



Poetry and Politics in the Modern Arab World

Atef Alshaer

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The representation in poetic form of political events and ideas in the Arab world since the nineteenth century is this book's principal theme. Atef Alshaer demonstrates an integral connection between poetry and politics, reflecting the holistic character of Arab culture as well as the longstanding embodiment of poetry in the socio-political life of the Arabs. The shared Arabic language and common cultural heritage that Arabs have encompass and mirror widespread Arab concerns about their societies and their cultural and political development. Poetry as the essence of language served as an illuminating, and often mobilizing, medium of expression which brought the tensions and aspirations of each age to the fore. Beginning with the colonial empires and their colonization of the Arab world, Alshaer illuminates the perennial concerns of major Arab poets with their societies. He discusses the poetic representation of the end of the Ottoman Empire, the onset of Arab nationalism, French and British colonialism, Palestine and the struggle against Zionism, as well as Arab inter-relationships, the emergence of Islamism and Islamist movements, and finally the Arab Spring. Each chapter highlights the mainstream historical, political and intellectual currents of the time and interprets them alongside poems and poets that evoked and consecrated them.



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