

## Acknowledgements

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Some will argue that a non-Arab critic working in Germany who tries to construct an Anglophone Arab poetics and ethics must be conscious of his intrinsic inadequacies. He doesn't have first-hand experiences of being Arab in a world of anti-Arab racism and he doesn't really know the heavy burdens of English as a former colonial language that one has to carry to get oneself across. To intervene into the academic sub-field of Anglophone Arab literatures, arts and cultures from such positionality almost automatically risks disenfranchising oneself from the debate. I cannot but see it as an epistemological privilege to imagine myself as a tolerated house-guest who labors under such slightly embarrassing predicament. I boldly assume that I too am among the implied readers of these cultural texts—and yes, I claim to being among these works' implied critics. It is perhaps in my partial silence on the issue of identity politics, my refusal to speak morally, and my mere failure to write with the authentic authority of an insider about the collective value of Anglophone Arab representations that something of the *true* ethics resulting from my own intersectional limitations is articulated.

Most critical writings begin with some affirmative idea toward which they strive. I am afraid this project first and foremost was set in motion by my discomfort toward dominant readings of contemporary Anglophone Arab discourse. However, in the course of writing against other critics' attempts to locate this discourse in a reality which does not allow for fantasy, inconsistency, and dissonances, the initial idea of alternative interpretive approaches underwent profound transformations. The idea itself was constantly caught up in its actualization—in re-reading and re-writing. Such continuing actualization took the form of imagined and real exchanges. The book's various chapters reflect the immediacy of these textual and/or personal encounters. I have benefitted from each and every of them.

I am deeply grateful to a number of people—writers, artists, critics, colleagues, students, and friends—who helped me each in their own way to traverse the fiction of truth and counter-truths in literary and cultural criticism and who encouraged me to write this book. I wish to thank Rabieh Alameddine in particular for the tender smile of his narratives' metafictional wisdom as well as for a conversation on

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Although I have constantly tried to circumvent a too-rigid notion of truth and lie I do now strongly believe one can describe, if not what truths and lies are, at least what they do, in literary fiction, in works of art, in the world, and between worlds. In any case it is my hope that this book can contribute to the critical reconceptualization of the two notions. Yet, it goes without saying that no one is expected to believe in this study more than I have believed in its writing.

This book is dedicated to Gini, who shared with me its changeful genesis just as she is my irreplaceable partner in the unpredictable circling of our joint worlds.

Kiel, 2019