

## Gamal Al Ghitani

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### Prairies of Fever

Taking as the basis of her study the premise that the boundaries of history and literature are difficult to define, and that the two disciplines represent related types of narrative discourse, Samia Mehrez examines the work of three leading contemporary Egyptian writers: the Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz, Sonallah Ibrahim, and Gamal al-Ghitani. Mehrez delves into the relationship between history and narrative literature and shows that both attempt to transform 'reality' and 'life' into historical structures of meaning. By analyzing the works of these authors in terms of the relationship between authority and the production of narrative literature, she reveals a context in which literature becomes a kind of 'alternative' history - a discourse that comments not only on the history of a place but also on the creation of a narrative on history. As the author says in the Introduction, "The three writers whose careers and works are discussed in these chapters represent some of the most crucial contributions to the larger signifying entity that has engaged the Arab reader in many transformative ways. . . . The authors and their works provide an indispensable (hi)story of the literary field itself, mapping, through their own development as artistic producers, the history of the context which they inhabit and in which they produce".

### La Momie de la Momification

Drawing on an intimate knowledge of modern Arabic writing, Denys Johnson-Davies brings together in this collection a colorful mosaic of life as lived and portrayed by Arabs from Morocco to Iraq. From a diverse area of the world with the common factor of a written language, these thirty stories tell of an old Moroccan peasant woman who kills snakes; an Iraqi soldier who returns home as a stranger after years as a prisoner-of-war; a repairer of lost virginites in a Tunisian village; a typically Mahfouzian start to a train journey; the steamy meeting of two women and a cat at the height of an Iraqi summer; the ill-fated attraction of a boy to a magical bird in the Tuareg deserts of Libya; and a novel way of hunting ducks in the Nile Delta. The purveyors of this strange and delightful cornucopia of fictions include Naguib Mahfouz, Yusuf Idris, Gamal al-Ghitani, and Mohamed El-Bisatie

from Egypt; Fuad al-Takarli and Mohamed Khudayyir from Iraq; Zakaria Tamer from Syria; Hanan al-Shaykh from Lebanon; and Ibrahim al-Kouni from Libya.

## **The Cairo of Naguib Mahfouz**

What was it like to live in Iraq before the earth-shaking events of the end of the twentieth century? The mid seventies to the late eighties witnessed Saddam Hussein's rise to power, the establishment of Kurdish autonomy in the north, and the Iraq-Iran war. It also brought an influx of oil wealth, following the 1973 war and the spike in oil prices, and a parallel influx of Arab talent, including many Egyptians, as the Egyptian left became disenchanted with Sadat. The massive migration also extended to workers and peasants, some of whom created an entire Egyptian village just outside Baghdad. We witness all of this and more through the eyes of an Egyptian woman married to an engineer working in Iraq. The narrator, who works for an Egyptian magazine's bureau in the Iraqi capital, has a behind-the-scenes view of what was really happening at a critical juncture in the history of the region. Moreover, she has a mystery to solve: an Iraqi woman from the marshes in the south of Iraq, who is also a communist journalist, has disappeared, and as the mystery unfolds we learn of her love for an older Egyptian Marxist journalist. This is Iraq before and beyond Saddam, Iraq as the Arabs knew it, in the lives of interesting people living in a vibrant country before the attempted annexation of Kuwait and the American invasion. This is the Iraq that was

## **Incidents in Za'frani Alley**

### **Cairo**

This book presents a stimulating discussion of a subject previously only touched upon. The author tests his theories against similar phenomena in European society and with reference to several standard authorities in anthropology and social history. Popular culture in medieval Cairo will, therefore, be of interest to students and specialists in Middle Eastern studies and also to medieval historians.

## **Rain Over Baghdad**

Portraying the shallowness of the petrodollar culture and the price one pays for quick money, this prize-winning book describes the protagonist's experiences and those of migrant workers and professionals in one of the Gulf states. It also describes their interaction with the oil-rich country's local elite and with agents of western businesses.

## **The Anchor Book of Modern Arabic Fiction**

On the eve of Salma's twenty-first birthday, scattered friends and family converge on New York for a celebration organized by Darwish, her obstinate grandfather. Each guest's journey to this fated gathering takes on an unexpected significance, as they find themselves revisiting the choices they have made in life, and rethinking their relationships with one another and the country in which they live.

Traveling seamlessly between Egypt and the United States, Embrace on Brooklyn Bridge is a story about how we construct and shift our identities, and about a family's search for home.

## **Critique of Religious Discourse**

### **The Mahfouz Dialogs**

One of Egypt's greatest contemporary writers reflects on life and love. This haunting memoir, written ten years before Ghitani's death, weaves together a series of vignettes in a style that mimics the uneven, discontinuous nature of memory itself. These fragments are summoned from across the span of a singular lifetime. We read of his childhood adventures, his erotic awakenings, his time as a political prisoner, and his reports from the battlefield in Iraq and the corridors of power in Syria. Vivid passages capture fleeting glances of strangers through car windows, flavors and scents of delicacies savored, dreams and sorrows of neighbors in the apartment blocks of Cairo before Nasser, as well as chance conversations at points of transit, in cafés, on elegant streets, and with unnamed paramours. These memories, and Ghitani's musings on memory's own finitude and mutability, make *Traces* both a memoir and a meditation on memory itself, in all its inscrutable workings and inevitable betrayals.

## **Conscience of the Nation**

Provides information on the works and lives of 150 authors who write primarily in Arabic, from the first known works of Arabic literature in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., to the present day.

### **Zabiba and the King**

This ground-breaking work presents original research on cultural politics and battles in Egypt at the turn of the twenty first century. It deconstructs the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' culture drawing on conceptual tools in cultural studies, translation studies and gender studies to analyze debates in the fields of literature, cinema, mass media and the plastic arts. Anchored in the Egyptian historical and social contexts and inspired by the influential work of Pierre Bourdieu, it rigorously places these debates and battles within the larger framework of a set of questions about the relationship between the cultural and political fields in Egypt.

## **Egypt's Culture Wars**

An important work of contemporary Islamic thought argues against the programmatic use of Islamic religious texts to support fundamentalist beliefs. First published in Arabic in 1994, progressive Muslim scholar Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd's controversial essay argued that conventional fundamentalist interpretations of the Quran and other Islamic religious texts are ahistorical and misleading. Conservative religious leaders accused him of apostasy. Marking the first time a

work by Abu Zayd is available in its entirety in any Western language, this English edition makes his erudite interpretation of classical Islamic thought accessible to a wider audience at a critical historical moment.

## **Madinah**

In this surrealist novel with political and religious aspects and an edge of satire, the narrator is an unseen, unheard presence with the privilege of observing events from the past, mostly those involving his father and grandfather. Inanimate objects that have "witnessed" events (such as a date palm, or a brick in a hospital wall) report to the narrator, who seems to know no temporal or physical boundaries. A sense of displaced time saturates the blending of real and unreal events, such as the fight in the desert around Karbala against Israel and the forces of the West (including William Casey (the former CIA director), the narrator's father, Gamal Abdel Nasser, and al-Husayn). Nasser, who has miraculously reappeared after his death, is shocked and appalled to find that peace has been brokered with Israel and that Israelis have made Egypt a holiday destination.

## **City of Saffron**

Built for eternity and radiating an aura of the divine, the pyramids have inspired wonder and fear for millennia. In this novel, Gamal al-Ghitani uses these enigmatic monuments to evoke the human quest for wisdom and enlightenment. Weaving strands of Sufi mysticism and medieval Islamic history into ancient Egypt's most enduring symbols, Pyramid Texts beguiles the imagination with its masterful use of language, its haunting parables, and its glimpses of divine revelation. In a series of chapters each shorter than the last - so that, like their subjects, they taper ultimately into nothingness - the author traces the obsessions that have drawn men over the centuries to the brooding presence of the pyramids. A Moroccan shaykh spends years contemplating them in the hope that one day he will understand their mysteries. Seven young men enter the Great Pyramid of Giza, seeking illumination as they penetrate its heart of darkness. Another visitor waits patiently for the moment when the shadow of one pyramid will diverge from its accustomed path and bestow immortality. In each of these tales, the pyramids are the link between the physical and the eternal, the point "where matter ends, and the void begins." Evoking both the modernist fiction of Jorge Luis Borges and the Sufi poetry of Rumi, Pyramid Texts is a revelation in itself.

## **The Golden Chariot**

Traces the development of the modern Arabic novel from the 1960s to the present.

## **Artists, Writers and The Arab Spring**

A new AUC Press edition from the author of The Man from Bashmour

## **The Experimental Arabic Novel**

For Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz (1911-2006), Cairo was always a place of

special resonance. As the place in which he was born and lived his whole life, it is a city he loved passionately and visited and revisited in his writing. It is the setting for nearly all his novels and short stories, not merely as a backdrop but as an integral part of his fiction, playing its own role in the dramas. In this special new and expanded edition of the bestselling book first published in 1999, photographer Britta Le Va guides us through his pages, and treads his streets and alleys, to produce a collection of outstanding visual images of the historic city, while novelist Gamal al-Ghitani describes a walking tour with the great man around the streets of Gamaliya, that historic heart of the old city where both of them-more than thirty years apart-were born and grew up.

## **Fictions of African Dictatorship**

'Madinah' - the Arabic word for 'city' - may conjure labyrinthine streets and the hustle and bustle of the souq in Westerners' minds, but for the inhabitants of the Middle East it is a much more mercurial thing, and one that's changing today faster than ever. Here - in ten urban stories set across the region - the city reveals itself through a vibrant array of characters: from the celebrated author collecting an award in the city that exiled him decades before, to the forlorn lover waiting at a rendezvous as government officials raid nearby shops, confiscating 'wanton' Valentine's Day roses. Whilst engineers race to complete another 'world's tallest building' in Dubai, and American helicopters patrol the Martyrs Bridge in Baghdad, we realise it is the people, and not the landmarks, that define these places; like the language student in Beirut who tries to make a joke of being 'war-broken' to her friends, or the Israeli General who invites guests to his office to watch promo videos for the tank that will 'win the next war' whilst eating biscuits and reciting poetry. For all we think we know of the conflict and exoticism of the region, nothing opens more doors to what we don't than its writing. Here, ten short stories by new and established writers have been selected and translated in English for the first time, to open just such a door... "Isolation, homesickness and sex are themes to be expected in literature about cities. It is human for isolated people to experience places intensely and for the displaced to miss home" - The Times, 22 Nov 08. "The desert cities bloom with unsustainable desire" - The Independent, 28 Nov 08. 'a sampler of the vibrant writing coming out of the Middle East' - The Saudi Gazette, 5 Jan.

## **Red Wine**

Nezar AlSayyad narrates the many Caïros that have existed through time, offering a panorama unmatched in temporal and geographic scope, through an in-depth examination of the city's architecture and urban form. His narration illuminates how there can be "no one history of the city, but rather multiple, contested, and often invented histories."

## **Vertigo (English)**

First ever book-length study of Scotland's immigrant communities since 1945

## **Conspiracy in Modern Egyptian Literature**

Fictions of African Dictatorship examines the fictional representation of the African dictator and the performance of dictatorship across genres. The volume includes contributions focusing on literature, theatre and film, all of which examine the relationship between the fictional and the political. Among the questions the contributors ask: what are the implications of reading a novel for its historical content or accuracy? How does the dictator novel interrogate ideas of veracity? How is power performed and ridiculed? How do different writers reflect on questions of authority in the postcolony, and what are the effects on their stories and modes of narration? This volume untangles some of the intricate workings of dictatorial power in the postcolony, through twelve close readings of works of fiction. This work was published by Saint Philip Street Press pursuant to a Creative Commons license permitting commercial use. All rights not granted by the work's license are retained by the author or authors.

## **Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo**

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. From the Trade Paperback edition.

## **Zayni Barakat**

### **Egyptian Writers Between History and Fiction**

Centres on an episode in the life of Mikhael, a sensitive and clever young Christian boy growing up in Alexandria, Egypt, in the thirties.

### **Nasser in the Egyptian Imaginary**

"This is an allegorical love story set in the mid-600s to the early 700s between a mighty king (Saddam) and a simple, yet beautiful commoner named Zabiba (the Iraqi people). Zabiba is married to a cruel and unloving husband (the United States) who forces himself upon her."--P. [4] of cover.

### **The Book of Epiphanies**

The book aims to explore the foresight of prominent Middle Eastern authors and artists who anticipated the Arab Spring, which resulted in demands for change in the repressive and corrupted regimes. Eventually, it led to cracking down on the protests with excessive force, which caused tremendous human suffering, destruction, and also escalation of extreme insurgency. The author analyzes major literary and artistic works from Egypt, Syria and Tunisia, and their political context. This monograph will be helpful to scholars and students in the growing field of Middle Eastern and North African Studies and everyone who is interested in the politics of MENA.

## **The Zafarani Files**

Ahmed, a society photographer in a celebrated Cairo nightclub, witnesses a friend horrifically killed in a fight between young business rivals. Forced to escape the scene of the crime and go into hiding, Ahmed is ensnared in a web of cover-ups and crimes whose perpetrators stop at nothing to hide. In this sprawling political thriller, Ahmed is forced to confront ruthless players. It's a game where the penalty for failure could be his life. First published in Arabic in 2007, and by BQFP in 2010, this is a tense thriller that exposes contemporary Egypt and Cairo's seedy nightlife.

## **Beer in the Snooker Club**

With its Sufistic parables of the human condition, rendered in a style redolent of both the austere meditations of Borges and the dark engorged ruminations of Arthur C. Clark, Pyramid Texts engages the mind and beguiles the imagination. In a series of chapters each shorter than the last so that, like their subjects, they taper ultimately into nothingness the author evokes the obsessions that have drawn men over the centuries to the brooding presence of mankind's most ancient and mysterious monuments. Among others in a procession of exotic characters, a Moroccan seeker after knowledge spends years contemplating the pyramids in the hope that one day he will understand the mysterious writing that fitfully appears on their sides. Another waits patiently for the moment when the shadow of one will diverge from its accustomed path and bestow immortality, and the Sphinx performs a celestial dance. Pyramid Texts leads us into a world of endless passages and mysterious sighing winds, a world whose claustrophobic and shadowy spaces may be illuminated by flashes of ecstasy leading to scintillating transfigurations and dizzying annihilations.

## **The Undergraduate's Companion to Arab Writers and Their Web Sites**

Set amidst the turbulence of 1950s Cairo, Beer in the Snooker Club is the story of Ram Bey, an over-educated, under-ambitious young Egyptian struggling to find out where he fits in. Ram's favorite haunt is the fashionable Cairo Snooker Club, whose members strive to emulate English gentility; but his best friends are young intellectuals who devour the works of Sartre and engage in dangerous revolutionary activities to support Egyptian independence. By turns biting and comic, Beer in the Snooker Club — the first and only book by Waguih Ghali — became a cult classic when it was first published and remains a timeless portrait of

a loveable rogue coming of age in turbulent times.

## **The Other Place**

The late President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970), has been represented in many major works of Egyptian literature and film, and continues to have a presence in everyday life and discourse in the country. Omar Khalifah's analysis of these representations focuses on how the historical character of Nasser has emerged in the Egyptian imaginary. He explores the recurrent images of Nasser in literature and film and shows how Nasser constitutes a perfect site for plural interpretations. He argues that Nasser has become a rhetorical device, a figure of speech, a trope that connotes specific images constantly invoked whenever he is mentioned. His study makes a case for literature and art to be seen as alternative archives that question, erase, distort and add to the official history of Nasser.

## **zayni barakat**

The intrigues of an old Cairo quarter: gossip, spells, betrayals, and busybodies in a parable about political and personal freedoms

## **Traces**

Artfully combining social and literary history, this unique study explores the dual loyalties of contemporary Egyptian authors from the 1952 Revolution to the present day. Egypt's writers have long had an elevated idea of their social mission, considering themselves 'the conscience of the nation.' At the same time, modern Egyptian writers work under the liberal conception of the writer borrowed from the European model. As a result, each Egyptian writer treads the tightrope between authority and freedom, social commitment and artistic license, loyalty to the state and to personal expression, in an ongoing quest for an elusive literary ideal. With these fundamentals in mind, Conscience of the Nation examines Egyptian literary production over the past fifty years, surveying works by established writers, as well as those of dozens of other authors who are celebrated in Egypt but whose writings are largely unknown to the foreign reader. Novelists and poets, scriptwriters and playwrights, critics and journalists--all have battled with and tried to resolve the tensions inherent in the conflicting forces of self and society.

## **The Man who Lost His Shadow**

This series is designed to bring to North American readers the once-unheard voices of writers who have achieved wide acclaim at home, but are not recognized beyond the borders of their native lands. With special emphasis on women writers, Interlink's Emerging Voices series publishes the best of the world's contemporary literature in translation or original English.

## **Under the Naked Sky : Short Stories from the Arab World**

The Man Who Lost His Shadow tells the story of Yusif Abdul Hamid, an ambitious

Cairo journalist, through the eyes of four people: Mabruka, the young peasant girl who marries Yusif's aging father while being attracted to Yusif; Samia, a minor actress, who Yusif lives with and almost marries but latter rejects; Muhammad Nagi, who Yusif pushes out of his job as newspaper editor after Muhammad marries Samia; and finally Yusif himself, editor-in-chief of the newspaper al-Ayyam, a stranger to himself.

## **Egyptian Short Stories**

This sweeping novel depicts the intertwined lives of an assortment of Egyptians--Muslims and Copts, northerners and southerners, men and women--as they begin to settle in Egypt's great second city, and explores how the Second World War, starting in supposedly faraway Europe, comes crashing down on them, affecting their lives in fateful ways. Central to the novel is the story of a striking friendship between Sheikh Magd al-Din, a devout Muslim with peasant roots in northern Egypt, and Dimyan, a Copt with roots in southern Egypt, in their journey of survival and self-discovery. Woven around this narrative are the stories of other characters, in the city, in the villages, or in the faraway desert, closer to the fields of combat. And then there is the story of Alexandria itself, as written by history, as experienced by its denizens, and as touched by the war. Throughout, the author captures the cadences of everyday life in the Alexandria of the early 1940s, and boldly explores the often delicate question of religious differences in depth and on more than one level. *No One Sleeps in Alexandria* adds an authentically Egyptian vision of Alexandria to the many literary--but mainly Western--Alexandrias we know already: it may be the same space in which Cavafy, Forster, and Durrell move but it is certainly not the same world.

## **The Queue**

"The Queue has drawn comparisons to Western classics like George Orwell's 1984 and The Trial by Franz Kafka. It represents a new wave of dystopian and surrealist fiction from Middle Eastern writers who are grappling with the chaotic aftermath and stinging disappointments of the Arab Spring." -- The New York Times Winner of the English PEN Translation Award In a surreal, but familiar, vision of modern day Egypt, a centralized authority known as 'the Gate' has risen to power in the aftermath of the 'Disgraceful Events,' a failed popular uprising. Citizens are required to obtain permission from the Gate in order to take care of even the most basic of their daily affairs, yet the Gate never opens, and the queue in front of it grows longer. Citizens from all walks of life mix and wait in the sun: a revolutionary journalist, a sheikh, a poor woman concerned for her daughter's health, and even the brother of a security officer killed in clashes with protestors. Among them is Yehia, a man who was shot during the Events and is waiting for permission from the Gate to remove a bullet that remains lodged in his pelvis. Yehia's health steadily declines, yet at every turn, officials refuse to assist him, actively denying the very existence of the bullet. Ultimately it is Tarek, the principled doctor tending to Yehia's case, who must decide whether to follow protocol as he has always done, or to disobey the law and risk his career to operate on Yehia and save his life. Written with dark, subtle humor, *The Queue* describes the sinister nature of authoritarianism, and illuminates the way that absolute authority manipulates information, mobilizes others in service to it, and fails to uphold the rights of even

those faithful to it.

## **No One Sleeps in Alexandria**

The Mahfouz Dialogs records the memories, views, and jokes of Naguib Mahfouz on subjects ranging from politics to the relationship between his novels and his life, as delivered to intimate friends at a series of informal meetings stretching out over almost half a century. Mahfouz was a pivotal figure not only in world literature (through being awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1988 he became the first writer in Arabic to win a mass audience), but also in his own society, where he vastly enhanced the image of the writer in the eyes of the public and encapsulated as the victim of a savage attack on his life by an Islamist in 1994 the struggle between pluralism, tolerance, and secularism on the one hand and extremist Islam. Moderated by Gamal al-Ghitani, a writer of a younger generation who shared a common background with Mahfouz (al-Ghitani also grew up in medieval Cairo) and felt a vast personal empathy for the writer despite their sometimes different views, these exchanges throw new light on Mahfouz's life, the creation of his novels, and literary Egypt in the second half of the twentieth century.

## **Pyramid Texts**

"In the course of my long travels I have never seen a city so devastated. After a long time I ventured out into the streets. Death, cold and heavy, hung in the air. Walls have no value here, doors have been eliminated. No one is certain that they will see another day." The Egypt of the Mamluk dynasty witnessed a period of artistic ostentation and social and political upheaval, at the heart of which lay the unsolved question of the ruler's legitimacy. Now, in 1516, the Mamluk reign is coming to an end with the advance of the invading Ottomans. The numerous narrators, among them a Venetian traveler and several native Muslims, tell the story of the rise to power of the ruthless, enigmatic, and puritanical governor of Cairo, Zayni Barakat ibn Musa, whose control of the corrupt city is effected only through a complicated network of spies and informers.

## **Sardines and Oranges**

Many of these authors are major literary figures in their own countries and the Arab world, who have broken with taboos and censorship, and established standards of innovation that have encouraged younger generations of authors. Pain, hardship, heartache, humour, identity, joy, loss and strategies for survival are universal

## **Embrace on Brooklyn Bridge**

Winner of the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature. Suzie Mohammad Galal, born in the Egyptian city of Suez during the War of Attrition in the late 1960s, is a woman of inner conflicts, at once a fighter and a lover, who traverses the boundaries of ethnicity and religion. Her whole life is intricately tied to the wars and political events taking place in Egypt. But as she grapples with where to begin her story of personal and national crises, questions of narration arise: which

metaphor best serves the layers of meaning she wants to communicate, and whose voice is telling the story anyway? *Red Wine* is both timely in its attention to the issues of state brutality, religious extremism, and gender, and timeless in the way it deals with the themes of coming of age, guilt, and sadness.

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