

emotional toll of the process on families—all in the Egyptian social context of vast socioeconomic inequalities that exist in a healthcare system that is inadequate at best and government failures to ensure the protection of the rights and dignity of its citizens. Hamdy concludes that, ultimately, attributing Egyptians' attitudes to organ transplantation simply to religion or to sociomedical problems is unhelpful because it “misses the ways in which these interrelated factors *inform* Muslim ethical positions” (246). Rather the patients she interviewed “understood ethical formulations to be contingent upon the specificities of their social circumstances” (247).

I am not an anthropologist, and thus I will leave the assessment of *Our Bodies Belong to God's* theoretical contributions to the field of anthropology to others better qualified for that task than I am. As a historian with a keen interest in disability, the body, and illness in the Arab world, I found that the book can also be read as a sophisticated and well-documented sociocultural history of organ transplantation in Egypt over the past forty years. Its main shortcoming is the paucity of interviews with kidney donors, whose voices would have added an important perspective, but that is not the author's fault, as the Egyptian government unfortunately did not grant her research permission to conduct those interviews. Besides that, the prose could be tighter in places, the endnotes are at times slightly repetitive, and the first few pages of the conclusion, which present a lengthy and glowing description of the Mansoura Kidney Center, seem somewhat out of place. These are merely minor details; Sherine Hamdy's richly textured book is not only a model of scholarly rigor, but also of sensitivity and empathy. ✂

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**MICHELLE HARTMAN.** *Native Tongue, Stranger Talk: The Arabic and French Literary Landscapes of Lebanon*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014. xviii + 368 pp. Cloth US\$44.95 ISBN 978-0-8156-3356-3.

“How can a French text speak Arabic?” (x), asks Michelle Hartman, who argues that the novels she has studied, although written in French, use “representations of the Arabic language” (23) to challenge gender roles and hierarchies within Lebanese society and most particularly in its French-speaking elites. The introduction of this well-written and well-conceived

book undertakes a thorough review of concepts that will be used further on, so thorough, in fact, that hearing the author's voice is sometimes somewhat difficult (this is, however, amended by the end of the introduction).

The following concepts stand out: world literature (with references to Franco Moretti, David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, and Aamir Mufti, among others), novelization, polyglossia and polyphony (as defined by Mikhail Bakhtin), foreignization (of translation—as discussed by Lawrence Venuti), postcolonial studies and the ways in which the empire writes back (with reference to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin's work), relexification (a concept proposed by Chantal Zabus in *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel*, Rodopi, 2007), and radical bilingualism (as defined by Abdelkébir Khatibi).

Throughout the book, close readings lead to in-depth discussions and reexaminations of concepts. The nine novels are studied in three distinct parts organized both chronologically and thematically. In the first part, "Gendered Interference," Amy Kher's *Salma et son Village* (Salma and Her Village), Eveline Bustros's *Sous la Baguette du Coudrier* (Under the Divining Rod), and Andrée Chedid's *Le Sommeil Délivré* (From Sleep Unbound) are mainly read as ethnographic novels on the mandate and on a newly-independent Lebanon, written from an insider-outsider perspective examining the "use of footnotes and translated Arabic words and expressions" (63). Relexification is taken here as "the literal translation of Arabic expressions into unidiomatic, antiquated or awkward-sounding French" (54). While these three novels delve into customs and traditions of a somewhat idealized Lebanon, as presented by writers belonging to social and intellectual elites, it is difficult to separate them from their French counterparts of the time: novels of the 1930s, written by the likes of Jean Giono or Marcel Pagnol, that tried to rehabilitate the local or the regional, and expressed a form of nostalgia linked to a desire to resist modernization and social change. In many cases, the ideological hides behind the ethnographical.

The second part, "Arabic as Feminist Punctuation," focuses on the civil war period and Vénus Khoury-Ghata's *Le Fils Empaillé* (The Son Stuffed with Straw), Evelyne Accad's *Coquelicot du Massacre* (A Poppy from the Massacre—strangely not yet translated in English, as noted on page 174) and Dominique Eddé's *Lettre Posthume* (A Posthumous Letter). Significant redefinitions of class and gender relations brought about by the long civil war, along with essential issues such as identity politics, sexuality and food culture (from coffee to tabbouleh), are examined in these novels through linguistic lenses (see, for instance, the discussion on the insertion of the Arabic expression *taqburni* (honey, darling), literally "may you bury me" (203)), and concepts

such as polyglossia. Hartman uses Bakhtin's concept of billingsgate, which she defines as "the everyday and even vulgar language of the streets or marketplace" (130) to analyze Accad's and Eddé's novels.

The third part, "Writing as Translation," is on post-war Lebanon, and analyzes in a quite convincing manner three contemporary novels: Leïla Barakat's *Sous les Vignes du Pays Druze* (Under the Vines in Druze Country), sometimes branded as the "first Francophone Druze novel" (242); Dominique Eddé's *Pourquoi Il Fait Si Sombre?* (Why Is It So Dark?); and Eddé's *Cerf-Volant* (Kite). Hartman rightly notes in her excellent introduction to this section that language is "the centerpiece of the French-language postwar novel in Lebanon" (225)—the novels do "create a textual language that reads as translation" (239).

Beyond language, Hartman shows how Eddé's novels challenge (often playfully) all kinds of conventions, be they generic (267), social- or gender-related. In each part, the first chapter gives information on the period studied (the mandate and early independence, civil war, postwar). These introductory chapters could have given more information on Lebanese history and society (the elites' formation, for instance). It would have been useful to remind the reader how modern Lebanon was formed in 1917–1920, or to discuss differences between the mandate and colonial status, or even briefly to come back to nineteenth-century internal conflicts and external interventions, if only to contextualize and explain the specificity of Lebanese colonial and "postcolonial" history. Also, the comparison between Beirut and Alexandria (41) is relevant in many ways, and could have been developed more.

The French language is associated with elites throughout the book; however, part of the Lebanese middle class speaks French. Hartman could have referred more explicitly to the many publications on French, and education in French, in Lebanon; including statistics (even though these were scarce during the civil war). Close readings are effective and reinforced by a clear, original focus on "paratexts" (footnotes in particular) and (especially) vocabulary—through detailed studies of transliterated familiar or vulgar Arabic expressions, or (for instance) the mixing of French and Arabic in Khoury-Ghata's *franbanais*. Studying syntax and stylistic choices through a more comprehensive perspective would have benefited the discussion of linguistic aspects.

This is the first time that these novels are presented to the English-speaking public in a monographic form: this innovative work deserves praise and will be useful (including for case studies) to many in the field of Middle Eastern studies and beyond (linguistics; women's studies; so-called Francophone or *littérature-monde* studies; comparative/world literature;

sociology; translation studies, etc.). Further, translating this interdisciplinary book in both Arabic and French seems to be a necessary endeavor, not least because this work clearly challenges lines of criticism that have often avoided questioning categories such as Arab-ness or Francophone-ness. ✦

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**SALLY HOWELL.** *Old Islam in Detroit: Rediscovering the Muslim American Past.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. xv + 366 pages, figures, images, notes, acknowledgements, footnotes, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$36.95 ISBN 978-0-1993-7200-3.

**S**cholars of Islam in the United States who attempt to render a composite history find significant archival and informational gaps in their narratives. In part, this is a consequence of limited information about Muslims in America during the antebellum period as well as insufficient primary resources outlining the interracial, intercommunal, and political engagement of various Muslim communities from the middle of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. As a result, scholars often find themselves stuck in discussions of the more recent present, unable to fully appreciate the myriad ways that Muslim American communities have historically dealt with the challenges of American society.

There is a growing body of literature on the place of the mosque in American Muslim life, the nature of Muslim leadership in America, and the ways that Muslims have understood, negotiated, and translated Islam into the American context. However, all too often this literature lacks a robust discussion of pre-1970s American Islam. Providing this history and filling the aforementioned gap is exactly the challenge that Sally Howell succeeds in taking on in *Old Islam in Detroit: Rediscovering the Muslim American Past*.

From the outset, Howell explains that a deeper appreciation for the history of Muslim American communities in the early half of the twentieth century can “help Muslims and non-Muslims realize the extent to which their identities are connected and mutually reinforced” (28). This richly researched study, which unearths archival materials and provides important and insightful interviews spanning the history of Islam in Detroit, is enhanced by photographs and images that bring the story of the Muslim communities in and around this city to life.