

than Shaul Arieli and Shafir assume, especially since most Israelis within its 1967 borders pay little heed to West Bank events.

A major segment of this third section discusses the possibility of a one-state solution or binational state as opposed to a two-state solution, and then shifts to the BDS movement; both use the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa as a comparison. These sections reflect wide-ranging scholarship with respect to citizenship, federalism in one country, and a single state, along with examining Noura Erekat's examination of a single state in light of the South African experience that has preserved preexisting poverty gaps while achieving equal political rights for all. What then would citizenship mean in a single Jewish-Arab state and what steps could be taken to overcome issues of identity and disparate cultural norms within both Jewish and Palestinian communities, not just between them?

As for the BDS movement, it compares badly to the African National Congress (ANC) struggle against apartheid. Though nonviolent, unlike the ANC, it, also unlike the ANC, rejects the idea of "normalization" of ties between the ruling group, Israel in this case, and the Palestinians. This means to Shafir that BDS leaders refuse to cooperate with Jewish opponents of the occupation, especially in their call for an academic boycott of Israeli universities and faculties whereas the ANC sought allies within the white South African community. For Shafir this is an ironic path to take in the call for freedom because the best studies of the impact of Israel's approach to the occupation, on which he relies, come from Israeli academics in Israel who would be victims of the boycott under BDS terms. Cooperation with sympathetic Israelis would be more fruitful than isolating and alienating them, especially since the antiapartheid movement gained worldwide support. BDS, on the other hand, while gaining sympathy for its economic boycott of Israeli goods in some circles, has sparked opposition to an academic boycott that is universal with respect to all Israeli universities, supposedly in the name of free speech.

Some may consider Shafir's analysis in this last segment controversial. Still he raises key questions about the feasibility of different approaches to resolving apparently intractable conflicts, practical solutions and methods as opposed to the moral satisfaction that may come from the academic aspect of the boycott movement which would isolate the very Israelis who back the Palestinian cause and instead serve rightist Israeli propaganda goals. For him, a reformed BDS working with Jewish allies in and outside of Israel, instead of alienating them, would have greater potential for exerting pressure on the occupation.

This is a major study, relying on a broad range of scholarship well beyond the contours of Israel/Palestine, closely analyzed and brilliantly argued. It deserves a wide readership not just for its discussion of Israeli strategies to deny what is obvious, the occupation, but for the questions it raises about current tactics to end that situation.

WAED ATHAMNEH, *Modern Arabic Poetry: Revolution and Conflict* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017) Pp. 324. \$60.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780268101541

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The book is a much needed and an important contribution to the history and development of modern Arabic poetry in the second half of the 20th century. By focusing on three

modern Arab poets, Iraqi ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Bayati (1926–99), Egyptian Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mu‘ti Ḥijazi (b. 1935), and Palestinian Maḥmud Darwish (1941–2008) and their poetic trajectories, *Modern Arabic Poetry: Revolution and Conflict* examines the perennial and strong connections between society, politics, and Arabic poetry, and the major turning points that inspired transformation and new poetic directions. Through the case study of the three major poets, the particular focus of this book makes it a unique and a comprehensive investigation that, while it situates each poet within the broader sociopolitical and cultural contexts, showing the existential connections between their artistic productions and their societies, examines on a case-by-case basis how change slowly came about, thus moving the poetic away from the political, and reconnecting poetry with issues pertaining to the personal, humanist ideals and aesthetic considerations.

The relations between poetry, society, and politics are nothing new in Arabic literary expression. Already, in pre-Islamic poetry, the nexus between the tribe and the poet as its political spokesperson was very strong. Poets continued throughout the ages to embody in their productions this reciprocal relationship. Yet, in the 20th century, with the *nahḍa*, a philosophical and literary concept made its way into Arabic culture under the name of *iltizām*, or “engagement,” referring to the commitment of the writers and poets to their societies and their moral responsibilities as men of letters. Central to *Modern Arabic Poetry* is the author’s examination of the concept of literary *iltizām* and its influence on Arabic literature and poetry after it was adapted from French into Arab literary circles by Taha Hussein, and its wide adoption by proponents of committed literature. The author also introduces the reader into the sociopolitical context of the early mid-20th century, an era marked in the Arab Middle East by postcolonial struggles, pan-Arabism, Nasserism, and the Arab–Israeli wars.

The book critically examines how many Arab poets adopted the concept of *iltizām* and committed their poetry to the social and political issues of the times, such as Arab nationalism, Nasserism, and pan-Arabism. It analyzes how their poetry became emotional, propagandist, and ideological, and how the failure of Arab nationalism and the defeat in the 1967 war served as a wakeup call for these poets to take their distances from political *iltizām* and to re-envision their poetic art and give their careers new directions.

After an introductory chapter explaining elements of the sociopolitical context and the concept of *iltizām*, the remaining three chapters detail the different examples of poetic departure from committed poetry. It traces how the change manifested itself differently with the three selected poets: some refrained from writing poetry, or turned their poetic gaze inward, towards aesthetic concerns, yet others moved in directions connecting their poetry with humanistic ideals and broader concerns for justice and freedom.

The selection of the three prominent poets is intelligent and representative. They all belonged to the 1960s generation and their choice clearly exemplifies the main argument of the dialectical relationship of politics and poetry in Arabic literary and cultural production. At the same time it demonstrates the major transformations that took place and aesthetically influenced the course of modern Arabic poetry.

The book dedicates a full chapter to each poet examining their poetic careers, their engagement, their disappointments, and their innovations and experimentations in form and content. The author analyzes key poems in connection to key political and social events, demonstrating the artistic development of the poets and the shift in Arabic poetry from nationalism and commitment, to more humanistic and self-reflexive visions. In each

chapter, the analysis offers contextualized reading of selected poems given both in Arabic and English translation (some of the translations are by the author, which is an excellent didactical tool that can be very useful to students and learners of Arabic. Chapter 2 focuses on al-Bayati and how his innovations in form and content revolutionized Arabic poetry as he moved beyond committed poetry into writing poetry more concerned with poetic creativity and language. The self-reflexive turn where poetry and the poet, as an anxious and alienated subject, take center stage was not devoid of a concern for the struggle of humankind. Chapter 3 discusses the trajectory of Hijazi as a Nasserist and a proponent of Arab nationalism. The 1967 defeat ended his poetic career as the poet of the regime, and a long hiatus marked his disengagement from his creative process. However, as he witnessed the Arab uprisings, politics became a source of inspiration anew for Hijazi, and he became a poet recommitted to the people and not to a leader. The last chapter is dedicated to one of the most important poets of modern Arabic poetry: the Palestinian Mahmoud Darwish. The author shows how the concept of political *iltizām* took on a militant and anti-Israeli tone with the early poetry of Darwish, and how it contributed in creating readers committed to the Palestinian cause. Yet though dedicated to the Palestinian cause, his poetry nevertheless witnessed many changes and transformations. From the poet of resistance and displacement, *Modern Arabic Poetry* argues that Darwish's poetry moved from an "extroverted political poetry" to a more "introverted" stance. A selection of major poems is contextualized and thoroughly analyzed where the author identifies and analyzes the changes in Darwish's poetry, mainly his ability to humanize the enemy and see him as a human other. The book concludes on the survival of the perennial potential of the notion of commitment and the new meanings it takes on as poets continue to be inspired by people's aspirations for and dreams about freedom and justice.

Many excellent books on Arab poets and modern Arab poetry have been published in the last few years. Muhsin J. al-Musawi's *Arabic Poetry: Trajectories of Modernity and Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2006) provides comprehensive coverage of modern and postmodern poetry from the 1950s onwards. *The Poet's Art and His Nation* by Khaled Mattawa (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2014) focuses on Mahmoud Darwish and offers an overview of the life and work of Palestine's national poet. Athamneh's book goes further in shaping knowledge and scholarship in the way it offers a comprehensive analysis and a historical interpretation of change in modern Arabic poetry. It will help scholars and generations of literature students navigate the development of this art and its connections to the dynamics in Arab politics.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIPS, *The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2016). Pp. 320. \$30.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780300217179

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Although *The Battle for Syria* does discuss the internal aspects of the conflict in Syria that has raged since 2011, author Christopher Phillips focuses on the actions of the six principal external actors involved in this conflict: the United States, Russia, Iran, Turkey,