



The Novel and the Rural Imaginary in Egypt, 1880-1985 (Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures)

Samah Selim

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The book locates questions of languages, genre, textuality and canonicity within a historical and theoretical framework that foregrounds the emergence of modern nationalism in Egypt. The ways in which the cultural discourses produced by twentieth century Egyptian nationalism created a space for both a hegemonic and counter-hegemonic politics of language, class and place that inscribed a bifurcated narrative and social geography, are examined. The book argues that the rupture between the village and the city contained in the Egyptian nationalism discourse is reproduced as a narrative dislocation that has continued to characterize and shape the Egyptian novel in general and the village novel in particular. Reading the village novel in Egypt as a dynamic intertext that constructs modernity in a local historical and political context rather than rehearsing a simple repetition of dominant European literary-critical paradigms, this book offers a new approach to the construction of modern Arabic literary history as well as to theoretical questions related to the structure and role of the novel as a worldly narrative genre.

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