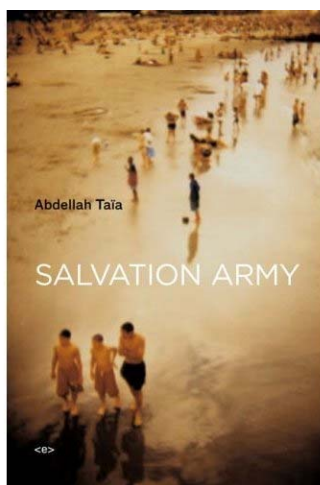


MOROCCAN WRITER ABDELLAH TAÏA  
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BOOKS AND BOOKS  
265 Aragon Avenue, Coral Gables  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2009, 6:30 P.M.



MOROCCAN WRITER ABDELLAH TAÏA will present the recent English and Spanish translations of his novel *Salvation Army*. He will discuss his work with Ralph Heyndels and Gema Perez (University of Miami) during this trilingual event (English, Spanish, French).

Abdellah Taïa is a young Moroccan writer and intellectual figure living in Paris and writing in French. He is the author of several novels, most recently *L'Armée du Salut* and *Une Mélancolie arabe* (Éditions du Seuil), the co-author with Frédéric Mitterand of the texts of a photography book entitled *Maroc 1900-1960* (Actes Sud), and the editor and introducer of *Lettres à un jeune Marocain* (Éditions du Seuil). As the first openly gay writer intervening publicly in Morocco itself (actually the first in the entire Arab world) and whose novels are distributed in that country, he has been ranked by the influential Moroccan weekly magazine *Tel Quel* as one of the three <icons> of contemporary Moroccan culture and society. He is also a vigorous defender of tolerance, cultural and civic openness, democracy and human rights in his native country and everywhere. Novels by Abdellah Taïa have already been translated in Spanish, Dutch and Italian, and *Salvation Army* just appeared in English, translated by Frank Stock and prefaced by Edmund White, at M.I.T. Press. Taïa's "calmly transgressive work" has been recognized as a "major addition to the new French literature emerging from the North African Arabic diaspora", as it combines narrative and rhetorical complexity with the subjective genuine tonality of personal story telling and auto-fictional apparent confession.

*This is a novel about love in all his forms. A Moroccan boy's love for his mother (...) The boy's love for his older brother (...) About the boy's love of the French language and literature (...) This is (...) a book about the love of men for men (...) This a book about a boy's love for his past. This is also a book about fear. (...) If the secret of great fiction (...) is "defamiliarization", making everything known seem strange, then nothing could be more accomplished and persuasive than this mysterious novel. The boy himself is foreign to us, our world is foreign to him, everyone is a foreigner in love with the "other" (whether that be a Swiss man or an older brother). Despite the simplicity and clarity of Taïa's style, we sense how sophisticated he is – that this is a simplicity that only intelligence (...) can buy. Not only has the language been chastened, but the selection of scenes to show and to exclude has also been subjected to a draconian editing process. Finally, this is a book about poverty. About sexual tourism, its benign side (...) and its cruel side. But Abdellah Taïa doesn't spell this out. His is an ecstatic and generous nature who lives in the particular, who shies away from generalizations. No matter how often he might be disappointed or wounded he is ever (...) prepared to receive that wonderful, transforming thing: reciprocal affection. This book is a clear stream; drink from it deeply. Edmund White*

This event is organized in conjunction with the U.M. Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and the French Cultural Services (Miami office), with the support of the U.M. Queer Studies Research Group and the U.M. Africana Studies Program, along with the Alliance Française de Miami-Fort Lauderdale.. Open to the public. Free admission.