



The Female Suffering Body: Illness and Disability in Modern Arabic Literature (Gender, Culture, and Politics in the Middle East)

Abir Hamdar

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Although there is a history of rich, complex, and variegated representations of female illness in Western literature over the last two centuries, the sick female body has traditionally remained outside the Arab literary imagination. Hamdar takes on this historical absence in *The Female Suffering Body* by exploring how both literary and cultural perspectives on female physical illness and disability in the Arab world have transformed in the modern period. In doing so, she examines a range of both canonical and hitherto marginalized Arab writers, including Mahmoud Taymur, Yusuf al-Sibai, Ghassan Kanafani, Naguib Mahfouz, Ziyad Qassim, Colette Khoury, Hanan al-Shaykh, Alia Mamdouh, Salwa Bakr, Hassan Daoud, and Betool Khedair. Hamdar finds that, over the course of sixty years, female physical illness and disability has moved from the margins of Arabic literature—where it was largely the subject of shame, disgust, or revulsion—to the center, as a new wave of female writers have sought to give voice to the "female suffering body."

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