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**TERRI DEYOUNG.** *Mahmud Sami al-Barudi: Reconfiguring Society and the Self.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015. xi+423 pages. Cloth US\$49.95 ISBN 978-0-8156-3391-4.

**M**ahmud Sami al-Barudi (1839–1904) is generally regarded as the founder of modern Arabic poetry. He is credited with establishing a “neoclassical” style of poetry that reverted to pre-Islamic, Umayyad, and Abbasid poetic models for its inspiration, while taking up certain themes of contemporary society and finding an enthusiastic audience among participants in the newly developing public sphere. The most prominent poets of the next generation followed al-Barudi’s lead, incorporating ever more contemporary themes, before giving way to a new style of poetry, “Romanticism,” firmly established by the 1920s. Al-Barudi achieved historical prominence in addition as a statesman who held posts in various Egyptian governments and stood as one of the leaders of the so-called ‘Urabi Revolt in 1881–82, during which time he served as prime minister and promulgated Egypt’s first constitution, only to be exiled by the invading British to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) for seventeen years. Al-Barudi’s political “heroism” and tragedy not only lend grandeur and mystique to his poetic achievement, but raise a number of questions for the literary historian. What induced al-Barudi to emulate centuries-old poetic models and what connection did this have with his political career and ambitions? Did al-Barudi’s membership in the Turko-Circassian ruling class play some role in his poetic orientation? Given that al-Barudi received his secondary education in a newly established military school, what effects did educational and military reforms have in the emergence of al-Barudi’s poetic tastes and inclinations?

Terri DeYoung touches on some of these questions as she focuses her literary biography of al-Barudi, the first in the English language, on “the integration of his interests in literature as a vehicle for self-expression and agency and a hallowed bearer of the great traditions of the past” (27). She also revisits an issue that used to preoccupy Arabic literary historians: to what extent did al-Barudi pave the way for the emergence

of Romanticism in Arabic poetry, regarded as the first truly modern style? Admirers of al-Barudi have sought out instances in his poetry that can be identified as harbingers of Romanticism, while those who find only rehashed classicism, like the prominent poet Adunis, excoriate him for his anti-modernism. Quite a number of literary and biographical studies of al-Barudi are available in Arabic, while in English al-Barudi mainly figures in literary histories of modern Arabic poetry, although his work has been the subject of a few scholarly articles and book chapters. DeYoung structures her literary biography chronologically, with chapters on al-Barudi's childhood, education, and early career in Istanbul; his work in the entourage of the Khedive Isma'il in the 1860s; his military deployment in Crete in 1866–67; his marriage, social relationships, and literary activities after his return; his political activities and connections during the 1870's in the turbulent period leading to the 'Urabi Revolt; the revolt itself, British invasion, and exile; the period of exile in Ceylon; and the final years back in Egypt. The chapters contain biographical information, much of which comes from the biography of al-Barudi by al-Hadidi (1969), as well as contextual information, and sustained readings of a number of al-Barudi's poems. Interestingly, DeYoung tends to choose poems that are apparently or circumstantially related to personal experiences of the poet, rather than the political poems that express al-Barudi's self-display as a heroic leader who denounces and repudiates the contemporary political situation. DeYoung's chapters also contain excurses on related topics, such as the lives and works of al-Barudi's associates, and Aristotelian virtue ethics as formulated by Miskawayh in *The Refinement of Morals*.

DeYoung's attention to al-Barudi's personal relationships, his views on ethics and friendship, and his psychological states at various points in his life, breaks new ground, in that few literary historians have dwelt on these topics. Her reflections remain for the most part conjectural however, since precious few details are available regarding al-Barudi's marriages and friendships. His poetry, with its abstract, neoclassical style, refers obliquely if at all to any of these matters. Moreover, DeYoung's search for the expression of personal experience in al-Barudi's poetry succumbs at times to the danger of ascribing a vaguely defined Romanticism to certain passages of al-Barudi's poetry and judging its import on this basis. A clear definition of Romanticism, beyond direct reference to personal experience in poems, would enable a more systematic analysis. Beyond this, al-Barudi's poetry calls for analysis on its own grounds, rather than in terms of its relation to a later style regarded as truly modern. On the sociological level, DeYoung breaks new ground in suggesting the relevance of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the cultural field to

understanding al-Barudi's place in the intellectual and literary social space of his time. In this period of the emergence of a modern state bureaucracy, professional social classes, and an Arabic public sphere, al-Barudi played a key role in adapting the poetic tradition to his own purposes and at the same time to a new social function. Unlike Bourdieu, however, DeYoung does not attempt to delineate the nature of the cultural field in which al-Barudi operated or to set out its parameters and the various positions within it. Such an exposition would throw much light on the transformation of the social role of poetry and poets in al-Barudi's period and on al-Barudi's own working of the system as well.

DeYoung's work enables its readers to examine key specimens of al-Barudi's poetry in the context of the life experiences and historical context surrounding their composition. This is the fundamental task of any literary biography of a poet, and DeYoung's work accomplishes it well. In this regard, inclusion of the original Arabic texts of the quoted poetry in an appendix or otherwise would be a welcome and perhaps necessary enhancement. Moreover, DeYoung's work, by making the life and poetry of a founding figure of modern Arabic literature accessible to an Anglophone audience, constitutes a significant contribution to current scholarship on the period of the "nahda" or Arab renaissance of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. DeYoung's book is a fine addition to her previous excellent literary biography of the celebrated modernist poet Badr Shakir al-Sayyab. ✨

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MAHA EL SAID, LENA MEARI AND NICOLA PRATT, EDS. *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance: Lessons from the Arab World*. London: Zed Books, 2015. ix + 244 pages, acknowledgment, introduction, about the contributors, index. Paper US\$47.00 ISBN 978-1-78360-283-4.

This book discusses the ways in which movements of socio-political transformation in the Arab World, especially the Arab Spring reshape the discourse of gender and sexuality. The book consists of a collection of scholarly essays analyzing the subversive strategies and acts of resistance employed by women during the 2011 uprisings. The articles situate their analysis within a historical context showing continuity between the discussed actions of 2011 and precedent forms of female activism. Women