al Mawred Al Thaqafy. She is currently a cultural policy expert in the European Regional Project – MED Culture, 2017-2015, and an international expert for the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Farhat is an active member of the Riwa Initiative - the Palestinian Community Innovative Events Fund; and she is currently a consultant for the UNESCO Office in Palestine and the Drosos Foundation in Switzerland.

Hassan Abbas

Abbas holds a PhD from Université de La Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris III in Modern Literature and is the President of the Syrian League for Citizenship. He is a Professor and Researcher at the French Institute of the Middle East (IFPO) in Damascus. He was also the Director of cultural activities at Institut Français d'Etudes Arabes de Damas from 1992 till 2006. He is a Co-founder and executive member of the human rights association in Syria *l'Association des droits de l'homme en Syrie*. He has published numerous books and scholarly articles in Arabic, French, and German.

Marianne Noujaim

Noujaim has a PhD in Theater studies from Université de La Sorbonne Nouvelle -Paris III and a PhD in French Literature from the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik. She currently teaches at the Lebanese University in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences.

The Mentors

Jamal Chehayed

Chehayed has a PhD in comparative literature from Université de La Nouvelle Sorbonne, Paris III, France in 1974. He worked as a professor at the Damascus University. Currently, he is a researcher at the French Institute for Middle Eastern Studies and a visiting professor at the College de France. He has written five books in Arabic and French, and translated 17 books, to and from French. Among his books: *Memory in Contemporary Arab Novels* (2011), and *Rhetoric of Modernity in Literature* (2004). His translations included two parts of Proust's seven volumes' work, Lamartine's *Journey to the Orient*, two volumes of *The Book of Method* by Edgar Morin, and *Dictionary of Epistemology*. He focuses on narration and modern criticism.

Hassan Abbas: Biography listed in the Selection Committee section.

Husam Al Saad

Al Saad holds a Doctorate in Sociology from the Damascus University, Faculty of Arts – Sociology Department, 2002. He worked as a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts and at the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts – Theater Studies Department, Damascus, 2014-2002. He also worked as an editor of the Syrian file in the *Akhbar Al Aan* website, 2015-2013. Al Saad published several books and studies, including *The Image of Women in Contemporary Religious Discourse*, published by the Arab Women's Organization, 2006; *Guests of Postmodernism – A Sociological Study of Contemporary Israeli Culture*, published by Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, 2008; and *The Reality of Syrian Working Women In Rihaniya City*, published by Hermon Center for Contemporary Studies, 2017. Currently, Al Saad is the Director of the Social Research Unit at the Hermon Center for Contemporary Studies.

Marie Elias

Elias holds a PhD in Theatre from France and is a professor in the Faculty of French Literature and the Faculty of Letters at the Damascus University. She was the Head of the Faculty of French Literature in 2003 and was a Lecturer and supervisor for students' theses at the Higher Institute for Dramatic Arts in Damascus until 2001. This involved reading dramatic and theatre texts as well as theatre criticism. From 2007 up till now she has contributed to the drafting and updating of the teaching curriculum and admission exams in the department for theatre studies at the Higher Institute for Dramatic Arts. Elias is a lecturer at the Jesuit University in Beirut – Lebanon and is a member of the editorial board for the specialized refereed Magazine entitled *Life Theatre* issued by the Ministry of Culture in Syria until 2005.

Mayada Hussein

Hussein is a professor of Theater in the Arab Region at the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts. She supervised several theses for students of Theater Studies Department at the Higher Institute

Arts in Damascus since 1992. She held the position of the Head of Theater Studies Department at the Institute, 2012-2007. Hussein is also a Professor of Theatrical Literature at the Art School in Damascus. Throughout her teaching career, she supervised several theses for students of Theater Studies Department at the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts.

Omar Al Ameri

Al Ameri is a Jordanian poet and critic. He holds a Doctorate in Arabic Literature and Criticism from the Yarmouk University in Jordan. He had worked as a lecturer at the University of Philadelphia in Jordan, and is currently an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law in Kuwait. Al Ameri has written several studies in the field of literary criticism and poetry, including two books under printing, namely: *Alienation in the Poetry of Mohammed Al Qaisi*, and *The Structure of Poetic Language of Qasim Haddad*, in addition to many studies published in Arab and Jordanian periodicals. Moreover, Al Ameri published two poetry collections, which received several awards, including the Jordan Poet Award for 2013 and the Sharjah Award for Arab Creativity in 2000.

The Researchers

Guevara Namer

The Image of Minorities in Syrian Cinema – The Kurdish Community as a Model

Hiba Mehrez

The Syrian Cultural Product in Exile – Between Democratic Integration and Acculturation

Jihan Katish

Art Production and Educational Policies – A Study of Qualification Methods of Technical Cadres and their Relationship with Labor Market

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The Tragic Mask in the Poetry of Nuri Al Jarrah After 2011

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Features of Contemporary Children's Theater in Syria

Mohammad Aljssem

Managing the Diversity of Cultural Components in Syria – Arabs and Kurds as a Model

Mudar Al Ramadan

The Policy of the Directorate of Theaters and Music towards the Independent Theater in Syria

Rasha Salah

Cultural Resources Associated with Wheat – Sweida Governorate as a Model

Wael Salem

Syrian TV Drama – The Relationship between Writers and Production Companies.

The Image of Minorities in
Syrian Cinema – The Kurdish
Community as a Model
Guevara Namer



Namer holds a degree in photography and published theatre studies at the Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts in Damascus. Since 2009 she has worked in supporting and empowering documentary filmmaking through her work at the DOX BOX association in Syria and Germany.

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About the research

In recent decades, Syrian cinema has contributed to establishing and instilling specific images of minority ethnic or racial communities. This research is based on the assumption that the stereotype produced is incapable of accurately reflecting the image of these communities, especially because it does not take into account the originality of these images, or the extent to which these cultures are often influenced by the cultures of other communities that have lived by their side for centuries. The research discusses the results of generalizing these images, through the study of a model, which is the image of the Kurdish community in the Syrian cinema.

Our lack of knowledge of the components of Syrian society to which we belong has often prompted us to ask self-evident questions about each other, but what have we done to answer these questions or to ask even deeper questions? The lack of knowledge of the other and claiming knowledge of their culture had an adverse effect on most members of this community, which became clearer after the outbreak of protests in Syria in 2011.

In its quest to monitor the image of Kurdish community in Syrian cinema, the research begins with a series of questions, including: How did Syrian cinema portray ethnic and racial minorities in general and the Kurdish community in particular? Did this image reflect the true nature of this community? Or did it fall into the trap of stereotyping? How did the Syrian revolution affect this way of expression? The research also compares the situation before and after 2011.

The research is divided into two parts, the first of which is a study of cinematic models dealing with the image of minorities in general and the Kurdish community before 2011 in particular. The research covers the production and social conditions that accompanied the production of films, starting with the production mechanism, the screening conditions, and the role of political censorship in drawing this image by often banning films that had addressed the Kurdish community in a way different from the common and typical image, where they stand in conflict with the narrative of the regime.

The second part of the research is devoted to the study of this image in films produced after 2011, in light of the great changes that have taken place in the Syrian cinema, especially in terms of production mechanisms, and the development of independent documentary cinema as one of the most popular expressions of current events. These developments were accompanied by a change in the way the components of Syrian society in general, and the Kurdish community in particular, were expressed. The research seeks to trace the effects of these changes on the image of minorities in these films.

In studying the models, the research examines the sociological circumstances under which the film was made and their impact on the nature of the resulting image, such as the location of the filmmaker, that is to say, whether or not he/she is outside or inside Syria, or whether he/she belongs to the ethnic group that he/she discusses in the film. The research draws some conclusions, including that the local filmmaker who had

decided to visit the Kurdish areas and monitor the daily life there may show a clear state of alienation in addressing the characters, the place, and the endless details of this life. The film of a filmmaker in exile shows a state of alienation from the whole of this life. The film of a filmmaker in exile shows a state of alienation from the whole country and the whole context of changes occurring in this country. Perhaps the comparison between the two cases of alienation can expose the extent of our true knowledge of the other, or our true desire to know this other and to approach them more through the cinema.

The research concludes with identifying some aspects of the image of the Kurdish community as presented in the Syrian cinema, comparing this image before and after 2011, and focusing on the main factors that had contributed to the formation of this image and how it has transformed over time. These factors relate to the conditions of production and how they have changed after the revolution. They also relate to the role of artistic and political censorship and how it has influenced the cinematic outcome of an entire country over decades. The research also sheds light on today's intensive production of documentary films, which have become a feature of Syrian cinema in recent years. This new wave of films express the desire of filmmakers to document the shifts in Syrian society and to monitor its image away from the stereotypes and frames that were adopted by cinema when it was confined to the existing political system.

The Syrian Cultural Product in
Exile – Between Democratic
Integration and Acculturation
Hiba Mehrez



Mehrez is a 2013 graduate of the Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts in Damascus in the Department of Drama Studies. She participated in 2011 in the writing of the texts on play readings presented at the Saadallah Wannous Theater at the Higher Institute. She worked as a dramaturge and an Assistant Director for two theatre plays. The first, *Visit of the inner self* was directed Hussein Khaddour in 2015, as an adaptation of the German writer Patrick Süskind's text *The Dove*. The second play, *Paradise* was directed by Ibrahim Jumaa in 2015 from the text *The speechless waiter* by the British writer Harold Pinter. She has published an article in the Egyptian magazine *Our Theater* on the image of women in the texts of Saadallah Wannous in 2015, and an article on the novel by the Afghani writer Atiq Rahimi in 2015. She also participated in many workshops on theatrical work held in Damascus between the years 2013 and 2014. Mehrez wrote a scenario for two short films entitled *Smoke* shown in Damascus, and *Blind images* displayed in Cairo.

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About the research

In the past six years, Syria has experienced an unprecedented migration rate. The country's political map has changed, as well as the demographic map of the region. Millions of Syrians have fled to various countries, most notably the bordering countries, such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, in addition to countries of the European Union. They formed new communities under the label of "refugees". The countries hosting large numbers of Syrians are influenced by this influx and have begun to show many changes in their policies to adapt to or exploit this circumstance. Such changes occurred most notably in the countries of the European Union and became a subject of public debates, especially in Germany, which received the largest number of Syrian refugees in the European Union. Integration as a term has controversially reemerged in public life, where prolonged studies are dedicated to discuss how these refugees could be integrated into their new countries.

This research discusses the concept of integration of Syrians in exile today, and tries to answer the following questions: What is the reality of the Syrian cultural product in exile today? How does it manifest itself? What is its relationship with the new cultural situation experienced by Syrians today? The research takes Germany as a model for this study, and adopts the term "Democratic Integration" as first presented by the French sociologist Alain Touraine, through which he defines three modes of integration: the original environment of the immigrant, the new environment to which he/she has moved, as well as the individual ego of the immigrant. The research seeks to uncover the impact of each of these modes on the general image of the cultural product in order to reach a clear perception of the impact of integration on the life and work of a specific model of Syrians in Germany who are working in the cultural field.

We assume that the migration of workers in the cultural field is not new to Syrians. Naturally, there is a huge difference between their numbers now and then; nonetheless, many Syrian immigrants had been living in Germany and other countries before 2011, and had experienced or are still experiencing the stage of integration and its related difficulties. Therefore, the first part of the research attempts to examine the Syrian cultural product in exile at different periods of time, and to present examples of the works of two Syrian artists who have lived and produced their works in Germany and addressed the subject of integration and acculturation, the painter Marwan Kassab Bashi and the poet Adel Qarashouli.

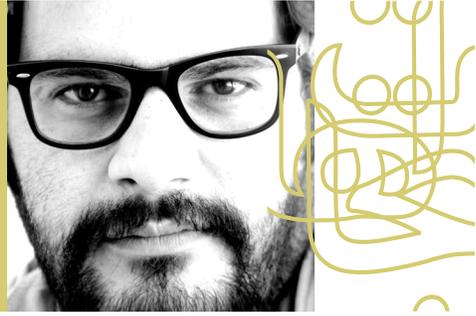
In the second part, we discuss the Syrian young cultural production in Germany today, although our attempt to explore this production may seem absurd at first because every day, there is a possibility for a new work. As a result of this momentum of production, we chose to cover the time period after 2011 by examining four models: two artists working in the field of visual arts, namely Iman Hasbani and Ali Qaf, and two writers, namely Mohammed Al Matrouf and Rasha Abbas. The research concludes with drawing a perception of how two generations of Syrian immigrants in Germany deal with the concept of integration through their cultural productions and how these productions affect the success or failure of the integration policies adopted by these countries.

In pre2011- samples, we see a gradual presentation of cultural products, which adopt the model of democratic integration. The production process of the cultural product had gone through fluctuating stages relating to the three definitions of (we - they - I), where the "we" was in a precedent stage the "I" and "they". The "other" entered into the equation at a later stage. After experiencing some form of conflict or interchange, the product presented came full of the "I", which also included the "we", and at the time, the "they" element became clearly present.

On the other hand, young intellectuals who migrated after 2011 relied on individualism and the ego, and tried to address the general "other" i.e. the other human, and simultaneously included in their work the "we", the "I", and the "other". The large number of Syrians receiving Syrian cultural works in exile alongside the German or non-Syrian cultural works is a new equation, which has influenced the nature and themes of works produced. In one form or another, we see that the young Syrian intellectual in Germany has started from where the former Syrian intellectual in Germany has ended, but with greater momentum and new energy, heralding a special and unique cultural situation that will result from this integration or acculturation.

Art Production and Educational Policies – A Study of Qualification Methods of Technical Cadres and their Relationship with Labor Market

Jihan Katish



Katish is a lecturer and the Head of the Theatrical Techniques Department at the Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts, from where he graduated specializing in lighting design. He has directed a multi-media project at the Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts entitled (under the sun) in collaboration with the students of the Department, which was the first experiment of its kind conducted in Syria. Katish has worked on many of the Syrian and Arab theatrical works (*The thirteenth night - For a yes or a no – The Boxer - The Marriage of Figaro - Readings on the road*). He has also worked as the lighting and photography director for many documentaries and dramatic films including (*Yasmin – The ATM – A cup of coffee - Emptiness*). He participated in numerous television programs in Syrian and international channels.

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About the research

The Department of Dramatic Techniques was opened at the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in 2007. It was aimed at qualifying cadres capable of dealing with the technical aspect of artwork, specifically in light design and sound engineering. The first batch of students graduated in 2011, coinciding with the beginning of the events in Syria. Since then, the number of graduates exceeded forty, but only one was employed at the Directorate of Theaters and Music, and the rest had to work in specializations unrelated to their study and qualification, or travel abroad.

In this research, we try to monitor the reality of cultural institutions in Syria through a specific model, which focuses on the Dramatic Techniques Department at the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus and the impact of the recent changes and events in Syria on the reality of the institution. We also seek to monitor the reasons behind the marginalization of the graduates of the department, and to understand why they have not been employed by cultural institutions in Syria.

We pose a number of specific questions and attempt to answer them. For example, why does the market of Syrian cultural art production – including theater, cinema and television – ignore the graduates of the Dramatic Techniques Department? Is it just a defect in the marketing of graduates? Or is there a defect in the scientific qualification of the students of this department, making them less efficient than the current technical cadres working in various fields of artistic production?

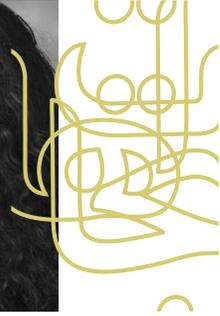
The research is divided into two chapters; the first chapter includes a comprehensive review of the reality of the art labor market in Syria since 1990s until 2016, and the nature of production and its mechanisms. The period covered by the research is divided into three phases: 1990 (1st 2011-2004 (2 ;2003-, along with all the transformations that contributed to the consequent flourishing of this sector and its openness to new horizons that were previously unavailable; 2016-2011 (3, and how the political events have affected the reality of art labor market in these years. In the second chapter, we examine the various methods of qualifying technical cadres in Syria, whether through direct practice or through official educational institutions, such as the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts. We also look at the impact of these methods on the reality of labor market and qualifying technical cadres who are capable of maintaining the continuity and development of art production.

Through an overview of the reality of art production in the period monitored, we find that the unsteady political events and circumstances have led to rapid radical shifts in the course and development of the production process. The technical revolution, which occurred worldwide during the past two decades, has also contributed to the development of artistic techniques. Such developments made it necessary to think about qualifying new cadres to match the needs of the market, which were later abandoned due to the rejection of proposed ideas and solutions by the successive and dissimilar administrations in charge of the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in the last few years. Moreover, this has coincided with the stormy political events we have

experienced in recent years and the great transformations in the reality of cadres qualification and labor market.

The research includes nine annexes that provide statistics related to the artwork and events that took place in Syria during the period covered by the research, such as the number of art production companies working in the field of TV, cinema, or theater and the number of theater and cinema festivals and other events. We chose not to mention these statistics in the core of the research, as they are not directly related to the problem but rather documents that have been collected, and that could be consulted, utilized and constantly updated for the benefit of other research related to this topic.

The Tragic Mask in the Poetry
of Nuri Al Jarrah After 2011
Kholoud Charaf



Charaf graduated from the Medical Institute of the University of Damascus with a degree in laboratories work. He has practiced in the medical field and worked in both the fields of germs and toxins, drugs and DNA, and has participated in several seminars on DNA in Qalmoun University. She is currently studying Arabic at Damascus University. Passages from her poetry book titled *The Corpse of the Butterfly*, issued by the publishing house Dar El Takween in 2016, were translated into French. She writes literary articles in the UAE's Journal of heritage, for Dar Al Mada's publishing house, and for other magazines and newspapers.

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About the research

In poetry, the term "Tragic Masks" refers to the presence of tragic characters in the poem, which have poetic symbolism and connotations. Tragic masks were first present in ancient poetry during the flourishing of Greek theater; however, their presence in modern poetry is a new phenomenon in which modern poetry takes on a special pattern to emerge from the self and the individual to the general and the human.

This research sheds light on the repercussions of the Syrian tragedy and its manifestations in the post2011- poems of the Syrian poet Nuri Al Jarrah. The research seeks to uncover the mystical, religious, philosophical, literary, and historical symbols embodied in the tragic masks used in Al Jarrah's poetry and their meanings. It also explores the artistic and stylistic techniques employed in the poems in order to identify the effects of current events on a model of contemporary Syrian poetry by focusing on the subject of the "tragic mask" and its uses in poems.

The main questions in this research are: How did Nuri Al Jarrah use the technique of the "tragic mask" to express the ongoing Syrian tragedy? What are the possibilities of using this technique in modern Arabic poetry and how is it compatible with the peculiarity of this poetry?

The research is divided into two chapters, each of which is divided into different sections and topics. The first chapter includes a theoretical definition of the "tragic mask", its use in poetry since its inception, and how tragic heroes –known by human experience– have turned into masks and symbols used by poets to express their ideas. The first chapter finally discusses the different and various manifestations of the "tragic mask" in modern and contemporary Arabic poetry.

The second chapter includes an applied study of the poems selected as a sample, i.e. the poems of the Syrian poet Nuri Al Jarrah. It also includes critical and analytical readings according to specific topics, such as the poetic texture of the tragic mask, the intellectual content of the poems and mechanisms of using the tragic mask to express this content, and the mechanism of transforming the tragic mask from a stylistic technique to a formative principle in the poems under study. In this chapter, we also describe the aesthetic values included in this method, i.e. the way tragic masks are formed and how poetic texts are built around these masks. The chapter uncovers the nature of the tragic mask used and how the poet employs tragic elements in the construction of a poetic text characterized by the presence of tragedy despite its modernist nature.

The research concludes with a number of results and ideas related to the characteristics of this experience as expressed in the work of poet Nuri Al Jarrah in particular, and in the Arab and Syrian contemporary poetry in general. We find that the use of "tragic mask" technique in contemporary poems often stems from the personal experience of the poet, who reduces the human experience to reflect the tragedy we are living in, i.e. the Syrian tragedy. Through this technique, the poet can relate Syria's pain to the

universal collective pain and the history of the mythical tragedy of the tragic character represented by the mask, such as the use of the characters of Prophet Noah, Qabil, and Abel to express the current Syrian tragedy.

The Syrian tragedy is reflected in the poems that accompanied the outbreak of events in Syria, where mythological, religious and literary symbols have been presented in different ways and levels by the "tragic masks" used. These poems represent a literary document on the tragic experience of the Syrian people, and they stand as a literary witness to the most horrendous human catastrophe in the 21st century. Consequently, the "tragic mask" in poetry has developed from being a stylistic technique before the beginning of the Syrian events to a formative principle after their occurrence.

Features of Contemporary
Children's Theater in Syria
Manal Ghanem



Ghanem is an archeologist and restoration expert, having worked on the Syrian historical sites with the joint Syrian-French missions in prehistoric times in - 2002 2006. She has documented Syrian paintings in all sites and museums in Syria between 2003 and 2007. She has experience working with the European Centre for the building of the Byzantine and the University of Damascus, a project to document the Syrian mosaic. She is the Director of the Department of programs and courses in the Syrian International Academy of Media since 2007 and has coordinated and organized the Syrian Secretariat of the Damascus Capital of Culture in 2008. She has moderated and trained participants in interactive theater with the Syrian Trust for Development Foundation 2011 - 2009. She participated in a workshop in Dramaturgy with the German dramaturge Frank Radats 2009, and with Bruce Myers in 2008 on the analysis of Shakespeare's work. She holds an award with the media of Al Jazeera media Center for training and development - Al Jazeera television in 2007 as a program presenter.

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About the research

Children's Theater has a special peculiarity that distinguishes it from adult theater. It plays an educational role, as well as being an artistic and creative production that cannot ignore the requirement of communicating with and entertaining its audience. Therefore, it must be characterized by specific features that correspond to the nature of its audience, such as keeping away from ambiguity and complexity, focusing on being easily understood by children, and facilitating the interaction with them. Children's Theater also needs to take into account the impact that ideas can have on children, their convictions, and their view of the world, and must deal responsibly with the content presented during theatrical performances.

Children's Theater in Syria is still present despite all the difficulties facing cultural work in general and theater in particular. Many entities are still producing and presenting children's theater. In an initial overview of these theatrical performances, we often note the absence of a clear strategy that takes into account the peculiarity of child audience, in addition to the lack of specific criteria that contribute to controlling the contents of these performances and the ideas that may have a negative impact on children, especially in light of the current dangerous situation in Syria, and the spread of violent and extremist ideas, taking into account that children are easily influenced by such ideas.

This research attempts to determine the impact of theatrical performances on children by studying various models of Children's Theater in Syria during 2016. It also reviews the producing entities and examines the goals and priorities of these entities in addressing children. The research seeks to answer the following questions: To what extent do these theatrical performances contribute to the goals of these entities? Do these entities realize the impact of these theatrical performances on children, and the serious consequences that can result from underestimating the issue of addressing children and participating in building their knowledge and convictions, especially in light of the violence and extremism that prevails in Syria today and the great impact it has on the formation of the child's personality and ideas?

To answer these questions we first begin by identifying entities concerned with the production of Children's Theater in Syria now, whether public entities of the State, such as the Ministry of Culture represented by the Directorate of Theaters and Music, and Damascus Governorate; or private entities, such as the School of Dramatic Art in Damascus. In reviewing these entities, we examine models of theatrical performances presented by each of them. In the second part of the study, we analyze these models in terms of their form and content, their sensitivity to the specificity of Children's Theater and the exceptional situation currently experienced by children in Syria, and the features of these theatrical performances and to what extent are they compatible with the standards of Children's Theater.

The research concludes with a set of ideas and results, of which the most important is the lack of a clear strategic planning for the entities involved in the production of

Children's Theater, except for some individual efforts exerted by few experienced and knowledgeable workers in this field – these efforts disappear with the disappearance of these workers and their initiatives. Many of the theatrical performances are prepared by amateurs who lack the tools and knowledge to work in Children's Theater, and most importantly, to compose theatrical texts.

The research also presents a set of suggestions and recommendations to entities concerned with the production of Children's Theater, such as the need to develop the work of reading committees playing the role of a supervising entity, in order to upgrade the quality of the artistic work and its sensitivity to the peculiarity of Children's Theatre in Syria at this critical stage. The research also highlights the need to increase professional theatrical performances as well as amateur theatrical performances, and to combine the two types to ensure the proper building and development of the children's artistic taste. Recommendations also focus on activating the role of dramaturgy in controlling the ideas targeting children through theatrical performances.

**Managing the Diversity of
Cultural Components in Syria
– Arabs and Kurds as a Model
Mohammad Aljssem**



Aljssem is a social researcher, holding a master's degree in sociology from the University of Damascus and a diploma in economic planning from the Institute for the Planning of Economic and Social Development. Since 2015, he has worked as a researcher at the Center for Civil Society and Democracy. He has several publications and research papers which have been translated on the genesis of Syrian civil society and its institutions and on research related to social phenomena that emerged from the Syrian crisis.

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About the research

Managing the cultural diversity in societies characterized by diverse races and ethnicities is one of the most important issues that must be considered during political crises. Nearly two thirds of conflicts around the world are due to the poor management of diversity according to the UNESCO, which stresses that the best guarantee to achieve international peace and security is by adopting the principle of diversity and respect for different cultures. New approaches to sustainable development also emphasize the principle of cultural diversity as one of the most important tools for achieving development in societies. The importance of cultural diversity management stems from respecting the cultural identities of human groups that contribute to the cohesion and integration of community, as they affect the healthy growth of individuals within groups and lead to respecting the cultural specificity of the various groups and safeguarding the fundamental human rights of all. On the other hand, the mismanagement of cultural diversity in the society often leads to conflicts that are based on ethnic or religious affiliations, and are characterized by bloodshed and widespread violations of human rights.

The research seeks to study the reality of diversity management of the various cultural components existing in Syria today. It focuses on the model of the Arab and Kurdish components due to the distinct ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences between the two largest ethnic components in Syria, in addition to considerations related to the current sensitivity in the areas with Arab – Kurdish presence.

Syria enjoys a great cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. The estimated number of cultural components in Syria is twenty-six, which cannot be separated from each other by clear geographical boundaries, and none of them can be cancelled or marginalized by the other. The importance of this research stems from its quest to help determine the best ways to deal with this diversity to ensure the rights of all cultures, to nurture the diversity of cultures, and to avoid the cancellation of one culture by the other, especially in light of the changes occurring in community awareness of these components and of the ruling authority after the outbreak of protests in Syria.

The research examines the relationship between these components according to three frameworks: the structure of the existing Syrian society, the previously practiced government policies in managing cultural diversity, and the current relations created by the popular protest movement. Accordingly, the first part of the research reviews how successive Syrian governments have managed cultural diversity since the independence until today. In this section, we review the geographical distribution of the Syrian cultural components in general, the way the authorities deal with these components, and how this method has changed according to the political and historical developments, especially in relation to the Kurdish component as a model. Based on this data, we handle, in the second part of the study, the relationship between the Arab and Kurdish components, in terms of identity and the extent to which the absence of a clear strategy for managing diversity has affected this relationship. We attempt to deduce the current concerns of each component

through questionnaires and field interviews with samples from the two components.

The research concludes with a set of results, most importantly that the identity and affiliation of the Kurdish component does not exceed national affiliation as a result of the exclusionary practices targeted against them, especially in terms of their cultural rights. For example, the Kurdish language is not adopted as an official language of the state and its use is therefore very restricted. On the other hand, the affiliation of the Arab component is related to the "Syrian Nation" and taking pride in the traditional tribal structure; however, this affiliation is losing luster due to its failure in achieving initial aspirations.

The relationship between the Arab and Kurdish components cannot be classified as a relationship of deep integration, even in mixed or contiguous areas; rather, it appears to be a mutually beneficial relationship imposed by the circumstance of sharing the same geographical area. In both components, the image of the other is affected by elements of stereotyping, where each component feels superior to the other.

The popular movement that began in 2011 created new developments in people's awareness of the ruling authority and other cultural components; however, this awareness has soon bounced back into a stereotypical and discriminatory framework, though under new rules, the most important of which is the declining power of the ruling authority. Moreover, the two components hold two different views on social and political issues. The view of the Arab component does not exceed the framework of the majority, which sees itself as a general and basic identity and culture, in which all other components must be integrated. The Arabs see their current relationship with the Kurds as being extremely tense, especially because the Kurds are becoming the dominant force in the northern regions under study, where Kurds conduct practices that could pave the way for the oppression of Arabs in a way that resembles the oppression of the Kurds before 2011. On the other hand, the Kurds see the relationship with the Arabs as being tense in general, with fears of returning persecution of their national rights.

Finally, the mismanagement of diversity since the establishment of the national state has led to cracks in the relationship between the Syrian components in general and the ethnic groups in particular and has created different views based on the narratives produced by the violations committed against the various components. Polarizations based on ethnic and racial affiliations, which were produced during the protest movement in 2011, can only be understood, analyzed, and alleviated through a detailed and comprehensive study of pre-protest diversity management of different racial and ethnic components, not only the Kurdish component.

The Policy of the Directorate of
Theaters and Music towards
the Independent Theater in Syria
Mudar Ramadan



Ramdan is a Syrian actor and director. He was born in Aleppo in 1986 and holds a degree in Performing Arts (Drama Studies Department in 2015) and holds a degree in the English language from the University of Aleppo (2011). He worked as an actor, director, assistant director and dramaturge in the university group and the National Theatre in Syria. He has also undergone a group training in acting and directing in the Al Hamra Theater in Tunisia 2016 - 2015 under the supervision of Serine Guenon. He participated in a number of television and film works, of which the most recent is writing on the snow, directed by Rashid Mashharawi which will be presented in 2017. Additionally, he has written a number of articles in the theater critique.

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About the research

The Directorate of Theaters and Music of the Ministry of Culture in Syria has managed and organized Syrian theater production since its establishment in 1959 through the production of theatrical performances and the organization of events and festivals. The situation changed in the last decade after introducing the concept of independent production into the Syrian theater community. Independent here means the production that does not depend mainly on the Directorate, but depends on supporting funds and private or individual funding to support theatrical works outside the framework of government production. This type of production has increased after the popular movement in 2011, and has achieved many successes. Moreover, it is accompanied by the absence of any significant change or development in the Directorate's production mechanisms or any attempt to cooperate with or support this new type of production.

This research aims at examining the policy adopted by the Directorate of Theaters and Music in addressing independent theater in Syria after 2011. It seeks to answer the following basic questions: How did the Directorate deal with independent theater productions? Has it supported and contributed to their development or has it impeded their continuation? How did the Directorate react to the emergence and development of this new form of production? Have laws, working mechanisms, and production methods been developed to comply with this new circumstance? The research also seeks to define the role that should be played by the Directorate under this type of development, especially in light of the current changing and complex political and social events in Syria.

In order to answer these questions, the research tries in its first part to determine the production policy of the Directorate of Theaters and Music in general. Because the Directorate does not share its rules of procedure, we explored its mechanism of work through its various models of production. In the second part, we define the meaning of Independent Theater in Syria, in terms of its mechanism of work and production, and in light of its relationship with government production represented by the Directorate of Theaters and Music. We also review the ways in which the Directorate deals with independent theater productions, through the study of models of independently produced plays, which have cooperated or tried to cooperate with the Directorate, and have been presented in Syria since 2011.

The research focuses on the role of the Directorate of Theaters and Music as an institution that manages and organizes theatrical activity in Syria in general, both independent or government production. It has a great influence on theater production in Syria, and absolute power over public theater facilities. Through our study of some of the independent theater models presented during the period studied, we noticed that the Directorate adopts mechanisms of close supervision. We also noticed the challenges associated with independent production and the fact that work is carried out based on individual efforts and initiatives rather than being supported in ways that enrich the Syrian theatrical scene and increase its diversity. Moreover, independent

plays do not affect the Directorate's productions nor pose as a sole alternative to them.

The Directorate of Theaters and Music adopts an ambiguous policy in terms of logistical support and granting opportunities and approvals, where many plays were excluded on the grounds that approval was not granted. In addition, the Directorate has not made any significant changes in its policies in order to adapt to the emergence of this independent production mechanism, or in line with the social, political and cultural changes that have occurred between 2011 and 2016.

The research concludes with a number of special recommendations, which can contribute to the development of independent production mechanism and encourage the Directorate's positive interaction with this mechanism so as to contribute to the development of the Syrian theater scene in general under current conditions. These recommendations include for reducing discrimination against theatrical performances on the basis of the producing entity, especially in terms of programming, using public theater facilities, and creating a comprehensive and diverse theater atmosphere that takes into account the diversity of Syrian society and its differences, and the current social, cultural and political changes.

Cultural Resources Associated
with Wheat – Sweida
Governorate as a Model
Rasha Salah



Salah was born in 1985. She studied Spanish at the University of Havana-Cuba, graduating in 2011, and then studied media at the University of Damascus in 2014. She worked as a Spanish teacher at the Higher Institute of Languages and various departments at the University of Damascus. She worked in the media and writing sectors for online platforms concerned with Syrian content. She also worked in the field of relief and psychosocial support for families affected by the war. She has contributed to several civilian projects that support and help the younger generation. She now lives in Beirut and works in the field of psychological support and relief.

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About the research

Wheat is a major resource in the economy of Sweida governorate and a major component of many foods, most significantly bread. Sweida governorate is most famous for its cultivation of wheat and has rituals related to this type of agriculture. In addition to being an economic and food resource, wheat is an important cultural resource whose symbolism and rituals are directly related to the culture of society itself. This research aims at highlighting the symbolism of wheat for the people of Sweida by identifying and classifying its cultural resources, and describing the social situation and rituals that accompany all that is related to cultivation, harvesting, storage methods and types of food made from wheat.

The research does not focus on wheat as a mere economic or food resource, rather it examines it as a cultural resource that contributes to the formation of the culture of the region and its effects on lifestyle. Hence comes the importance of this research as an initial step in a long-term project concerned with developing a cultural map of the region, which includes the most important cultural resources and contributes to their preservation and protection as a vital and influential human heritage to this day.

The research suggests that wheat is of a great symbolic value for the people of Sweida. It is a basic food and economic resource, and its season is associated with many social rituals, such as the rituals of harvesting, storage and cooking. The research tries to determine the nature of this symbolism by examining the material and non-material resources related to wheat, and the prevailing social rituals related to these resources.

In its first part, the research presents a review of the material resources associated with wheat in Sweida, including fixed resources, such as mills, or movable resources, such as tools used in agriculture and harvesting. In the second part, the research examines the non-material resources, such as agricultural experiences and traditions of cultivation, harvesting and storage, in addition to the social traditions associated with these works, such as poetry, singing and popular proverbs that relate to various events. The research also focuses on the social events formed as a result of overlapping material and non-material resources, where social phenomena and rituals had resulted from wheat-related work. For example weddings are associated with Al Mansaf or Kubba dishes, of which wheat is a main component. These rituals are related to agricultural seasons, where they always occur upon the completion of harvesting and storage of grains.

In the collection and classification of these resources, the research relied on various references, the most important of which was Ibn Wahshia's book Nabataean Agriculture, as well as a series of studies and statistics on wheat cultivation and the rituals accompanying it. We also relied on interviews with farmers who are still working in wheat cultivation in Sweida today. We asked them directly about the resources they deal with and their nature, and we matched their views with what we have collected from the theoretical references we have reviewed. In addition, we conducted interviews with specialists and academics working in agriculture or in the field of cultural mapping of regions.

The research aims to draw an accurate picture of the various types and characteristics of cultural resources related to wheat in Sweida governorate, and to stress the importance of preserving these resources and working on documenting them, especially the social activities, literary productions, folk poems, or folk tales. The research also refers to the role that could be played by these resources in alleviating the differences and conflicts between the various areas of Sweida Governorate or between Sweida and its immediate surroundings, i.e. Houran and the surrounding areas, particularly because these resources play a social and economic role in the lives of individuals and groups.

Syrian TV Drama – The
Relationship between Writers
and Production Companies
Wael Salem



Salem graduated from the Higher Institute of Theatrical Arts in Damascus, Department of Theatre Studies in 2013. Salem has participated in several workshops including creative writing with the Danish cultural center in Damascus in 2009, and in several play workshops in Damascus with the Damascus Laboratory Theater. He also worked on organizing effective theatrical readings in March 2011 at the Saadallah Wannous Theater at the Higher Institute. He has authored many short theatrical texts and was the first to translate the play *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* by the British author Joe Orton into Arabic. He has also worked as a coach and interpreter in the workshop "Image/Word" with a group of Syrian children and Germans in Berlin in 2016, and has participated in the book *My Location* with the Goethe Institute in Berlin in 2016.

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About the research

This research attempts to delve deeper into the Syrian TV drama, which has become an important part of popular culture and one of the most important sources of education and creation of public taste. The research monitors the relationship of TV drama writers with production companies. The underlying reasons for our interest in this issue is the neglect suffered by drama writers on the critical level. Most of the literature addressing Syrian drama lacks precision and objectivity, and tends to make value judgments on the work produced, even though this type of drama is one of the most important cultural components directly affecting the Syrian society due to its great popularity among a wide spectrum of Syrians and Arabs alike.

The research assumes that Syrian drama has reached in 2017 a very critical situation in terms of quantity and quality. It attempts to investigate the causes of this situation by monitoring the changes that have occurred in the production mechanism as a result of the attempts of production companies to adapt to the current complicated situation. The research seeks to answer two fundamental questions: Why did many production companies have to change their working mechanisms more than once in the past years? What are the implications of these changes on those working in the field, especially on the writers?

The research is divided into two chapters. In the first chapter, we present a historical account of the stages of Syrian drama, reviewing the changes that occurred in each stage at the level of production and the implications of these changes on the writers. The stages covered begin with the 1980s and continue through the 1990s, which witnessed a qualitative leap in the quantity and type of production. Then the first decade of the 21st century witnessed rapid changes and conditions that transformed the Syrian drama into a national industry with its own economic cycle as a result of its popular success locally and in the Arab world.

In the second chapter we discuss the relationship between writers and production companies in light of other factors, such as the censorship imposed by the state on the content of the works, and the spread of online broadcasting and the resulting new viewing conditions that have changed the way of expression and thus affected the relationship between writing and production in general. The research also addresses the relationship between what is socially marginal and central in drama, which is a problematic relationship characterized by the lack of representation of a wide segment of Syrian society in TV drama and their marginalization in favor of other segments.

The research monitors the relationship between TV drama writers and the Syrian production companies, through relying on two mechanisms of collecting information; the first is conducting historical research to understand the work method and the development of this complex medium. The second source of information is based on interviewing a number of Syrian writers from different generations, backgrounds and experiences; in addition to referencing past interviews – published online – with TV drama writers. The research faced great difficulty in communicating with production

entities inside Syria, whether governmental or private, where we faced a categorical refusal to cooperate in providing information that would have helped us enrich the research and save us great effort in counting TV works throughout different historical stages.

Finally, the research was able to reach a number of conclusions about the relationship between the writers and production companies, and the impact of changes occurring in the production mechanisms on this relationship, its nature, and how it has changed over time. We notice that signs of weakness in the TV production in Syria were emerging before the events of the Arab spring, due to the interest of production companies in quantity at the expense of quality, and their focus on satisfying the market and channels, rather than focusing on the development of the strengths that characterize the Syrian drama and give its momentum. The most important strength of Syrian drama is the existence of professional writers capable of writing interesting works that are closely related to the audience and which lend their success to their quality and avoid the needs of the consumer market.

Consequently, a change has occurred in the nature of dealing with different workers in the field of TV drama, especially writers. The relationship between writers and production companies is often characterized by controversy and disharmony, especially after the spread of Syrian TV works in the Arab world. It is regrettable that the writers are the weakest in the process of production. Although they devise the essence and basis on which the entire work is based, they suffer from the ever-decreasing freedom of expression and the imposition of many restrictions by companies and channels.

Syrian drama has proved that it is an influential, viable and self-sustaining art product. Missing on the chance of benefiting and investing in this mediator, rejecting it completely, and giving absolute value judgments on the works produced, is a regrettable missed opportunity in a country where the art types that are capable of self-financing are rare.

