



A Short History of Modern Arabic Literature

M. M. Badawi

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This is the first book in English that gives a concise and authoritative survey of the whole of modern Arabic literature since the mid-nineteenth century with a view to helping the general reader as well as the student to form a clear picture of the literary achievements of the modern Arabs. The drive for modernization, which started in Egypt and Syria early in the nineteenth century and which gradually spread to the rest of the Arab world, resulted in the introduction of secular education, printing, journalism, and much translation of western thought and literature. Consequently, a new reading public and a new conception of literature emerged. Inspired by rising nationalism and the conflict between Islam and westernization, writers sought to reflect and indeed change social and political reality, instead of merely displaying their verbal skill. This book examines the attempts made by Arab authors including Nobel winner Naguib Mahfouz to define this cultural identity and meet the needs of the modern world by adapting the imported forms of the novel, short story, and drama, as well as their indigenous poetic and prose tradition.

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