

Miral Al Tahawy

A railway freight clerk in Ghana attempts to hold out against the pressures that impel him toward corruption in both his family and his country.

"This short but cleverly crafted novel recounts the tale of Muhra, a young woman whose name means filly, born of the descendants of the Bedouin tribes who settled in Egypt's Delta Province of El Sharqiyya during the 18th and 19th centuries." "Past mingles with present and myth and folklore blend with reality, as the narrative voice records Muhra's quest as she seeks to discover the truth about her mother through the old family photographs that adorn the walls of her grandfather's house and other documents hidden away in cupboards and drawers." "At once both narrator and narrated, Muhra's tale of self discovery is set against the dwindling fortunes of her own people as they struggle to preserve their identity and culture amid the larger Egyptian community that encroaches upon them. At the same time her father's wanderings and ultimate demise reflect the waning star of the Arab tribes who once controlled large swathes of Egyptian territory and enjoyed the patronage of Kings and Princes." "Unwilling to give up despite premonitions of doom, Muhra's search leads her inexorably to the bitter truth about her mother's poignant life and tragic and untimely end."--Jacket.

Literary Nonfiction. Women's Studies. Middle Eastern Studies. MIN FAMI: ARAB FEMINIST REFLECTIONS ON IDENTITY, SPACE, AND RESISTANCE is an anthology that cradles the thoughts of Arab feminists, articulated through personal critical narratives, academic essays, poetry, short stories, and visual art. It is a meeting space where discussions on home(land), exile, feminism, borders, gender and sexual identity, solidarity, language, creative resistance, and (de) colonization are shared, confronted, and subverted. In a world that has increasingly found monolithic and one-dimensional ways of representing Arab womyn, this anthology comes as an alternate space in which we connect on the basis of our shared identities, despite physical, theoretical, and metaphorical distances, to celebrate our multiple voices, honour our ancestry, and build community on our own terms, and in our own voices.

Ahmed Otared is a Cairene police officer and trained sniper. When the country is invaded and occupied by a force of foreign mercenaries he joins the underground resistance, embarking on a new bloodthirsty career. As the violence he encounters and participates in intensifies, a terrifying reality, bubbling below the surface of 'normal' life, is revealed to him, and he finds himself in a fantasia of torture and torment, a hellscape from which there is no deliverance. This unflinching and grisly tale is made vivid through Mohammed Rabie's brutally beautiful writing.

This lyrical novel tells the story of a young man living in Egypt in the 1990s, a time of great turmoil. We see student riots at Cairo University, radical politics, and the first steps towards the making of a writer. But his story is not told in isolation: through his experiences and memories Yasser Abdellatif also unfolds the experiences of his Nubian family through the epochal changes the country underwent in the twentieth-century. The symphonic four-part text presents us with narratives of Egyptian identity, a constant knitting and unravelling that moves us back and forth through time, as the reader slides and leaps across the shifting tectonic plates of Abdellatif's vignettes, his immaculately limpid prose poetry bringing forth the same questions. Nobody quite belongs in Cairo, it seems, but at the same time none of them belongs anywhere else: a relative emigrates from his Nubian village to the Cairo of the 1930s, where Italian fascists chase him through the streets and into a Maltese exile, only for him to return and make his way back South to the homeland he left. Another relative falls into religious esotericism and later madness, spinning away from Cairo and back to the wasteland of a village relocated after it had been flooded by the Aswan Dam. Meanwhile, in the 1990s, students fight security forces and binge on pills amid the dysfunctional remnants of a centralized state whose gravitational pull uprooted their parents and offered the possibility of assimilation into a national identity. Through the clear sky of Abdellatif's novel his characters, the spaces they call home, their way-stations, and even the nation that contains them all are a murmuration of starlings, held together and apart forever. The lives of two women living centuries apart are connected by an enigmatic painting in this mesmerizing debut based on historical events Art historian, Yasmine, is restoring an unsigned portrait of a strikingly beautiful girl from the Napoleonic Era, when she discovers that the artist has embedded a lock of hair into the painting, something highly unusual. The mysterious painting came into the museum's possession without record, and Yasmine becomes consumed by the secret concealed within this captivating work. Meanwhile, at the close of the French Campaign in Egypt, sixteen-year-old Zeinab, the daughter of a prominent sheikh, is drawn into French high society when Napoleon himself requests her presence. Enamored by the foreign customs of the Europeans, she finds herself on a dangerous path, one that may ostracize her from her family and culture. Seamlessly merging fiction with history, art, and politics, modern day Cairo with its opulent past, this compelling story of two women caught between worlds and entangled in matters of the heart launches an entrancing new literary voice.

Follows the immigration experience of a young Vietnamese girl who comes of age in a hardscrabble Quebec community before earning an education and pursuing a career and her literary ambitions, in a story constructed as a series of short vignettes.

A must-read for anyone interested in Muslim cultures, this volume not only explores Muslim identities through the lens of sexuality and gender - their historical and contemporary transformations and local and global articulations - but also interrogates our understanding of what constitutes a 'Muslim' identity in selected Muslim-majority countries at this pivotal historical moment, characterized by transformative destabilizations in which national, ethnic, and religious boundaries are being re-imagined and re-made. Contributors take on the most fundamental questions at the intersections of gender, sexuality, and the body. Several overarching questions frame the volume: How does studying gender and sexuality expand and enrich our understanding of Muslim-majority countries, historically and at present? How does the embodiment of 'Muslim' identity get reconfigured in the context of twenty-first-century globalism? What analytical questions are raised about 'Islam' when its diverse meanings and multifaceted expressions are closely examined? What roles do gender and sexuality play in the construction of cultural, religious, nationalistic, communal, and militaristic identities? How have power struggles been signified in and on the bodies of women and sexuality? How have global dynamics, such as the intensification and spread of neoliberal ideologies and policies, affected changing dynamics of gender and sexuality in specific locales? Here global dynamics touch down in diverse contexts, from masculinity crises around war disabilities, transnational marriages, and fathering in Turkey, Egypt, and Pakistan; to Muslim femininity narratives around female genital cutting, sexuality in divorce proceedings, and spouse selection; to gender crossing practices as well as protesting bodies, queering voices, and claims of authenticity in literary and political discourse. This book brings exciting research on these and other topics together in one place, allowing the essa

Finalist for the Man Booker International Prize 2015 Buttologist is down on his uppers. His girlfriend, Original Colour, has cleared out of their Paris studio and run off to the Congo with a vertically challenged drummer known as The Mongrel. She's taken their daughter with her. Meanwhile, a racist neighbour spies on him something wicked, accusing him of 'digging a hole in the Dole'. And his drinking buddies at Jips, the Afro-Cuban bar in Les Halles, pour scorn on Black Bazaar, the journal he keeps to log his sorrows. There are days when only the Arab in the corner shop has a kind word; while at night his dreams are stalked by the cannibal pygmies of Gabon. Then again, Buttologist wears no ordinary uppers. He has style, bags of it (suitcases of crocodile and anaconda Westons, to be precise). He's a dandy from the Bacongo district of Brazzaville - AKA a sapeur or member of the Society of Ambience-makers and People of Elegance. But is flaunting sartorial chic against tough times enough for Buttologist to cut it in the City of Light?

"Fuller brings Africa to life, both its natural splendor and the harsher realities of day-to-day existence, and sheds light on her parents in all their humanness—not a glaring sort of light, but the soft equatorial kind she so beautifully describes in this memoir." —Bookpage A story of survival and war, love and madness, loyalty and forgiveness, Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness is an intimate exploration of Fuller's parents, whom readers first met in Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight, and of the price of being possessed by Africa's uncompromising, fertile, death-dealing land. We follow Tim and Nicola Fuller hopscotching the continent, restlessly trying to establish a home. War, hardship, and tragedy follow the family even as Nicola fights to hold on to her children, her land, her sanity. But just when it seems that Nicola has been broken by the continent she loves, it is the African earth that revives and nurtures her. Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness is Fuller at her very best. Alexandra Fuller is the author of several memoirs: Travel Light, Move Fast, Leaving Before the Rains Come and Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight.

In this extraordinary novel by heralded Iraqi author Muhsin Al-Ramli, One Hundred Years of Solitude meets The Kite Runner against the backdrop of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. "A profoundly moving investigation of love, death, and injustice." --The Guardian "A standard in contemporary Middle Eastern literature." --Booklist "A stunning achievement." --The National On the third day of Ramadan, a small village in Iraq wakes to find the severed heads of nine of its sons stacked in banana crates by the bus stop. One of them belonged to one of the most wanted men in Iraq, known to his friends as Ibrahim the Fated. How did this good and humble man earn the enmity of so many? What did he do to deserve such a death? The answer lies in his lifelong friendship with Abdullah Kafka and Tariq the Befuddled, who each have their own remarkable stories to tell. It lies on the scarred, irradiated battlefields of the Gulf War and in the ashes of a revolution strangled in its cradle. It lies in the steadfast love of his wife and the festering scorn of his daughter. And, above all, it lies behind the locked gates of the President's gardens, buried alongside the countless victims of a pitiless reign of terror.

The author shares his impressions of Paris, describes the many memories associated with its streets and buildings, and looks at the future of the city

Meet Egypt's top TV preacher Hatem el-Shenawi: a national celebrity revered by housewives and politicians alike for delivering Islam to the masses. Charismatic and quick-witted, he has friends in high places. But when he is entrusted with a secret that threatens to wreak havoc across the country, he is drawn into a web of political intrigue at the very heart of government. Can Hatem's fame and fortune save him from this unspeakable scandal?

Recounts the tale of Muhra, a young woman whose name means filly, born of the descendants of the Bedouin tribes who settled in Egypt's Delta Province of El Sharqiyya during the 18th and 19th centuries. This title describes Muhra's quest as she seeks to discover the truth about her mother through the old family photographs.

The Tent is a beautifully written, powerful, and disturbing novel, featuring a host of women characters whose lives are subject to the will of a single, often absent, patriarch and his brutal, foul-mouthed mother. Told through the eyes of a young girl, the lives of the Bedouin and peasant women unfold, revealing the tragedy of the sonless mother and the intolerable heaviness of existence. Set against trackless deserts and star-filled night skies, the story tells of the young girl's relationship with her distant father and a foreign woman who is well-meaning but ultimately motivated by self-interest. It provides an intimate glimpse inside the women's quarters, and chronicles their pastimes and preoccupations, their stories and their songs.

Spanning the collapse of Ottoman rule and the British Mandate in Palestine, this is the story of three generations of a defiant family from the Palestinian village of Hadiya before 1948. Through the lives of Mahmud, chief elder of Hadiya, his son Khaled, and Khaled's grandson Naji, we enter the lives of a tribe whose fate is decided by one colonizer after another. Khaled's remarkable white mare, Hamama, and her descendants feel and share the family's struggles and as a siege grips Hadiya, it falls to Khaled to save his people from a descending tyranny.

This book considers the ways in which madness has been portrayed in writing by women writers. It readdresses the madwoman trope, opening up multiple sites of literary madness, examining places and spaces outside of the 'madwoman in the attic.' In particular, a transnational approach sets itself up against a Eurocentric approach to literary madness. Women novelists from the Brontës to the Indian writer Arundhati Roy and Arab writers Fadia Faqir and Miral al-Tahawy interrogate patriarchal societies and oppressive cultures. Female characters who suffer from madness are strikingly similar in their revolutionary subversion of patriarchal environments.

The Puppet, a mythic tale of greed and political corruption, traces the rise, flourishing, and demise of a Saharan oasis community. Aghulli, a noble if obtuse man who has been chosen leader of the oasis, hankers after the traditional nomadic pastoralist life of the Tuareg. He sees commerce (understood as including trade in gold, marriage, agriculture, and even recreation) as the prime culprit in the loss of the nomadic ethos. Thus he is devastated to learn that his supporters are hoarding gold. The novel's title notwithstanding, the author has stressed repeatedly that he is not a political author. He says that The Puppet portrays a good man who has been asked to lead a corrupt society. The subplot

about star-crossed young lovers introduces a Sufi theme of the possibility of transforming carnal into mystical love. The Puppet, though, is first and foremost a gripping, expertly crafted tale of bloody betrayal and revenge inspired by gold lust and an ancient love affair.

Widely acclaimed as Naguib Mahfouz's best novel, *Midaq Alley* brings to life one of the hustling, teeming back alleys of Cairo in the 1940s. From Zaita the cripple-maker to Kirsha the hedonistic cafe owner, from Abbas the barber who mistakes greed for love to Hamida who sells her soul to escape the alley, from waiters and widows to politicians, pimps, and poets, the inhabitants of Midaq Alley vividly evoke Egypt's largest city as it teeters on the brink of change. Never has Nobel Prize-winner Mahfouz's talent for rich and luxurious storytelling been more evident than here, in his portrait of one small street as a microcosm of the world on the threshold of modernity.

Hani was out for an evening stroll near Cairo's Tahrir Square when a heavy hand landed on his shoulder. An informant had identified him, and he was thrown into the back of a police truck. There began a seven-month nightmare as he was swept up, along with fifty other men, in the infamous Queen Boat affair that targeted Egypt's gay community. Finally free, but traumatized into speechlessness, Hani writes down the events of his life--his first sexual desires, his relationship with his mother, his marriage of convenience, and his passion for Abdel Aziz, the only man he ever truly loved. In the Spider's Room is a sensitive and courageous account of life as a gay man in Egypt.

This dazzling anthology features the work of seventy-nine outstanding writers from all over the Arab-speaking world, from Morocco in the west to Iraq in the east, Syria in the north to Sudan in the south. Edited by Denys Johnson-Davies, called by Edward Said "the leading Arabic-to-English translator of our time," this treasury of Arab voices is diverse in styles and concerns, but united by a common language. It spans the full history of modern Arabic literature, from its roots in western cultural influence at the end of the nineteenth century to the present-day flowering of Naguib Mahfouz's literary sons and daughters. Among the Egyptian writers who laid the foundation for the Arabic literary renaissance are the great Tawfik al-Hakim; the short story pioneer Mahmoud Teymour; and Yusuf Idris, who embraced Egypt's vibrant spoken vernacular. An excerpt from the Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih's novel *Season of Migration to the North*, one of the Arab world's finest, appears alongside the Libyan writer Ibrahim al-Koni's tales of the Tuaregs of North Africa, the Iraqi writer Mohamed Khudayir's masterly story "Clocks Like Horses," and the work of such women writers as Lebanon's Hanan al-Shaykh and Morocco's Leila Abouzeid.

A multigenerational tale of love, loss, exile, and rebirth, shortlisted for the 2016 International Prize for Arabic Fiction. As children sleeping on the rooftop of their ancestral family home in Raqqa on warm summer nights, Joumane and her sisters imagine the sky is so close they can almost touch it. Years later, Joumane lives as an expatriate in Jordan, working for a humanitarian agency, while her sisters remain trapped in war-torn Syria. Living alone as she fights her own battle with cancer, she contemplates the closeness of the same sky, despite the sharply delineated borders that now separate her from her family. Her only close confidant is another exile, a charming, divorced Palestinian man with whom she develops a warm relationship—later discovering that their relatives were neighbors in Syria. As Joumane undergoes painful chemotherapy treatments, Nasser slides into the role of her caretaker and partner. She comes to depend on him utterly, at the same time fearing that her vulnerability and need will ultimately drive him away.

Interspersed with Joumane's story is a sweeping historical narrative that moves from nineteenth-century Aleppo, Raqqa, and Damascus, to Palestine before and after the 1948 Nakba, to Iraq before and after the American occupation, and beyond to the United States, Serbia, and Vietnam. Each character in the book is revealed, and linked, through the stories of their ancestors, showing the intergenerational inheritance of trauma and identity. Ujayli's attention to detail and evocative prose brings to life worlds forgotten and ignored, reminding us of the devastation of war and the beauty that people create wherever they go. As children sleeping on the rooftop of their ancestral family home in Raqqa on warm summer nights, Joumane and her sisters imagine the sky is so close they can almost touch it. Years later, Joumane lives as an expatriate in Jordan, working for a humanitarian agency, while her sisters remain trapped in war-torn Syria. Living alone as she fights her own battle with cancer, she contemplates the closeness of the same sky, despite the sharply delineated borders that now separate her from her family. Her only close confidant is another exile, a charming, divorced Palestinian man with whom she develops a warm relationship—later discovering that their relatives were neighbors in Syria. As Joumane undergoes painful chemotherapy treatments, Nasser slides into the role of her caretaker and partner. She comes to depend on him utterly, at the same time fearing that her vulnerability and need will ultimately drive him away. Interspersed with Joumane's story is a sweeping historical narrative that moves from nineteenth-century Aleppo, Raqqa, and Damascus, to Palestine before and after the 1948 Nakba, to Iraq before and after the American occupation, and beyond to the United States, Serbia, and Vietnam. Each character in the book is revealed, and linked, through the stories of their ancestors, showing the intergenerational inheritance of trauma and identity. Ujayli's attention to detail and evocative prose brings to life worlds forgotten and ignored, reminding us of the devastation of war and the beauty that people create wherever they go.

The Tent
American University in Cairo Press

Narrating Postcolonial Arab Nations significantly enhances the interface between postcolonial literary studies and the hitherto under-studied Arab world. Lindsey Moore brings together canonical and less familiar Arab novels and memoirs from the last half century to consider colonial continuities and consequences. Literary narratives are shown to oppose repressive versions of nationalism and to track desire lines toward more hospitable nations. The literatures discussed in this book enable a deeper historical understanding of twenty-first century Arab uprisings and their aftermaths. The book analyzes four rich sites of literary production: Egypt, Algeria, Lebanon, and Palestine. Moore explores ways in which authors critique particular nation-state formations and decolonizing histories, engage the general problematic of 'the nation', and redefine, repurpose,

and transcend national literary canons. Chapter One contrasts Egyptian literary representations of popular revolt with official revolutionary discourse. Chapter Two addresses the enduring legacy of anti-colonial violence in Algeria and the place of Albert Camus in its literature. Chapter Three uses narratives of gender violence on the Beirut front line to reveal the divisibility and intersectional identity politics of postcolonial nation-states. Chapter Four emphasizes ways in which Palestinian memoirs insist upon remembering towards a postcolonial future. The book provides detailed analysis of literary narratives by Etel Adnan, Rabih Alameddine, Alaa al-Aswany, Rachid Boudjedra, Albert Camus, Rashid al-Daif, Assia Djebar, Ghada Karmi, Naguib Mahfouz, Jean Said Makdisi, Edward Said, Boualem Sansal, Raja Shehadeh, Miral al-Tahawy, and Latifa al-Zayyat. It is an indispensable volume for students and scholars of Postcolonial, Arab, and World literatures.

'Notes on the Flesh' is a collection of short stories that unravel the intricacies of identity, love, and illness in the Middle East. Unreliably narrated, these are the stories of women and men who have lost the war against patriarchy. Adolescent love, intimacy and familial sacrifices are the shadows that accentuate the unhealable rift between tradition and modernity.

Blue Aubergine tells the story of a young Egyptian woman, born in 1967, growing up in the wake of Egypt's defeat of that year, and maturing into womanhood against the social and political upheavals Egypt experienced during the final decades of the twentieth century. Physically and emotionally scarred by her parents and the events of her childhood, and incapable of relating to men, Nada, the 'Blue Aubergine,' fumbles through a series of dark and unsettling adventures, resorting first to full Islamic dress with niqab and gloves and then throwing it all off for the flowing hair and tight clothes of an emancipated young graduate student, in an ever more desperate and ultimately failed search for tenderness and affection. A frank assessment of the damage society wreaks by foisting unwise claustrophobic values on its children, this richly woven text shifts unpredictably through time and space like a sojourn in dream time. A mixed crowd of aunts and teachers, classmates and fellow students, Marxists and Islamicists are there to people the Blue Aubergine's bewildering journey to the knowledge that the maintenance of chastity and innocence and her naive determination to cling to the threads of silk and lace that bind her to her past bring only misery and isolation.

In Riyadh, against the events of the second Gulf War and Saddams invasion of Kuwait, we learn the story of Munira with the gorgeous eyes and the unspeakable tragedy she suffers as her male nemesis wreaks revenge for an insult to his character and manhood. It is also the tale of many other women of Saudi Arabia who pass through the remand center where Munira works, victims and perpetrators of crimes, characters pained and tormented, trapped in cocoons of silence and fear. Munira records their stories on pieces of paper that she folds up and places in the mysterious bottle given to her long ago by her grandmother, a repository for the stories of the dead, that they might live again. This controversial novel looks at many of the issues that characterize the lives of women in modern Saudi society, including magic and envy, honor and revenge, and the strict moral code that dictates male-female interaction. Yousef al-Mohaimeed is a rising star in international literature. Munira's Bottle is a rich and skillfully crafted story of a dysfunctional Saudi Arabian family. One of its strengths lies in its edgy characters: Munira, a sultry, self-centered, sexually repressed woman; Ibn al-Dahhal, the bold imposter who deceives and betrays her; and Muhammad, her perpetually angry and righteous brother, a catalyst who forces the events. Western readers will welcome it for its opening door into Arab lives and minds. Annie Proulx Mohaimeed writes in a lush style that evokes a writer he cites as an influence, Gabriel Garcia Marquez. [He] takes on some of the most divisive subjects in the Arab world.

The moufflon, a wild sheep prized for its meat, continues to survive in the remote mountain desert of southern Libya. Only Asouf, a lone bedouin who cherishes the desert and identifies with its creatures, knows exactly where it is to be found. Now he and the moufflon together come under threat from hunters who have already slaughtered the once numerous desert gazelles. The novel combines pertinent ecological issues with a moving portrayal of traditional desert life and of the power of the human spirit to resist.

The adventures of a modern time traveler in Egypt's colorful medieval past

Hassan ekes out a living in his native Marrakesh as a comic writer and performer, through satirical sketches critical of Morocco's rulers. Yet, when he is suddenly conscripted into a losing war in the Sahara, and drafted to a far-flung desert outpost, it seems that all is lost. Could his estranged father, close to power as the King's private jester, have something to do with his sudden removal? And will he ever see his beloved wife Zinab again? With flowing prose and black humor, Youssef Fadel subtly tells the story of 1980s Morocco. He evokes a system whose brutality emanates from the top, and is felt and reproduced in the countless uneven power relations of the people living underneath.

"A beautiful, daring, challenging novel" of a young Muslim immigrant—from the author of the New York Times Notable Book, *The Translator* (The Guardian). Leila Aboulela's American debut is a provocative, timely, and engaging novel about a young Muslim woman—once privileged and secular in her native land and now impoverished in London—gradually embracing her orthodox faith. With her Muslim hijab and down-turned gaze, Najwa is invisible to most eyes, especially to the rich families whose houses she cleans in London. Twenty years ago, Najwa, then at university in Khartoum, would never have imagined that one day she would be a maid. An upperclass Westernized Sudanese, her dreams were to marry well and raise a family. But a coup forces the young woman and her family into political exile in London. Soon orphaned, she finds solace and companionship within the Muslim community. Then Najwa meets Tamer, the intense, lonely younger brother of her employer. They find a common bond in faith and slowly, silently, begin to fall in love. Written with directness and force, *Minaret* is a lyric and insightful novel about Islam and an alluring glimpse into a culture Westerners are only just beginning to understand. "Lit up by a highly unusual sensibility and world view, so rarefied and uncompromising that it is likely to throw the reader out of kilter . . . Her delicacy of touch is to be complimented." —Chandrabhas Choudhury, San Francisco Chronicle

Hind, newly arrived in New York with her eight-year-old son, several suitcases of unfinished manuscripts, and hardly any English, finds a room in a Brooklyn teeming with people like her who

dream of becoming writers. As she discovers the various corners of her new home, they conjure up parallel memories from her childhood and her small Bedouin village in the Nile Delta: Emilia who sells used shoes at the flea market smells like Zeinab, the old woman who worked for Hind's grandfather; the reflection of her own body as she dances tango awakens the awkwardness of her relationship to that body across the years; the story of Lilette, the Egyptian bourgeoisie who has lost her memory, prompts Hind to safeguard her own. Through this kaleidoscopic spectrum of disadvantaged characters we encounter unique but familiar life histories in this award-winning and intensely moving novel of displacement and exile. It was the winner of the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature, and was shortlisted for the 2011 Arabic Booker prize.

At the beginning of this masterpiece of African literature, Clarence, a white man, has been shipwrecked on the coast of Africa. Flush with self-importance, he demands to see the king, but the king has just left for the south of his realm. Traveling through an increasingly phantasmagoric landscape in the company of a beggar and two roguish boys, Clarence is gradually stripped of his pretensions, until he is sold to the royal harem as a slave. But in the end Clarence's bewildering journey is the occasion of a revelation, as he discovers the image, both shameful and beautiful, of his own humanity in the alien splendor of the king

Cultural Identity in Arabic Novels of Immigration: A Poetics of Return offers a new perspective of migration studies that views the concept of migration in Arabic as inherently embracing the notion of return. Starting the study with the significance of the Islamic hijra as the quintessential migrant narrative in Arabic culture, Elmeligi offers readings of Arabic narratives as early as Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* and as recent as Miral Al-Tahawy's 2010 *Brooklyn Heights*, and as varied as Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz's short story adaptation of the ancient Egyptian Tale of Sinuhe and Yemeni novelist Mohammed Abdl Wali's *They Die Strangers*, including novels that have not been translated in English before, such as Sonallah Ibrahim's *Amrikanli* and Suhayl Idris' *The Latin Quarter*. To contextualize these narratives, Elmeligi employs studies of cultural identity and their features that are most impacted by migration. In this study, Elmeligi analyzes the different manifestations of return, whether physical or psychological, commenting not only on the decisions that the characters take in the novels, but also the narrative choices that the writers make, thus viewing narrativity as a form of performativity of cultural identity as well. The book addresses fresh angles of migration studies, identity theory, and Arabic literary analysis that are of interest to scholars and students.

"As a bookseller, I loved *Shelf Life* for the chance to peer behind the curtain of *Diwan*, Nadia Wassef's Egyptian bookstore—the way that the personal is inextricable from the professional, the way that failure and success are often lovers, the relationship between neighborhoods and books and life. Nadia's story is for every business owner who has ever jumped without a net, and for every reader who has found solace in the aisles of a bookstore." —Emma Straub, author of *All Adults Here* "Shelf Life is such a unique memoir about career, life, love, friendship, motherhood, and the impossibility of succeeding at all of them at the same time. It is the story of *Diwan*, the first modern bookstore in Cairo, which was opened by three women, one of whom penned this book. As a bookstore owner I found this fascinating. As a reader I found it fascinating. Blunt, honest, funny." —Jenny Lawson, author of *Broken (in the best possible way)* The warm and winning story of opening a modern bookstore where there were none, *Shelf Life: Chronicles of a Cairo Bookseller* recounts Nadia Wassef's troubles and triumphs as a founder and manager of Cairo-based *Diwan*. The streets of Cairo make strange music. The echoing calls to prayer; the raging insults hurled between drivers; the steady crescendo of horns honking; the shouts of street vendors; the television sets and radios blaring from every sidewalk. Nadia Wassef knows this song by heart. In 2002, with her sister, Hind, and their friend, Nihal, she founded *Diwan*, a fiercely independent bookstore. They were three young women with no business degrees, no formal training, and nothing to lose. At the time, nothing like *Diwan* existed in Egypt. Culture was languishing under government mismanagement, and books were considered a luxury, not a necessity. Ten years later, *Diwan* had become a rousing success, with ten locations, 150 employees, and a fervent fan base. Frank, fresh, and very funny, Nadia Wassef's memoir tells the story of this journey. Its eclectic cast of characters features *Diwan*'s impassioned regulars, like the demanding Dr. Medhat; Samir, the driver with CEO aspirations; meditative and mythical Nihal; silent but deadly Hind; dictatorial and exacting Nadia, a self-proclaimed bitch to work with—and the many people, mostly men, who said *Diwan* would never work. *Shelf Life* is a portrait of a country hurtling toward revolution, a feminist rallying cry, and an unapologetic crash course in running a business under the law of entropy. Above all, it is a celebration of the power of words to bring us home.

The Yacoubian Building holds all that Egypt was and has become over the 75 years since its namesake was built on one of downtown Cairo's main boulevards. From the pious son of the building's doorkeeper and the raucous, impoverished squatters on its roof, via the tattered aristocrat and the gay intellectual in its apartments, to the ruthless businessman whose stores occupy its ground floor, each sharply etched character embodies a facet of modern Egypt -- where political corruption, ill-gotten wealth, and religious hypocrisy are natural allies, where the arrogance and defensiveness of the powerful find expression in the exploitation of the weak, where youthful idealism can turn quickly to extremism, and where an older, less violent vision of society may yet prevail. Alaa Al Aswany's novel caused an unprecedented stir when it was first published in 2002 and has remained the world's best selling novel in the Arabic language since. A chance encounter on a plane throws together Doha, a fashion designer unhappily married to a leading figure in the Mubarak regime, and Ashraf, an academic and leading dissident. The story of their relationship and Doha's self-discovery runs alongside a young Egyptian's search for the mother he never knew, and these intersecting narratives unfold against the background of political protests that culminate in the overthrow of the regime. A moving and at times humorous story, *Butterfly Wings* is an extended allegory of Egypt's modern experience of authoritarian rule and explores the fractures and challenges of a society at the moment of revolutionary transformation. Mohamed Salmawy's almost prophetic novel was first published in Arabic immediately prior to the events of 25 January 2011, and has been celebrated as 'the novel that predicted the Revolution.' First published in Arabic in 2011 by al-Dar al-Misriya al-Libnaniya as *Ajnihat al-farasha*.

Shajar al-Durr, known as *Tree of Pearls*, was one of the most famous Arab queens and the only woman in the medieval Arab world to rule in her own name. Her narrative is one element of a much larger story of the unsettled political climate of thirteenth-century Egypt. In this eponymous novel, Zaydan charts the fall of the Ayyubid Dynasty and the rise of the Mamluke Dynasty through the adventures of *Tree of Pearls* and Rukn al-Din Baybars, a young Mamluke commander who eventually triumphs as the ruler of Egypt. War, political intrigue, murder, and a female ruler who was born a slave combine for an irresistible story, while Zaydan's keen observations on royal politics and subverted gender roles offer readers a richly detailed glimpse of the cultural milieu of the time. *Tree of Pearls*, originally published in 1914, is the last in a famous series of historical novels written by Zaydan, an accomplished historian whose books continue to be read widely in the Arab world today. Selim's fluid translation introduces an English audience to one of the Arab world's influential writers.

Modern Arabic literature remains little known and poorly understood despite growing curiosity among European readers. This brief introduction offers a unique overview, focusing on developments over the last fifty years. It provides a guide to the literary landscape, indicating the major landmarks in the shape of authors, ideas and debates. The picture that emerges shows that the literature of the modern Arab world, Europe's closest neighbour, is not so far from us as we are sometimes encouraged to think. A timely contribution to the dialogue between East and West, bringing modern Arabic literature into the mainstream for English-speaking readers. 'Tresilian's book is not only informative about its subject but also provides thought-provoking messages to the general reader.' Denys Johnson Davies Banipal Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz mines the riches of his homeland's ancient past in Rhadopis of Nubia, an unforgettable love story set against the high politics of Egypt's Sixth Dynasty. While the ravishing courtesan Rhadopis is bathing, a falcon lifts one of her golden sandals and drops it into the lap of the Pharaoh Merenra II. Upon hearing Rhadopis described as "beauty itself," the young pharaoh decides to return Rhadopis's sandal himself. When the two meet, they are immediately seized by a passion far stronger than their ability to resist. Thus begins a love affair that makes them the envy of Egyptian society. But blinded by their love and the extravagant attentions they lavish on each other, they ignore the growing resentment of the world around them in this extraordinary tale of star-crossed love.

Women's transgressive behaviors and perspectives are challenging societal norms in the Arab world, giving rise to anxiety and public debate. Simultaneously, however, other Arab women are unwillingly finding themselves labeled "bad" as authority figures attempt to redirect scrutiny from serious social ills such as patriarchy and economic exploitation, or as they impose new restrictions on women's behavior in response to uncertainty and change in society. *Bad Girls of the Arab World* elucidates how both intentional and unintentional transgressions make manifest the social and cultural constructs that define proper and improper behavior, as well as the social and political policing of gender, racial, and class divisions. The works collected here address the experiences of women from a range of ages, classes, and educational backgrounds who live in the Arab world and beyond. They include short pieces in which the women themselves reflect on their experiences with transgression; academic articles about performance, representation, activism, history, and social conditions; an artistic intervention; and afterwords by the acclaimed novelists Laila al-Atrash and Miral al-Tahawy. The book demonstrates that women's transgression is both an agent and a symptom of change, a site of both resistance and repression. Showing how transnational forces such as media discourses, mobility and confinement, globalization, and neoliberalism, as well as the legacy of colonialism, shape women's badness, *Bad Girls of the Arab World* offers a rich portrait of women's varied experiences at the boundaries of propriety in the twenty-first century.

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