

coupled with crisp and non-convoluted writing make this book an enviable intervention in revisionist histories of contemporary Islam. Further, the prescriptive historiographical nature of the book offers hopeful guidelines for aspiring historians and serious scholars in any field. There is little doubt that Lauzière has written the best book we have on Salafism. By providing a comprehensive critical reading of historiographical scholarship spanning late Orientalist and Salafi discourses, *The Making of Salafism* will impress a wide readership with interdisciplinary interests in history, contemporary Islamic studies, anthropology, religious studies, and political science. ✂

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Mohammed Pervaiz
Virginia Tech

BRINDA J. MEHTA. *Dissident Writings of Arab Women: Voices against Violence.* New York, NY: Routledge, 2016 (2014). 257 pages, bibliography, index. Paper US\$52.95 ISBN 978-1-138-20042-5.

Mehta's new text, *Dissident Writings of Arab Women*, focuses on the way in which postcolonial creative works by Arab women comprise a form of dissidence that provides alternate histories of the region, especially with regards to women's experience of war and other violence. Mehta asserts that these creative works (novels, short stories, poems, docudramas, interviews, testimonials, plays) represent the quest of writers to effect meaningful change in the world in the form of raised political and social consciousness, and new ways of thinking about the world. Mehta draws on a substantial body of postcolonial, feminist and literary theory to think about the political and cultural critique of these writers and the ways in which they may contribute to a changed consciousness about the experiences of women in colonial, postcolonial, revolutionary and wartime contexts.

She considers works that span fifty years, beginning with the Algerian war of the 1950s and ending with the initial stages of the Arab Spring uprisings. Mehta focuses on the work of women writing in French, English, Spanish and French *verlan*, (a slang that features inversion of syllables in a word) with one author writing in colloquial Egyptian Arabic. These authors are working from Europe, Africa, and the United States. She argues that by focusing on these writings she is representing a broad linguistic plurality in contemporary Arabic literature. This point is well taken. However, the presence of only one work penned in Arabic, when many are available in English and French translation, is perhaps one weakness of the volume.

The book is divided into three parts: Violence and War: the Algerian war story; Violence and Social/Sexual Oppression; and Staging Violence in North African Women's Theater. Part 1 explores the war-themed writings of contemporary Algerian authors Maïssa Bey, Assia Djebar, and Leïla Sebbar. With regard to these women's works, Mehta invokes Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of *la facultad*, which means the often unspoken but deep awareness of the world. She suggests that these writers' access to this awareness allows them to recuperate and bring forward the experiences of women that are often obscured by the patriarchal configurations of colonial power, nationalist ardor and religious sentiment in Algeria. For example, Mehta treats the work of Maïssa Bey, whose *Pierre sang papier ou cendre* (Stone, Blood, Paper or Ash) describes the brutality of French colonization of Algeria and in particular, how French notions of the civilizing mission of colonization often led to the brutalization and rape of women's and men's bodies, and of the land itself. Bey writes from the child's point of view so as to privilege another disenfranchised viewpoint, but also to explore the sorts of questions that children ask, but which adults have ceased to raise. In part 2 of the book, Mehta investigates themes surrounding the abuse of the disenfranchised in Morocco, Spain, and France in the writings of Aïcha Ech-Channa, Faïza Guène, and Laila Lalami. These authors explore the abuse of vulnerable women and children at the hands of upper classes, and the social and sexual violence experienced by those who try to cross international and sociocultural borders. Part 3 of the book turns to two playwrights: Jalila Baccar of Tunisia and Laila Soliman of Egypt. Mehta offers an insightful discussion of Jalila Baccar's play *Junun* (Dementia), which figures madness as the search for self-expression and the natural result of patriarchal oppression and political censorship. Mehta's analysis is interesting and suggests that she is using a similar approach to women writing in Arabic, such as Salwa Bakr (*The Golden Chariot* translated by Dinah Manisty, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1995) and Miral al-Tahawy (*The Tent* translated by Anthony Calderbank, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1998), who explore women's madness as a response to the inhumanity of the police state and harsh patriarchal mores.

Mehta makes the important point that Arab women writers are not only attempting to employ the power of discursivity to transform reality but are also experimenting creatively with both literary forms and topics and in some cases, producing very original hybrid texts. Perhaps missing from the discussion here is some important recent scholarship on works in Arabic, such as *Conscience of the Nation* by Richard Jacquemond (American University in Cairo Press, 2008) and *Egypt's Culture Wars* by Samia Mehrez (Routledge,

2008) which also consider the dual approach of creative innovation combined with serious cultural and political critique. Mehta's interdisciplinary study will be most useful for students and scholars of women's and gender studies, postcolonial studies and Arabic and Francophone literatures. ✂

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Caroline Seymour-Jorn
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

MOSTAFA MINAWI. *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016. xviii + 219 pages, figures, acknowledgments, endnotes, bibliography, index. Paper US\$24.95 ISBN 978-0-8047-9927-0.

The Ottoman Empire was the victim of European imperialism in the late Nineteenth Century, but it was also itself an imperialist and expansionist state. This revisionist idea is at the heart of Mostafa Minawi's *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa*, which makes a substantial contribution to a burgeoning body of work on late Ottoman frontier history. After the Conference of Berlin (Congo Conference) in 1884–1885, the Ottoman state sought to alleviate earlier territorial losses from the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878 by taking a role in the “scramble for Africa” with the other European imperialist powers, thereby demonstrating that the Ottomans were part of the European system of so-called civilized states. The Ottomans sought an area of control in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahara Desert, south of Ottoman possessions in coastal Libya, while accepting European rules on how to make territorial claims.

Minawi discusses in the first two-thirds of the book the historical development of Ottoman imperialism in Africa. He traces the background of Ottoman control in Libya, Ottoman links to the Sahara and Central African kingdoms, and especially the friendly Ottoman relations with the Sanusi Sufi organization that was widespread in the Libyan interior and beyond. It was through the Sanusis that the Ottomans expanded their influence. As Britain, France, and the Mahdist Sudan expanded into the eastern and central Sahara, the Ottomans also sought much of the same territory by sending weapons to the Sanusis. After 1894, however, the Ottoman government recognized its inability to directly challenge Britain and France in the Lake Chad region, opting instead to act together with the Sanusis to consolidate their influence and then indirectly resist the encroachments of France and Britain.

In addition to attempted expansion in Africa, Ottoman leaders perceived a threat in growing British, French, and Italian involvement in the Red