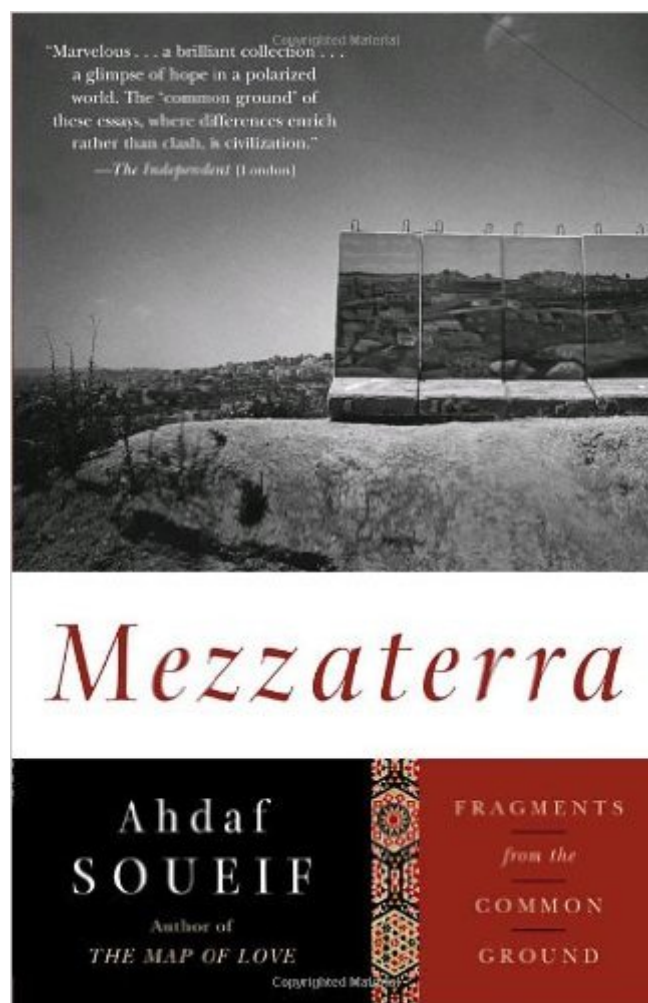


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Mezzaterra: Fragments From The Common Ground



Synopsis

From the bestselling author of the Booker Prize finalist *The Map of Love*—“an incisive collection of essays on Arab identity, art, and politics that seeks to locate the mezzaterra, or common ground, in an increasingly globalized world. The twenty-five years’ worth of criticism and commentary collected here have earned Ahdaf Soueif a place among our most prominent Arab intellectuals. Clear-eyed and passionate, and syndicated throughout the world, they are the direct result of Soueif’s own circumstances of being—like hundreds of thousands of others: people with an Arab or a Muslim background doing daily double-takes when faced with their reflection in a western mirror.” • Whether an account of visiting Palestine and entering the Noble Sanctuary for the first time, an interpretation of women who choose to wear the veil, or her post-September 11 reflections, Soueif’s intelligent, fearless, deeply informed essays embody the modern search for identity and community.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ahdaf Soueif is an Anglo-Egyptian novelist of deserved reknown. However, her collection of some 20 years of newspaper commentaries, published as "*Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground*," does not enhance her writing reputation by much, in my opinion. Apart from the opening essay in this book, which explains her theory of "mezzaterra," and one or two of her pieces on modern life in Egypt, most of the collection goes from one angry rant to another. Soueif's indignation is mostly aimed at Europeans, Israelis and Americans who have, in her opinion, abused and

disrespected Islamic nations and Islamic people over a long period of time. She launches some vitriol toward the recently ousted Mubarak n government as well. While her complaints are not unfounded, her voice is so shrill and her moral authority compromised by her self-imposed isolation from the Middle East and its manifold problems. This made me less sympathetic to her perspective. In fairness to Soueif, she was ill-served by a negligent editor at the publishing house who allowed these essays to be pulled together in a haphazard fashion. Overall, I think Soueif's works of fiction are a better investment of the reader's time.

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