



The Dramatic Literature of Nawal El Saadawi: God Resigns and Isis

Nawal El Saadawi

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Nawal El Saadawi's most recent play, *God Resigns at the Summit Meeting*, created an uproar in her native Egypt. On the basis of the title alone, officials declared the work heretical and charged El Saadawi with insulting the "Almighty God", not just Islam. Her prosecutors requested that all her books be destroyed, that she be arrested on return to Egypt and her Egyptian nationality be revoked. In the play, the prophets and great women gather for a meeting with God. Satan arrives to tender his resignation but neither Jesus, nor Mohammad, nor Moses are willing to replace him. Finally, God himself resigns. The second play in this collection is *Isis*, a critique of the discriminatory rules that control women, the daughters of Isis. Both *God Resigns* and *Isis* incorporate key themes to El Saadawi's work: that all religions are inimical to women and the poor, that the oppression of women is reprehensible and not uniquely characteristic of the Middle East or the "Third World", and that free speech is fundamental to any society. "El Saadawi writes with directness and passion" *New York Times Book Review* 'A poignant and brave writer' *Marie Claire* 'The leading spokeswoman on the status of women in the Arab World' *Guardian* 'More than any other woman, El Saadawi has come to embody the trials of Arab feminism.' *San Francisco Chronicle*

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