Tells the story of the Arab novel’s search for form

The novel is now a major genre in the Arabic literary field. This book explores its development, especially the ways in which the genre engages with aesthetics, ethics and politics in a cross-cultural context and from a transnational perspective.

It takes love and desire as the central tropes through which the Arabic novel tells the tale of its search for form in a world mapped by conflicting ideas. As it falls in love with the nation-state, the Arabic novel flirts with modernity and lives uncomfortably with tradition. The love triangle it creates is at once an expression of its will to participate in the politics, its interrogation of ethics of storytelling, and its search for new aesthetics.

The story of the Arabic novel is presented as a series of failed, illegitimate love affairs, all tainted by its suspicion of the legitimacy of the nation, modernity and tradition, and above all by its misgiving about its own propriety.