

Tlatli's masterpiece, *The Silences of the Palace* (1994), which is set during the last moments of the French occupation of Tunisia and the early years of independence in the 1960s. Using Albert Memmi's theoretical work, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (first published in English in 1965), Lang explains how the domination of women in the beylical palace was not that different from the domination of Tunisians by the French colonizers. Chapter 6 presents a study of *Essaïda* (1997) by Mohamed Zran. This film, Lang argues, takes up the theme of social class found in Tlatli's *The Silences of the Palace*. The author breaks down the story piece by piece to explain how the widening rift between rich and poor came about in postcolonial Tunisia. Nadia El Fani's *Bedwin Hacker* (2002) is the subject of chapter 7. This film deals with the media revolution (Internet and satellite television) and its impact on modern Tunisian society. The film is an allegory; openness to the world through technology is juxtaposed to the state's obsession with censorship. In chapter 8, Lang illustrates how Moncef Dhouib, the filmmaker of *The TV Is Coming* (2006), attempts to construct a "usable past" that best fits the needs of the time. Chapter 9 is a lucid analysis of more recent Tunisian society with pertinent examples from Nouri Bouzid's *Making Of* (2006). In the context of a post-Ben Ali Tunisia, Robert Lang walks us through the burning topics of Islam, political Islam, democracy, diversity, and identity. In sum, all the issues that have been serious concerns to Tunisians in recent years and are at the root of the Arab Spring that evicted Ben Ali.

Robert Lang skillfully shows how filmmakers of the new Tunisian cinema have attempted to reinterpret Tunisia's long history and, in their own ways, to redefine Tunisian collective consciousness. All in all, this is a great book and a must-read for all students and scholars in disciplines such as film studies, history, cultural studies, sociology, and North African studies. ✂

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KHALED MATTAWA. *Mahmoud Darwish: The Poet's Art and His Nation*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014. xvii + 197 pages, acknowledgements, notes on translation and transliteration, references, index. Cloth US\$24.95 ISBN 978-0-8156-3361-7.

This relatively small book deals with not only one of the greatest modern Arab poets but also one of the potentially most problematic issues of his poetry, namely, the issue of contingency. From the beginning of his poetic

career, Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008) was aware of this issue. He was deeply committed to writing poetry in support of his Palestinian people and against all injustices they suffered at Israel's hands, but he also wanted his poetry to remain lyrical and earnestly dedicated to absolute truth and human ideals.

Khaled Mattawa is a highly awarded poet writing in English who, most recently, has been named a 2014 MacArthur Foundation Fellow. He is a competent scholar of Libyan origin, a noted translator of Arabic poetry, and a teacher of creative writing at the University of Michigan. In this book, he offers a lucid, sustained, and perceptive literary analysis of some of Darwish's major poems. The seven chapters follow the development of the Palestinian poet as he lived through the evolution of his nation's political problem with Israel. While discussing this contingency affecting the poet, Mattawa successfully brings out the aesthetic elements of Darwish's poetry.

Although he does not mention using reception theory or any other literary theory for his analysis, he speaks of how one of the earliest and most popular of Darwish's poems, "Identity Card," was received differently by Arabs in Israel and Arabs in the Arab world: the former received it as an expression of defiance to Israel and the latter as an articulation of pride in being Arab. In his study, Mattawa shows how the clear political contingency of Darwish's later poetry was in line with the committed literature (*adab al-iltizam*) of social realism zealously published in the Arab world in the 1950s onward. He cleverly demonstrates how Darwish gradually became the spokesman of his people—a poet committed to fostering a collective consciousness among them, to helping them develop an empowered subjectivity and not to give in to despair, and to demythologizing Israelis and communicate with them about their harsh deeds against his countrymen and about the resilience of the Palestinians.

Doing this, Mattawa analyzes Darwish's art in his poems. He notes how Darwish uses the pronouns *I*, *we*, and *you* to create identification with suffering Palestinians, never mentioning the names of Palestinian victims in his early poems but holding them as symbols of the nation enduring the travails of Israeli occupation. He studies how Darwish's imagery, metaphors, and personae are used to represent ideas for transforming and empowering Palestinians. For example, he analyzes Darwish's love poems, where the beloved female is Palestine, and he shows how connected to the land this love is, in contrast to the proclaimed Zionist love based on excavating history and excluding others. As Darwish's *inamorata* is inaccessible, Mattawa shows how the poet invariably expresses the ever-living hope of attaining her. He also shows Darwish's deep knowledge of the Bible and Qur'an in his analysis of poems like "al-Hudhud" (The Hoopoe), "Hajar Kan'ani fi al-Bahr al-Mayyit" (A

Canaanite Stone in the Dead Sea), in order to demonstrate the poet's view of the necessary coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians living on the same land.

Mattawa also discusses the change in Darwish's poetry after leaving Israel in 1970–71 and asserting the aesthetic elements in his poems without abandoning Palestinian issues. Considering Darwish's poems that were written in France after major heart surgery and other notable achievements, Mattawa explains that Darwish began to insert himself in myth in order to embrace reality: "The poet earns authority through the works that endure beyond their context and that continue to provide a renewable philosophical, existential, and political outlook for his reader" (158–59). In discussing "Halat Hisar" (State of Siege), Mattawa shows Darwish's concepts of peace and Palestine as "a place for continuous and rewarding contemplation of the human condition" (167).

Mattawa demonstrates that the political contingency of Darwish's poetry has been transcended while being embraced, his achievement being—as many critics acknowledge—in John Bailey's words, the creation of a poetry that is "wholly contingent and yet makes of that very circumstance its own power" (*The Power of Delight: A Lifetime in Literature—Essays (1962–2002)*, W. W. Norton, 2005, 373).

Apart from errors and inconsistencies in transliterating Arabic words, names, and titles, Mattawa's book is an insightful and well-documented study of Mahmoud Darwish. It is a welcome contribution to understanding this great poet of Arabic literature and an outstanding paradigm for future studies. ✂

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SOPHIA PANDYA. *Muslim Women and Islamic Resurgence: Religion, Education and Identity Politics in Bahrain*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012. ix + 226 pages, acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth £58.00 ISBN 978-1-84885-824-4.

In *Muslim Women and Islamic Resurgence*, Sophia Pandya has done an admirable job of providing the reader with a nuanced view of religion, politics, and identity as experienced by a range of Bahraini and expatriate women living in Bahrain. Pandya's central thesis is that "the Islamic resurgence in Bahrain is shaped by the rise of modern education in the country, and that it ultimately offers a potential space for women's self-determination" (2). She successfully