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What does it mean to be modern outside the West? Based on a wealth of primary data collected over five years, *Reality Television and Arab Politics* analyzes how reality television stirred an explosive mix of religion, politics, and sexuality, fuelling heated polemics over cultural authenticity, gender relations, and political participation in the Arab world. The controversies, Kraidy argues, are best understood as a social laboratory in which actors experiment with various forms of modernity, continuing a long-standing Arab preoccupation with specifying terms of engagement with Western modernity. Women and youth take center stage in this process. Against the backdrop of dramatic upheaval in the Middle East, this book challenges the notion of a monolithic 'Arab Street' and offers an original perspective on Arab media, shifting attention away from a narrow focus on al-Jazeera, toward a vibrant media sphere that compels broad popular engagement and contentious political performance.

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