

a new instinct, as the United States was involved in democratization efforts in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere. Cook notes a particular challenge for U.S. officials in managing the shift from cooperating with stable authoritarian leaders to backing a faltering transition to democracy, which he says created wariness in the region about American democracy promotion efforts. He concludes that Washington has a limited role in shaping regional politics, with locals holding their countries' future in their hands.

Cook's argumentation is somewhat contradictory in the book's closing pages. He criticizes the Obama Administration for the failure of its actions to match rhetoric in Egypt and lack of sufficiently vocal messaging on democratic backsliding in Turkey, yet acknowledges that alternative actions would not have altered outcomes. He also argues that the United States can play a role in upholding democratic values and investing in technical assistance programs, yet notes the limited effect beyond avoiding the worst possible outcome of instilling mistrust on all sides. The United States should undoubtedly approach the region with humility about its ability to affect domestic politics. However, he fails to explain how best to achieve core American interests in the region (which he identifies as Israel, oil, counter terrorism, and non-proliferation) – especially during a time of transition.

Some may disagree with the author's analysis and conclusion. But the book will long serve as a useful reference given its detailed description of historic events. It would be a valuable text for an undergraduate or graduate course on Middle East history or politics. It has extensive footnotes, maps, a timeline of events (running from the death of the Tunisian fruit seller in December 2010 to Turkey's arrest of Kurdish politicians in November 2016), and a "cast of characters" from the four countries of study. Although the book was published in June 2017, it was completed before the 2016 election and does not address developments during the Trump administration. As a result, more remains to be written about the unfolding developments of a turbulent region that affects American interests. ✂

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**JOSEPH R. FARAG.** *Politics and Palestinian Literature in Exile: Gender Aesthetics and Resistance in the Short Story* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016). Pp. 304. \$135.00 cloth. ISBN 9781784536558.

Joseph Farag's latest book is among the few that shed light on Palestinian literature in Palestine. He has demonstrated unique skills in analyzing literature, especially short stories, in relation to politics and the socio-economic position of Palestinians living in the country and in exile as well. Farag's book is a literary history as much as it is a literary account of history, especially concerning the short stories written by Palestinian authors in exile from 1948 until the end of the First Intifada in 1993. The book focuses on specific political and historical turning points and their impacts on Palestine's literary scene. The book's three main chapters, "Nakba" (catastrophe, referring to the creation of Israel), "Naksa" (setback, referring to the 1967 War), the "Intifada" (Uprising), focus on three intertwined themes: the politics of aesthetics, gender and sexuality, and the literature of resistance, which are realized in each of the periods examined (1948, 1967, and 1987-93) and interconnected with ongoing social and political transformations (10). Each chapter touches on literary production in exile.

In the introduction, Farag outlines his main research on Palestinian literature and argues that there is a belated appreciation of the importance of Palestinian cultural production (2). More specifically, he explains that Palestinian short stories have been largely overlooked in literary studies of Arabic literature as a result of a series of colonial encounters with Europe, where novels have effectively colonized scholarly inquiry into modern Arabic literature (4).

In Chapter One, Farag argues that the Nakba definitively changed not only the modern history of Palestine, but also Palestinian literature. He illustrates the impact this had on Arabic literature, which is represented by the *Iltizam* (i.e., committed literature), a term and concept borrowed from Sartre. *Adab Multazim* has been adopted by Arab intellectuals, and authors to suit the political, historical, and socio-economic challenges set by the loss of Palestine. Farag's analysis in the first chapter of Samira Azzam and Ghassan Kanafani, two Palestinian authors from the Post-Nakba period, provides an excellent starting point for linking Palestinian literature to the country's political conditions. By examining their works, Farag complicates the typical characterization of Palestinian literary production and transportability of labels such as modernism and realism.

The first author under Farag's consideration, Samira Azzam, was one of the first Palestinian feminist voices. Her work incorporates realist principles and emphasizes class divisions and issues, often depicting the hardships of the economic underclass. However, in Azzam's later work,

she gravitated toward modernist themes, which inspired other writers after her, such as Liana Badr. In contrast to Azzam, Kanafani was a pioneer of modernist writing in Palestinian literature. His initial work focused on the malaise following the loss of Palestine and creation of the diaspora. However, after 1967, his writing grew more realist and engaged more directly with popular concerns such as mobilizing against the Israeli occupation. His voice was a well-heard one among Palestinians and Arabs, particularly in the resistance movements. His membership in the Political Bureau of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine provided him with a vantage of authority and power that comes off clearly in his writings. Farag makes an important point here that both Kanafani and Azzam were committed to a Sartrean sense of prose as an active force as well as to a literary sense of style and aesthetics. “Kanafani’s use of abstracted, modernist literary devices contrast sharply with Samira Azzam’s overarching realism, and yet neither author can fairly be said to be any less ‘committed’ in the Sartrean sense or less artistic in the literary sense.”

In Chapter Two, Farag investigates a new dimension to the literary response to the Naksa, or the 1967 defeat of the United Arab Republic forces by Israel. He gives an illuminating description of the political scenes during and after the Naksa, with a focus on identity. “As should be clear, Palestinian identity did not so much emerge only in the 1960s, but rather underwent a fundamental shift away from being part and parcel of Arab nationalism at large, towards a distinctly Palestinian self-conceived identity (81).” He compares the differences between the Nakba generation that lost Palestine and the Naksa generation that sparked a new hope for its liberation. In this chapter, Farag continues to examine Kanafani’s writings with a focus on his shift from modernist literature to a far more realist literary aesthetic that promoted armed resistance. Farag also includes an analysis of exiled Palestinian writer Yahya Yakhliif and his skepticism towards the armed resistance in the wake of political developments in Jordan and Lebanon after 1967. During this period, the chapter also shows that Liana Badr continues to build upon Samira Azzam’s work as a proto-feminist, using modernist aesthetics to deconstruct patriarchy.

In the last chapter, Farag examines the political manifestations and background of the First Intifada. He focuses on Ibrahim Nasrallah’s short stories in *Al-Awaj al-Barriyya* (Terrestrial Waves, 1988). Nasrallah, born in a Jordanian refugee camp, wrote this collection months before the First Intifada, predicting an uprising in all forms and shapes of Palestinians at

all levels of society. This series of short stories, which can also be read as a novel, shows Palestinians heroically turning their daily lives, social gatherings, weddings, and imprisonment into a means of resistance – an undefeatable spirit. He returns once again to the work of Liana Badr and specifically the collected stories of *Jahim Thahabi* (Hell of Gold, 1991). Badr’s work concerns the situation of Palestinian women within a patriarchal society and the marginalization of Palestinians living in exile after the First Intifada.

Farang concludes with an overview of the fraught politics of the academic study of Palestinian literature. He brings up Steven Salaita’s case against the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as an example of a western academy’s treatment of Palestinian cultural studies across different disciplines (197). Farang argues that Palestinian literary and cultural studies face challenges in western academia because it “contributes to a comparative settler colonial paradigm that situates colonialism in the metropolitan home in the ongoing present.”

Farang does not claim that he is creating any grand theory about short stories, but rather that he is highlighting the central role played by short stories in Palestinian literary production from 1948-1993. His book offers a well-written and important analysis of Palestinian short stories, revealing that these stories have an impact on the Palestinian cultural scene and have shaped the work of future authors. This book is a must-read for anybody interested in Palestinian literature. ✨

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**WILL HANLEY.** *Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017). Pp. 416. \$65.00 cloth. ISBN 9780231177627.

**H**ow did subalterns come to identify as members of nation states? Until recently, most studies of nation-state formation have attempted to answer this question by focusing on the spread of nationalist ideology and the construction of collective identity. Yet in his groundbreaking study of the rise of nationality in Alexandria, Egypt, Hanley traces the origins of our current international system to the spread of nationality laws in the late nineteenth century and their role in the creation of the modern national subject. Hanley shows that through the individual’s engagement with