

literaturen im kontext arabisch – persisch – türkisch

literatures in context arabic – persian – turkish

Vol. 41: Commitment and Beyond.
 Reflections on/of the Political
 in Arabic Literature since the 1940s

Series Editors

Verena Klemm (Universität Leipzig, Germany)

Sonja Mejcher-Atassi (American University of Beirut, Lebanon)

Friederike Pannewick (Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany)

Barbara Winckler (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany)

Advisory Board

Hülya Adak (Sabanci University, Turkey)

Roger Allen (University of Pennsylvania, USA)

Sinan Antoon (New York University, USA)

Tarek El-Ariss (The University of Texas at Austin, USA)

Beatrice Gründler (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)

Angelika Neuwirth (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)

Bilal Orfali (American University of Beirut, Lebanon)

Sunil Sharma (Boston University, USA)

Commitment and Beyond

Reflections on/of the Political
in Arabic Literature since the 1940s

Edited by Friederike Pannewick and Georges Khalil
together with Yvonne Albers



Reichert Verlag Wiesbaden 2015

Die Publikation wurde aus Mitteln
der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) unterstützt.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten
sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

© 2015 Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag Wiesbaden
ISBN: 978-3-95490-040-4
www.reichert-verlag.de

Das Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt.
Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urhebergesetzes ist ohne

Zustimmung des Verlages unzulässig und strafbar.

Das gilt insbesondere für Vervielfältigungen, Übersetzungen,
Mikroverfilmungen und die Speicherung
und Verarbeitung in elektronischen Systemen.

Printed in Germany

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	7
<i>Yvonne Albers, Georges Khalil, Friederike Pannewick</i> Introduction: Tracks and Traces of Literary Commitment— On <i>Iltizām</i> as an Ongoing Intellectual Project	9
Part 1 Of Poetics and Politics: Revolution and Literary Commitment	
<i>Randa Aboubakr</i> The Egyptian Colloquial Poet as Popular Intellectual: A Differentiated Manifestation of Commitment	29
<i>Atef Botros</i> Rewriting Resistance: The Revival of Poetry of Dissent in Egypt after January 2011 (Surūr, Najm and Dunqul)	45
<i>Dina Heshmat</i> Egyptian Narratives of the 2011 Revolution: Diary as a Medium of Reconciliation with the Political	63
Part 2 Roots of a Discourse: Historical Concepts of Literary Commitment	
<i>Elias Houry</i> Beyond Commitment.....	79
<i>Yoav Di-Capua</i> The Intellectual Revolt of the 1950s and the “Fall of the <i>Udabā</i> ”	89
<i>Rachid Ouaissa</i> On the Trail of Frantz Fanon	105
Part 3 Refiguring <i>Iltizām</i> : Literary Commitment after 1967	
<i>Stephan Guth</i> Between Commitment and Marginalization: The ‘Generation of the Sixties’ in the Sadat Era.....	125
<i>Sonja Mejcher-Atassi</i> The Arabic Novel between Aesthetic Concerns and the Causes of Man: Commitment in Jabra Ibrahim Jabra and ‘Abd al-Rahman Munif	143
<i>Zeina G. Halabi</i> The Day the Wandering Dreamer Became a Fida’i: Jabra Ibrahim Jabra and the Fashioning of Political Commitment	157
<i>Refqa Abu-Remaileh</i> The Afterlives of <i>Iltizām</i> : Emile Habibi through a Kanafaniesque Lens of Resistance Literature	171

<i>Michael Allan</i>	
You, The Sacrificial Reader: Poetics and Pronouns in Mahmoud Darwish's "al-Qurbān"	185
<i>Leslie Tramontini</i>	
Molding the Clay: Muẓaffar al-Nawwāb's Concept of Colloquial Poetry as Art of Resistance	201
<i>Sinan Antoon</i>	
Sargūn Būluṣ's Commitment.....	213
<i>Friederike Pannewick</i>	
From the Politicization of Theater to Individual Humanism: Towards a New Concept of Engagement in the Theater of Saadallah Wannous	221
Part 4	Commitment or Dissent? Contemporary Perspectives
<i>Tarek El-Ariss</i>	
Fiction of Scandal.....	237
<i>Christian Junge</i>	
On Affect and Emotion as Dissent: The <i>Kifāya</i> Rhetoric in Pre-Revolutionary Egyptian Literature	253
<i>Charlotte Pardey</i>	
A Body of Dissenting Images: Kamāl al-Riyāḥī's Novel <i>Al-Ghurillā</i> Read as an Example of Engaged Literature from Tunisia	273
<i>Stephan Milich</i>	
Narrating, Metaphorizing or Performing the Unforgettable? The Politics of Trauma in Contemporary Arabic Literature	285
<i>Felix Lang</i>	
Redeemed from Politics: Notions of Literary Legitimacy in the Lebanese Literary Field	303
<i>Yvonne Albers</i>	
The Empty Chair: On the Politics of Spectatorial Situatedness in the Performances of Rabih Mroué.....	317
<i>Hanan Toukan</i>	
Whatever Happened to <i>Iltizām</i> ? Words in Arab Art after the Cold War.....	333
Notes on the Contributors.....	351

On Affect and Emotion as Dissent: The *Kifāya* Rhetoric in Pre-Revolutionary Egyptian Literature¹

Christian Junge

Taha lost all awareness of what he was doing and leaped toward him, letting out an inarticulate, high-pitched cry like an angry roar.
The Yacoubian Building (Al Aswany 242/342)²

I could readily have throttled him [...]. But I'm an idiot, because now I'll die from the rancor. I should have killed him, a life for a life.³

Taxi (Al Khamissi 20/18)

It's a beautiful thing to hate truly and passionately.
It's been ages since I hated anything this sincerely.
Utopia (Towfik 103/131)

A terrible rage rises within me... THWACK!
Metro: A Story of Cairo (El Shafee 14/20)

Political dissent⁴ as expressed in literature has often been analyzed by focusing on thoughts, ideas, and values. Such a reading, however, limits our understanding of social and political criticism to reason and misses out how it relates to the “other of reason,” namely affect and emotion (Böhme and Böhme 13). While probably every formation and expression of dissent includes affective and emotional dimensions, it is a feature of many artistic, and especially literary, works to foreground this realm of life and experience. Against the background of a new interest in literary studies in ‘feeling’ rather than ‘thinking’ (El-Ariss, *Trials* 4–8), I shall focus on affect and emotion as expressions of political dissent in pre-revolutionary Egyptian literature.

While most scholars agree that affect and emotion have to be clearly differentiated, there is no consensus on how to define affect and emotion. New affect theorists, notes Ruth Leys, emphasize the autonomy of affect with regard to rationality. Affect is here understood as a non-conscious, non-semantic, pre-subjective, unintentional (i.e. not object-focused) strong corporeal intensity (436–39). Elaborating on a missing half-second between bodily event and the mind's consciousness thereof, Brian Massumi describes affect as too quick, too divergent, and too excessive to be fully grasped by consciousness (28–34). “As such, it is not ownable or recognizable and is thus resistant to critique” (28).

In contrast to the autonomy of affect, appraisal theory discusses emotion as interacting with the mind. Emotions here are “embodied, intentional states governed by our beliefs, cognitions, and desires” (Leys 437) that are closely linked to rational and mental processes, yet distinctive from them. Since we cannot deliberately elicit or fully control emotions and since they rather happen to us, emotions restrict our alleged rational autonomy. Nevertheless, this conflict makes us at the same time aware of our subjective beliefs, cognitions and desires (Demmerling and Landweer 11–12). In this context, Martha Nussbaum refers to

emotion as ‘upheavals of thought’ “suffused with intelligence and discernment, and thus a source of deep awareness and understanding” (i).

Having said this, I do not intend to apply an all too fixed or exclusionary⁵ schemata of affect and emotion to the literary text. Rather, I seek to be attentive to the expression of both affect and emotion in the literary text as either autonomous to, or in dialogue with, rationality and retrieve their particular concepts and functions from the literary text itself. I have chosen four different prose texts to analyze: Alaa Al Aswany’s (‘Alā’ al-Aswānī) *The Yacoubian Building* (2002), Khaled Al Khamissi’s (Khālīd al-Khamīsī) *Taxi* (2007), Ahmed Khaled Towfik’s (Aḥmad Khālīd Tawfīq) *Utopia* (2009), and Magdy El Shafee’s (Majdī al-Shāfi‘ī) *Metro: A Story of Cairo* (2008). These stories share several common features: They are often considered ‘low-brow literature,’ they deliver a very outspoken social and political criticism, and they were published in the first decade of the twenty-first century, a period that in this regard may be labelled as ‘pre-revolutionary.’ I will not entertain the idle discussion whether or not the 25th January Revolution was predictable; instead, I will discuss the affective and emotional matrix of the late Mubarak era as the *yawm al-ghaḍab* (Day of Wrath) loomed. By concentrating on affects like screams and outbursts along with emotions like anger and hatred, I shall thus be interpreting crucial moments in the protagonists’ lives, when they, suffering from injustice, suddenly feel that ‘enough is enough,’ that things cannot go on like this and that things *must* change.

In order to grasp this phenomenon terminologically, I adopt the Egyptian protest slogan of *kifāya!* (Enough!), which became so prominent in the last decade of Husni Mubarak’s reign⁶ and in my view accurately expresses the tight interaction between political demands and emotional expression. Specifically, the political slogan *kifāya!* demands intellectually that a situation be changed or brought to an end, while the personal exclamation *kifāya!* expresses the feeling that one cannot bear this situation any longer. I argue that the four texts—along with other contemporary Egyptian and Arabic texts⁷—rely on what I call ‘*kifāya* rhetoric’: They narrate and incite the feeling that ‘enough is enough.’ Moreover, in the realm of fiction, they facilitate ‘acting out’ and ‘living through’ different forms of dissent and resistance. With this in mind, I specifically focus on narratives of violence.⁸

Literature in Transformation: The 1990s vs. the 2000s

Before I turn to the texts themselves, it may be useful to outline some features of this kind of ‘popular literature’ from the first decade of the twenty-first century. This can best be achieved by comparing it to the avant-garde literature of the so-called “generation of the 1990s” and its successor, including writers like Mustafā Dhikrī (Muṣṭafā Dhikrī, b. 1966), Ibrahim Farghali (Ibrāhīm Farghālī, b. 1967), Miral al-Tahawy (Mīrāl al-Taḥāwī, b. 1968), Mansoura Ez Eldin (Manṣūra ‘Izz al-Dīn, b. 1976), and Youssef Rakha (Yūsuf Rakhā, b. 1976), who engaged in writing a ‘new novel’ (Hafez). Informed by postmodernist and post-structuralist aesthetics and poetics, they carefully eschew or shatter collective representation and clear-cut dichotomies; in contrast, the *kifāya* literature reintroduces collective representation and clear-cut dichotomies. Towfik’s dystopic novel *Utopia*, for instance, imagines Egypt’s social fragmentation as a total division between poor and rich in the year 2023. In other words, while the ‘new novel’ is mostly self-deconstructive, i.e. it explicitly foregrounds deconstructive readings of its text (Junge, “I Write”), *kifāya* literature is often anti-deconstructive, i.e. it emphasizes the construction of relatively stable textual meaning, at least in regard to their representation of social and political drawbacks. Against this back-

ground, Farghali polemically calls Al Aswany's *The Yacoubian Building* "a merely propagandist and directly political speech," where the "Arab author becomes a political combatant" and literature a "social document" (Farghali). Nevertheless, this tendency towards the unencrypted or plain text (Junge, "Genug" 132) may be seen as the poetics of hyperbole, seeking to be as outspoken and scandalizing as literature can be after postmodernism.

These 'popular novels' became extremely fashionable and constituted the phenomenon of 'Arabic bestsellers' that gained new reading audiences both in the Arab world and the West. This unprecedented success is often attributed to its simple, vernacular language and a clear plot that allows for easy and fast reading (Rooke). Rakha, for instance, claims in one of his polemics against *The Yacoubian Building* that Al Aswany uses "a sloganeering and free-press inspired 'revolutionary discourse'" (165) that fails to constitute an artistically substantial "revolutionary language" (162). Al Aswany composes "an unchallenging soap-opera-style plotline, summons up what humorous and/or sermonizing rhetorical power he has" (156) and stays within the "verbally inherited wisdom of the average downtown Cairo café-goer on appropriately 'universal' ideas: right, wrong, funny, sad" (ibid.).

I am not quoting these critiques in order to discredit the novels I wish to consider, but merely to emphasize that these texts turn against an artistic and elitist concept of literature and demonstrate the extent of the scandal this kind of popular fiction has provoked in the literary field (El-Ariss, "Fiction of Scandal"). They return 'scandalously' to storytelling, appeal to the ordinary reader, and combine commitment with entertainment. Thus, a literary *mélange* emerges that interestingly enough does not take the edge of its social and political criticism but rather quickens its pulse. While the postmodernist Egyptian novel is certainly not devoid of affects and emotions (Junge, "Emotion in Postmodernism"), *kifāya* literature has the naivety or courage to put forward *aggressive* affects and emotions, like screams and hatred, and thereby forges a new aesthetics of violence. As a result of suffering from social or political injustice, the protagonists mostly direct their affects and emotions outwards, to another person or group; they no longer internalize but externalize aggression. In contrast, the protagonists of the 1990s direct their frustration and suffering mostly inwards. Instead of anger and hatred, they emphasize emotions like fear and desperation (ibid.). Hafez describes Cairo's claustrophobic urban situation, in tandem with the suffocating social and political conditions, as a "closed horizon" that informs the novel of the 1990s (Hafez). Facing this closed horizon, most of the protagonists avoid open confrontation and aggression, preferring strategies of subversion and deconstruction. Against this background, I read the affects and emotions in the *kifāya* narratives as the attempt to break through the political bell jar of the late Mubarak era, albeit not subversively but outright scandalously! In fact, these texts try to incite in the reader the feeling that 'enough is enough': *al-ṣabr lahu ḥudūd* (patience has its limits), as an Arabic saying goes.

Al Aswany's *The Yacoubian Building*: On Screams and Relief

The emergence and trajectory of *kifāya* moments in life can probably best be observed in Al Aswany's *The Yacoubian Building* (*Imārat Ya'qūbiyān*, 2002).⁹ Set in downtown Cairo during the First Gulf War, it unfolds a broad communal narrative of Egypt by telling the life stories of the inhabitants of the Yacoubian Building, each of them furnished with a different background. Among them is Taha el Shazli, the doorkeeper's son, an ambitious youngster who turns into an Islamist terrorist. Coming from the lower stratum of society, he aspires to enter the Police Academy and to climb up the social ladder. Although he passes the exams

with extraordinary results, he is eventually rejected due to his social background; his subsequent complaint is turned down as allegedly unfounded. Frustrated by omnipresent social inequality, he soon turns toward the *Jamāʿa Islāmiyya*, or Islamic Group. Following an anti-governmental demonstration organized by the *Jamāʿa*, Taha is arrested and during interrogation brutally sodomized with a broomstick. This visceral moment is painfully expressed in an excruciating scream. It is the climax of an anti-deconstructivist representation of all-embracing social injustice and governmental despotism that dominate everything, even—and particularly—the body. In addition, it constitutes the *kifāya* moment of Taha's life, when he can no longer bear it and feels the urgent need to act at all costs. "I'm not afraid of death any longer. I've made up my mind to be a martyr" (Al Aswany 190–91/268). After suffering such radical humiliation, his sole aspiration is absolute retaliation, so he joins the militant wing of the *Jamāʿa Islāmiyya* and subsequently becomes involved in an assassination plot. However, during the painstakingly planned attack, he suddenly recognizes the targeted person as his torturer in prison. Disregarding the plan, he leaps towards his torturer, screaming, before watching the man die. "God is great" (242/342) shouts Taha, only to himself die soon after, struck down by bullets.

Taha may be taken as the clear-cut representation of an Islamist terrorist, a figure spawned by the social injustice and governmental despotism that allows no other outlet for dissent than militant religious-fundamentalist opposition. Focusing on torture, the act of anal rape during interrogation is understood as the governmental attempt to emasculate Taha. This refers to a whole thematic complex in modern Arabic literature, where the sodomized man functions as an allegory of the downtrodden and defeated citizen, while societal decay and governmental oppression is expressed in terms of 'deviant sexuality' and most often homosexuality (Massad 388–410). Refusing to meekly succumb to corruption, Taha, in contrast, might provide "a counterexample of manhood, one that prefers death to being feminized in this manner" (399).¹⁰ As for emotion, Taha's reaction is an expression of wrath, a reaction to suffered injustice that strongly violates moral norms. It is closely intertwined with the aspiration of retaliation addressed against a particular person or group (Demmerling and Landweer 287–310). Hence, the police officer's death seems to be a case of exacted revenge. Having outlined these interpretations of politics, sexuality, and emotion concerning Taha's fate, what can our reading of affect contribute to the understanding of Taha's expression of dissent?

First, it emphasizes Taha's feeling and highlights therefore the difference between visceral sensation and verbal expression, between affect and ideology. When Taha is sodomized, he starts screaming "until he felt that his larynx was bursting" (Al Aswany 153/216).¹¹ Reading this scream literally, it pushes the possibility of expressing pain verbally to its limits, since Taha's larynx is bursting. "The failure to express pain," as Elaine Scarry elaborates in *The Body in Pain*, "will always work to allow its appropriation and conflation with debased forms of power; conversely, the successful expression of pain will always work to expose and make impossible that appropriation and conflation" (14). Yet even after detention, Taha has no real chance to express his all-pervasive pain. On the verge of collapse, he meets a sheikh from the *Jamāʿa Islāmiyya* who is not at all interested in listening to Taha's troubling account, but only agrees to help him when Taha expresses his pain in an Islamist fashion, namely by adopting the formula of martyrdom. Later, in the boot camp, Taha works hard to fulfil his role as a terrorist, but once the training is to be put into practice and the attack goes ahead he suddenly drops out of his role. When he recognizes the targeted person as his torturer, Taha loses "all awareness of what he was doing and leap[s] toward him, letting out

an inarticulate, high-pitched cry like an angry roar” (Al Aswany 242/342). This ‘non-conscious sensation and act,’ namely affect, contradict the Islamist conviction that admonishes “personal feud” (169/237), preferring to re-direct anger “against the whole regime, not against particular individuals” (168/237). Taha’s leap, scream and steadfast staying at the site of the attack contravenes and ruins the plan; affect is here stronger than ideology; it is not Islamism that governs his action, but affect. Paradoxically, due to Taha’s affective intervention, the attack appears even more ideological: having finally proclaimed, “God is great,” he dies shortly after, although precisely this operation was *not* planned as a suicide attack. In my view, reading affect in regard to dissent has to trace and decipher such expressed forms like the scream, which are not fully—or even misleadingly—covered by verbal expression and therefore often neglected. Or in other words: The non-verbal scream tells us much more than the Islamist formula about the (in-)expressibility of pain and its far-reaching political consequences (Scarry 11–19).

Second, reading dissent affects in literature also offers an insight into the impact they have on the reader, how he/she senses dissent. In the final scene, when Taha loses all his awareness, the narration is significantly detached from thought and interpretation; instead it meticulously follows movement and sensation. Struck by a bullet, Taha first sees his body bleeding and then feels a coldness that is transformed “into a sharp pain that seize[s] him in its teeth” (Al Aswany 243/343). He falls to the ground screaming out in pain, while the dreadful pain gradually disappears until Taha senses “a strange restfulness engulfing him and taking him up into itself” (ibid.), where he only hears distant murmurs and recitation, “as though welcoming him to a new world” (ibid.). Besides this final thought of the protagonist—or the narrator’s interpretation—of a new world to come, the scene is devoid of any awareness, thought, or interpretation, narrating Taha’s unfiltered sensation *before* he interprets it and gives meaning to it. Thus, Taha sees and senses death before he thinks and knows that he’s about to die. I would argue that this passage is more concerned with the visceral sensation of dying than with an ideological representation of death. Seeing it in this light enables us to eschew questions related to the meaning of the represented fatal scream—e.g. mundane pain, divine punishment, or personal agony—and move beyond representation, shifting our attention to the scream’s intensity and the effect it has on the reader.

Gilles Deleuze describes this shift from representation towards sensation in his study *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. The Irish-born British painter Francis Bacon (1909–1992), whose oeuvre is deeply concerned with screams, once stated that he wants “to paint the scream more than the horror” (Deleuze 38), i.e. his interest was in rendering the intensity of the event (screaming) rather than providing the explanatory context (horror) that causes the scream.¹² This confrontation of the spectator with the visceral intensity of the event evinces what Deleuze calls a “violence of sensation” (39): It acts immediately and forcefully on the nervous system of the spectator (34–43). Following Marco Abel, who has recently applied this term to the analysis of film and literature (1–10), I would like to investigate the intensity of Taha’s fatal scream on the reader. Although in general Al Aswany’s plot-driven and tell-it-all novel certainly does *not* move beyond representation, Taha’s scream possesses in my opinion (and personal sensation) a remarkable intensity for the reader. While it says nothing about the horror of torture, terrorism and death, it makes the reader sense a scream’s fading out and away. Unlike Taha’s first larynx-shattering, painfully pervasive and persistent scream, Taha’s mortal cry is a receding visceral spasm and gradual transition to a detachment from the body itself. Thus, unlike the disquieting dissident affect under torture, the reader may sense here a relieving dissident affect: A strange, inexplicable, and engulfing restfulness

in the midst of action. Moving from sensation back to interpretation, one may call this the promise of dissent and resistance, which is interpolated in the muted relief from pain. But is this a viable and promising affect for political dissent? Ziad Elmarsafy has recently analyzed the uncontrolled and uncontrollable desire of beloved couples in Al Aswany's novel, seeing them as a political-democratic force. He surmises that aspiration is a "very individual experience, [one that] is always and everywhere capable of generating a powerful political change. Even under the most oppressive conditions, people's desire is the one thing that cannot be controlled, which is why it could and did bring down the Mubarak regime" (28–29). Similarly, I wish to analyze here uncontrolled and uncontrollable affects and emotions as forms of dissent, namely as an uncompromising *kifāya* feeling that stems equally from on the acuteness of pain as on the desire for relief from it.

Al Khamissi's *Taxi*: On Outbursts and Sympathy

While al-Aswany's *The Yacoubian Building* retraces the formation and impact of *kifāya* moments on the course of a life, Khalid al-Khamisi's *Taxi*¹³ focuses on daily upheavals and expressions of the *kifāya* feeling. In this semi-documentary, semi-fictional text,¹⁴ Al Khamissi gathers brief accounts of taxi drivers in Cairo, recorded between April 2005 and March 2006, at the peak of the political *Kefaya* demonstrations. *Taxi*, as Omayma Abdel-Latif has put it, "captures the point at which cabs cease to be just a means of transportation and instead become a space for debate and exchange, at a time when all other public spaces, including the street itself, had become inaccessible under the brutal force of the police state" ("Cairo's Taxicab's Confessions"). Rendered in Egyptian dialect, these accounts intend to quite literally give voice to the "simple people" (Al Khamissi 7) and galvanize the otherwise self-absorbed intellectuals. Thus, Al Khamissi dedicates *Taxi* to "the life which is latent in the words of simple people. May it swallow the void which has haunted us for many years" (7). El-Ariss analyzes this dynamic between driver and narrator as a "fiction of scandal" at work, where the narrator records the drivers' exposure (*faḍḥ*) of social and political drawbacks and personal misery as scandals (*faḍā'ih*), and thus becomes an exposé and scandalizer (*faḍḍāḥ*) as an author. Simultaneously however, the narrator is exposed and scandalized (*mafḍūḥ*) as an intellectual 'out of touch' with those peoples' lives; their narratives are a "violent slap" (Al Khamissi 20/19) in his face (El-Ariss, "Fiction of Scandal" 524–29).¹⁵ While El-Ariss is interested in exploring the affects depicted in these encounters, I wish to extend the focus to the moments after an affect becomes manifest, after the 'missing half-second' when processes of signification take place and emotion arises. Specifically, I am interested in how and why the drivers' outbursts incite the narrator's—and possibly also the reader's—sympathy.

My starting point is the driver's "hidden transcript" of dissident emotion and opinion. James C. Scott understands the "hidden transcript" in terms of an "arts of resistance" which "subordinates" cannot express openly in public, i.e. in the "public transcript" dominated by the hegemonic powers, but only clandestinely:

For most bondsmen through history [...], the trick to survival [...] has been to swallow one's bile, choke back one's rage, and conquer the impulse to physical violence. It is this systematic *frustration of reciprocal action* in relations of domination which, I believe, helps us understand much of the content of the hidden transcript. At its most elementary level the hidden transcript represents an acting out in fantasy—and occasionally in secretive practice—of the anger and reciprocal ag-

gression denied by the presence of domination. Without sanctions imposed by power relations, subordinates would be tempted to return a blow with a blow, an insult with an insult, a whipping with a whipping, a humiliation with a humiliation. [...] The frustration, tension, and control necessary in public give way to unbridled retaliation in a safer setting, where the accounts of reciprocity are, symbolically at least, finally balanced. [...] [I]t's crucial to recognize that there is an important wish-fulfilment component to the hidden transcript. (37–38)

Following Scott, I read Al Khamissi's *Taxi* as a hidden transcript of dissident emotions in pre-revolutionary Egypt. Often suddenly revealed in an outburst, the drivers express in many ways their "frustration of reciprocal action" or, in other words, suffered injustice with no hope of retaliation. One driver for instance had a client who turned out to be a police officer. Not only did the officer refuse to pay, he took the driver's money and insulted him. "I could readily have throttled him but I thought of my kids and the old woman. But I'm an idiot, because now I'll die from the rancor. I should have killed him, a life for a life" (Al Khamissi 20/18).¹⁶ By explicitly evoking the formula of reciprocity, the driver expresses the emotional dilemma of a "subordinate" facing the powerful. "The cruelest result of human bondage is," Scott writes, "that it transforms the assertion of personal dignity into a mortal risk. Conformity in the face of domination is thus occasionally—and unforgettably—a question of suppressing a violent rage in the interest of oneself and loved ones" (37). The driver has no other option but to act out his anger clandestinely, i.e. in the taxi. He thus indulges in rude insults and curses against the police.

For the narrator, this driver's story is not merely a "violent slap" in his face, the aspect pivotal to El-Ariss' study, but he confesses to have never felt more "sympathetic" (Al Khamissi 20/19) to a police victim before. Sympathy,¹⁷ as Martha Nussbaum defines it in reference to Aristotle, is "a painful emotion occasioned by the awareness of another person's undeserved misfortune" (301). The narrator's sympathy with the driver is thus based on three cognitive value judgments (304–27): 1) The driver's misfortune is serious or even existential; 2.) The misfortune is not the driver's own fault; and finally, 3.) The narrator may suffer a similar lot. The driver's 'lose-lose situation' vis-à-vis the police officer 'slaps' the intellectual narrator and gives him a 'taste' of the driver's lot. Sympathy is a socializing emotion that stems from "shared vulnerabilities" (321) and facilitates the establishing of new—or renewed—common ground between 'the simple' people and the 'intellectuals.'

I would argue that this common ground does not rely on opinion in the first instance but emotion. The angry driver condemns all police officers as thugs and thieves. Some people apparently advised the narrator/author to qualify the driver's generalization. "I didn't take their advice," the narrator/author says in brackets, "because he [i.e. the driver] was absolutely not in a state to talk reasonably or refrain from exaggeration" (Al Khamissi 20/19). Rather than using the driver as the mouthpiece of a well-balanced, fully reasonable critique, the narrator foregrounds the driver's pent-up emotional state. Or put another way: The driver's allegation may not be wholly *truthful* as a rational critique, but yet fully *authentic* as emotional expression. Even if the narrator may not agree with the opinion fully, he may sympathize with the protagonist. This tendency towards exaggeration is not restricted to *Taxi*, but constitutes the *kifāya* rhetoric at large. In El-Ariss' terms, it exposes *and* scandalizes at the same time. And this scandalizing exaggeration elicits precisely sympathy.

It is one of *Taxi*'s merits to push this scandal to its extreme and thereby probe the limits of the narrator and the reader's sympathy. In one story the narrator meets a driver who overtly indulges in a religious-misogynist tirade against women, interpreting their alleged moral decadence as a sign of the approaching eschatological Hour and finally ends up joyfully imag-

ining all women roasting in hell. Although the narrator does not share this view, and seized by affects flees the taxi in a rush, in his final commentary he reassesses the situation cognitively and emotionally. By alluding indirectly to the “frustration of reciprocal action,” he interprets the driver’s longing for the end of the world as a longing for “justice against tyranny and oppression” (47/50). Using terms highly charged with value like justice and oppression, the narrator now establishes a different relationship to the driver and explores a shared vulnerability, namely the fragility of justice. The narrator’s belated commentary is clearly an act of sympathy¹⁸ and restores common ground, though this does not suggest any condoning of the misogyny and hatred of the driver’s tirade.

And still another ‘turn of the screw’: While chatting casually with another taxi driver, the narrator is suddenly exposed to the full scandalous truth:

Everything I’ve told you was bullshit. I’m afraid, but I’ll speak to you frankly so you’re in the picture with me. If I could, I’d kill you right now and have everything you have. I’d do it right away. If I was arrested, it wouldn’t matter much to me, at least in prison I’d find someone to feed me. (193/193)

The narrator flees the taxi and is “slapped in the face by a hot blast of air from the polluted streets” (194/195). The story ends with this scandalous slapping and leaves everything after the ‘half second’ of the affective moment triggering the narrator’s flight to the reader. Unlike the authorial framing in the two preceding stories, it is now left to the reader to—if at all—(re-)evaluate this scene. Could we feel sympathy? Paradoxically, I would argue yes. As long as we evaluate the driver’s misfortune as grave and undeserved and agree in a shared vulnerability, his uttered—and at the same time withheld—murderous inclination appears, as Scott has put it, to be “an acting out in fantasy [...] of the anger and reciprocal aggression denied by the presence of domination” (37–38). This does not mean that the possibly elicited sympathy is here free from fear or leads to ethical approval. Rather, the *kifāya* rhetoric scandalizes the exposing of a protagonist’s *kifāya* feeling in order to arouse sympathy *before*—or *beyond*—moral reasoning. In other words: The reader may ethically disapprove or intellectually disagree with the protagonist’s opinion or action, but may also still feel sympathy for the protagonist’s plight. Even though it may not induce an intensive physical feeling this glimmer of compassion might nevertheless inform the reader’s attitude towards society. Through experiencing shared feelings and vulnerabilities *kifāya* narratives restore a burgeoning common ground between the ‘simple people’ and the intellectual.

Towfik’s *Utopia*: On Hatred and Revolt

The most drastic *kifāya* narrative is Ahmed Khaled Towfik’s¹⁹ novel *Utopia* (*Yūtūbiyā*, 2008). Drawing on speculative and horror fiction,²⁰ *Utopia* imagines ‘what if’ the socio-spatial fragmentation and the unfettered neoliberalism of the late Mubarak era was to continue: It is the year 2023 and Egypt is a land divided. The poor majority lives in a slum called Shubra. Totally abandoned by the government and without any public services, raw violence rules the streets. In contrast, the rich minority lives in a gated community called Utopia. Enjoying material abundance and spoilt by moral *laissez-faire*, Utopia’s bored youth indulge in a cruel hobby. They kidnap people from Shubra, hunt them down in the desert with jeeps before killing them and severing an arm as souvenir. This completely anti-deconstructive representation of socio-spatial fragmentation (Junge, “Genug” 133–36) forms the basis for the novel’s *kifāya* rhetoric. Told by two young first-person narrators, Alaa from

Utopia and Gaber from Shubra, the novel remarkably provides, in Scott's terms, the hidden *and* the public transcript of Egypt. When, during a kidnapping in Shubra, it is found out that Alaa and his girlfriend are from Utopia, Gaber rescues them, hoping that he can educate them about the injustice and feel Shubra's misery. Eventually Gaber takes them back to Utopia, but Alaa has not learnt a thing. In the end he kills Gaber. My reading focuses on the emergence and impact of Gaber's hatred, seeing it as a debate on the avenues and limits of dissent and resistance.

Gaber is a highly sophisticated and yet poor inhabitant of Shubra, who may be called the 'last intellectual' and forgotten 'moral conscience' of a divided nation (Towfik 104/131–32). "I've read everything [...] [u]ntil I ended up not belonging to the Others and not belonging to Utopia. In every situation, I am strange, different, peculiar, foolish, uncomfortable and unintegrated" (109/138). Despite the milieu in which he lives, he rejects violence, drugs, and sex without love; despite the harshness of his surrounding he is still interested in books, history, and politics. His readings of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Masque of the Red Death* (1842) (108–09/137) and 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Abnūdī's poem "The daily sorrows" ("Al-aḥzān al-'ādiyya," 1981) (142/176) clearly reflect his critical awareness; and as in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), books in general function here as the germ of dissent and critical thinking (85/110–11). In short: Gaber has not internalized the totalitarian dystopian system like the inhabitants of *both* Utopia and Shubra. Thus, in the midst of total decay, he preserves political memory and resists moral corruption. He is however no naïve do-gooder. Sheltering the couple from Utopia he experiences an emotional awakening.

I used to hate the two of them like cockroaches. It's a beautiful thing to hate truly and passionately. It's been ages since I hated anything this sincerely. I encounter everything with a profound feeling of disgust, but not hatred. You don't hate spittle. You are only disgusted by it. (103/131)

Gaber describes a crucial transformation from non-aggressive rejection, i.e. disgust, to aggressive rejection, i.e. hatred (Demmerling and Landweer 107–08), with far-reaching consequences. He now decides to make them suffer at the prevailing misery in Shubra, and this suffering is not merely to educate them but is an act of revenge. He even considers raping Alaa's girlfriend as an act of humiliation. Despite his hatred Gaber categorically rejects the killing of humans, since not killing is "the sole proof that I have that I'm still human, and haven't turned into a hyena" (Towfik 104/131), the fate befalling many Egyptians.

The Egyptian character has suffered a lot of damage in the last hundred years; it's like a wife whose husband treated her brutally for several years until she ended up closer to brutishness and viciousness. The more ignorance grew, the less the cerebral cortex dominated behaviour, making the crimes committed by the lower classes bestial, in the literal meaning of the word. Eventually, the murderer [...] [is] content to repeat: 'The devil made me to do it.'
It's a beautiful thing to hate. (103/132–33)²¹

Gaber's concept of hatred fully acknowledges the pleasure of overt aggressive rejection, but in contrast to other concepts of hatred (Demmerling and Landweer 295–99) it demands moral restraint and respects human dignity. Thus, he criticizes blind hatred in favor of a conscious hatred that is fully capable of reasoning and legitimating the dissent. At the center of Gaber's dissent is the notion of humanity. While the dystopian system dehumanizes the people of Shubra as the 'other to human,' degrading them to animals (Towfik 87/113), Gaber seeks to assert his humanity at all cost. When considering raping Alaa's girlfriend, he suddenly feels unable to do so. "Is this the dominance of Utopia," he wonders anxiously, "or is it the power of a sweeping conscience" (117/147) that prevents him from taking re-

venge? Gaber answers this question at the end of the novel. When Alaa asks him why he has helped him to escape, Gaber simply responds: “Because I want to do it” (142/175). With this claim of dignity and autonomy, the intellectual Gaber succeeds in expressing radical dissent and remaining a human, *both* of which are inherent in his concept of conscious hatred. So far so good—but what if Gaber’s engagement turns out to be in vain?

How this speculative novel narrates its denouement carries meanness to the extreme: Not only does Alaa murder Gaber and sever his arm, but he also rapes Gaber’s virgin sister Safiya, whose name literally means “the pure one” in Arabic. The *kifāya* rhetoric pulls out all stops to scandalize, to give the reader a violent slap in the face. On the diegetic level, the exposure of the crime enrages the people of Shubra, it “inflamed their passions” and was the “straw that broke the camel’s back” (Towfik 153/187). For Shubra’s inhabitants, Gaber’s death provokes a moment and feeling of *kifāya*, triggering a violent revolt. Though they have as good as no chance against the well-armed Utopia, they are now determined to revolt at all costs – they just cannot endure the situation any longer. The novel ends with the vision of the bloody revolt to come.

The intellectual Gaber, however, imagines an uncanny ending. “One day, I will die, and I’ll come back to haunt them [i.e. Utopia] in the guise of a demon or a ghost, and I’ll make their lives hell” (109/139). In this dehumanizing dystopia, the intellectual can no longer influence society as human, but only alienated as a ghost. Drawing on Sigmund Freud’s interpretation of the *unheimlich* as the instance where a once familiar but now suppressed belief uncannily comes back (Freud, “Das Unheimliche”), we may also read the death of the last intellectual as the moment when an allegedly outmoded desire for a bloody revolution (Towfik 91/118) uncannily returns to the people of Shubra and finally succeeds in frightening the people of Utopia—and probably the reader too. With Gaber’s death, hatred emerges *without* any moral restraints.

In general, *kifāya* narratives do not present feasible ways out the political bell jar, but rather unfeasible ways—or what had hitherto seemed unfeasible. Since everything else has become impossible, this is a radical way to fathom new possibilities: To make the reader feel the urgent need for change and thus force him/her to think about how to transgress the *status quo*. In this respect, violence does not convey a ready-made solution but rather works as a disquieting and sometimes even uncanny catalyst to trigger such a new thinking.

El Shafee’s *Metro*: On Stick Fighting and Rage

With my fourth and last example I turn to a subversive *kifāya* narrative. Magdy El Shafee’s²² graphic novel *Metro* (*Mitrū*, 2008) opens with an impressive ekphrastic *kifāya* moment: Angrily creased bushy eyebrows, a determined fixed gaze, a sternly wrinkled forehead, and the announcement of a bank robbery. “I don’t remember when I became so angry” (1/7, see figure 1). Shehab is a young promising software engineer who goes bankrupt in Cairo’s venal economy and feels trapped in a “cage”: Outside the cage lurk the big businessmen and the corrupt state, inside the cage are the poor miserable masses who have never tried to escape (4/10). In searching for a way out Shehab and his friend Mustafa pull off a bank robbery and go into hiding until the coast is clear. While in hiding Shehab almost accidentally exposes Cairo’s sprawling, yet not all-embracing corruption. The catalytic action of the story also includes a homicide, an attempted rape, police brutality during political demonstrations, and betrayal—Mustafa, his friend, business partner, and accomplice in the heist, runs away with the money. But Shehab also finds uncorrupted sites of freedom, for instance



Figure 1 (al-Shāfi'ī 7)

at a *Kefaya* demonstration or by falling in love with Dina. The final sequence, when Shehab intends to symbolically leave the metro station called Mubarak, might be interpreted as the juncture where Shehab makes his dissent known: He leaves the subway, symbol of his underground activities and at the same time the political state under Mubarak. Like the other *kifāya* narratives, *Metro* exposes moments and feelings of *kifāya*, but it differs from them in its less generalizing representation of corruption, the optimistic vision of a vivid non-violent democratic opposition, and the subtle critique of resistance by all means possible. With respect to this critique I would like to analyze the predicament of violence and affects inherent to *kifāya* literature.

As a graphic novel *Metro* has many more artistic devices at its disposal to express affect and emotion than a novel. *Metro* places great store on conveying the immediate sensation of affect in violent scenes, not relying solely on words but also on single lines, drawings, or the arrangement of the pictorial panels. When Shehab enters the bank director's bureau during the robbery, the panels suddenly topple from the fixed horizontal into a dynamic diagonal order. From a bird's-eye perspective, the reader/spectator observes Shehab at the center of the page jumping and smashing his stick forcefully on the bank director, whose glasses shatter. "Today, bones will break like our young dreams are smashed. WHACK!" (31/37, see figure 2). On the level of visual representation, violence empowers Shehab to break through the bell jar of the 'closed horizon' and retaliate. On the level of visceral sensation, the reader/spectator is exposed to the amazing fluency of movement and the impressive embodiment of smashing that overthrows the fixed horizontal and breaks through to a dy-



Figure 2 (al-Shāfi'ī 37)

dynamic diagonal; it is the sensation of a violent and pleasant dynamism that merges, to a certain degree, violence with pleasure.

“Since I was little, I’ve always loved Bruce Lee” (30/36). Having learned stick fighting in Upper Egypt from an early age, he masters the weapon of the *baltagiyya* (thugs) that the government deploys against protesters. But Shehab reclaims the stick for himself and violence for his aims. When thugs attempt to rape his girlfriend Dina, Shehab suddenly appears on the spot as an elegant man, tall protector and athletic fighter, the stick in his hand transgresses the scope of the panel and merges into the action on the next one. “A terrible rage rises within me... THWACK!” (El Shafee 14/20). Though the term ‘rage’ may be an apt transcript of Shehab’s affective state, the Arabic original speaks of *daṣṣa rahība* (a terrible outbreak/outburst/gush), not denoting the quality, but rather the intensity of this affective ‘blow.’ Later, when the same thugs attempt to rape Dina a second time, Shehab’s blow is much greater. Across four pages spanning eighteen panels, the pictorial scene of violence unfolds a tremendous intensity that in length turns into a pictorial scenario of movement and sensation detached from words and representation. As verbal communications almost collapses completely, the reader/spectator ‘hears’ Shehab’s smashing stick—“Whoosh! Bam!” (72/78, see figure 3)—and the thugs’ screams—“AAAAAAH!” (73/79), while the tumultuous surrounding turns into a flat monochrome background against which a ‘violence of sensation’ is projected: Thanks to his rage, Shehab again successfully defends Dina.

However, *Metro* also deconstructs this violent and pleasant affect. While Shehab expresses no sympathy at all for the dying thug—“What goes around comes around” (75/81)—, the



Figure 3 (al-Shāfi'ī 78–79)

graphic novel literally draws a different picture. On one and the same page, it brings together Shehab's care for Dina with Mustafa's care for his brother Wael (74/80), on a double page the death of a protestor with the death of the thug (76–77/82–83), and on a subsequent double page the care for their corpses (78–79/84–85); after all, violence has two faces and they are both human beings. The thug's death propels the *kifāya* narrative in a different direction. It is the tragic predicament of violence that Shehab has killed, apparently without knowing, the brother of his friend Mustafa, while Mustafa himself apparently does not

know who has caused his brother's death. After having lost his brother, Mustafa decides to run away with the money. "No one gave him a drop of respect in his whole life," Shehab concludes when reflecting on Mustafa's treachery, adding: "not even me" (86/92). I read this self-critique as a repercussion of violence and affect, a smashing of clear-cut dichotomies between good and bad, opposition and government, protestors and thugs, pleasant and painful. *Metro* exposes this predicament of violence and affect, not in a scandalous way but subtly. In this sense *Metro* narrates the departure from the *kifāya* narrative to a different form of expressing dissent and engaged resistance.

Kifāya as Literary Strategy: Moment, Feeling, and Rhetoric

And lastly, anger is always accompanied by a certain pleasure, due to the hope of revenge to come.
The 'Art' of Rhetoric (Aristotle 1378b/173)

To sum up, I have discussed the *kifāya* narratives in pre-revolutionary Egyptian literature by way of three structural features, namely the moment, feeling, and rhetoric of *kifāya*.

- 1) I understand the *kifāya* moment as a turning point in the narrative when a protagonist or group decides to cross a hitherto uncrossed ethical line and aggressively issue demands, often leading to violent retaliation for suffered injustice (e.g. Taha's turn to terrorism). The *kifāya* moment unfolds its impact on the course of events and may best be analyzed by narratological means. However, one narrative may have multiple and different *kifāya* moments (*The Yacoubian Building*), omit the narration of a distinct *kifāya* moment (*Taxi*), or end with the emergence of such a moment without narrating its further course (*Utopia*). The analysis of the *kifāya* moment may also shed light on the main socio-political problems (e.g. social fragmentation and despotism) and their possible outcome (e.g. revolt and terrorism).
- 2) With *kifāya* feeling I am referring to the painful feeling of a protagonist resulting from a situation experienced as unbearable and leading to outward aggression. Relying on my initial differentiation between emotion and affect in regard to their interaction with cognition and rationality, I consider emotion to be a judgment value of an unbearable situation (e.g. Gaber's hatred) and affect as the immediate bodily sensation of such a situation (Taha's pain). More importantly for the *kifāya* feeling, emotion and affect are both expressed *outwardly* and *aggressively*. This may be best explained by the comparison with Sonallah Ibrahim's (Ṣun'allāh Ibrāhīm, b. 1937) novel *The Committee* (*Al-lajna*, 1981). While the protagonist in Ibrahim's novel faces situations unbearable to him, he eventually redirects his aggression from the committee to himself; this inward turn is literally self-consuming. In contrast, the *kifāya* feeling directs its aggression externally (Gaber's attempted rape, Taha's scream). The analysis of the *kifāya* feeling thus provides the hidden transcript of affect and emotion in pre-revolutionary Egypt, including screams, outbursts as well as anger and hatred.

One might call this *kifāya* feeling a desperate desire for resistance at all costs. Yet I would argue that the *kifāya* feeling does not foreground *desperation* but rather *pleasure*. Aristotle attributes to anger "a certain pleasure, due to the hope of revenge to come" (1378b/173). Likewise, the protagonists of the *kifāya* narratives experience a wide range of pleasures (Taha's relief, Gaber's hatred, Shehab's rage). These pleasures arise when,

to draw on Scott's idea of the hidden transcript, "frustration, tension, and control necessary in public give way to unbridled retaliation [...], where the accounts of reciprocity are, symbolically at least, finally balanced" (38).

- 3) With *kifāya* rhetoric I address the possible effect of a *kifāya* narrative on the reader based on the assumption that it intends to incite a literary *kifāya* feeling. The starting point is what I have called an anti-deconstructive representation of socio-political grievances that furnish a generalizing and exaggerating view on society rather than a detailed and well-balanced critique. This anti-deconstructive starting point leaves no doubt about the legitimacy of dissent and resistance; the crucial question is not if but how to resist. The main literary strategy is—according to the discussed texts—to make the hidden transcript public. Thus, in his critical assessment of *The Yacoubian Building* Massad wonders "why the author (and perhaps the publisher) thinks that the novel's major function was to render visible and audible that which has been hidden and muted" (389). In this regard I find El-Ariss' term "fiction of scandal" helpful because it brings two connected yet different strategies, namely to expose and to scandalize, organically together. Once again with reference to *The Yacoubian Building*, Massad remarks that there is "an obvious need here to sensationalize, to tell what is already known as if it were new in order to induce moral panic" (ibid.). Indeed, the exposed socio-political grievances are in most cases not new phenomena, be it in public or in literary discourse; in fact, it is rather due to its scandalizing exposure that they are *newly* experienced. The *kifāya* rhetoric, I would conclude, is not so much about changing opinion but rather about intensifying experience; to make the reader feel that 'enough is enough.' From this perspective, the analysis of affect and emotion becomes indispensable for approaching dissent in this kind of literature. Alternatively, *kifāya* literature reminds us that dissent is not merely about opinion and value. Derived etymologically from the Latin compound *dis* and *sentire*, the latter meaning "to feel, to think" ("Dissent"), the English word dissent becomes a 'dis-sentiment'; a disapproval in both thinking *and* feeling.²³

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) for providing me with a scholarship that enabled me to complete this article at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. I also thank those who have commented on earlier versions of my article presented in Leipzig, Paris and Toronto, especially Verena Klemm, Friederike Pannewick, Tarek El-Ariss, Barbara Winckler, and W. Scott Chahanovich, to whom I am also grateful for the proofreading. An earlier version of this paper appeared in *Lisan: Zeitschrift für arabische Literatur* (Junge, "Genug").
- 2 I quote the English translation of the primary literary sources first, followed by the Arabic original. I always follow the English translations; modifications are indicated in the endnotes or discussed in the text.
- 3 Note the modification of Wright's translation that renders *ghill* as bitterness.
- 4 The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines dissent as "[t]he difference of opinion and sentiment" and "disagreement with a proposal or resolution." While political dissent in a narrow sense might be understood as the explicit disagreement with the government and its policies and practices, I use here the term 'dissent' in a broad sense, namely as disagreement with—and disapproval of—a political, social, and economic system, including the different ways of experiencing and expressing it.
- 5 I believe that the literary text can be analyzed in regard to both affect and emotion, precisely *because* affect and emotion are different phenomena. Thus, the analyses of affect and emotion do not exclude each other, rather "[t]he issue is to demarcate their sphere of applicability" (Massumi 7).
- 6 The *Egyptian Movement for Change (Al-ḥaraka al-miṣriyya min ajl al-taḡhrīr)*, informally called—and transcribed—as 'Kefaya Movement,' was founded in 2004 and publicly demanded that Mubarak step down. "With

- its simple message, ‘enough,’ Kefaya was able to mobilize and embrace diverse groups” (Lim 236), see: Lim, Merlyna. “Clicks, Cabs, and Coffee Houses: Social Media and Oppositional Movements in Egypt, 2004–2011.” *Journal of Communication* 62 (2012): 231–48. Print. In my article terms like *kifāya* literature do not directly refer to the Kefaya Movement, although the texts I analyze in this article and their authors and publishers are in different ways linked to the Kefaya Movement. The influential publisher Muḥammad Hāshim of the publishing house Dār Mīrīt, responsible for the first edition of Towfik’s *Utopia* and Al Aswany’s *The Yacoubian Building*, “credits Kefaya with the inspiration for his commitment to cross all the red lines” (Edwards, Brian T. “Cairo 2010—After Kefaya.” *A Public Space* 9 (2009). Web. 16 Oct. 2013). Al Aswany, whose *The Yacoubian Building* was published two years before the Kefaya Movement, is seen as one of its leading figures. Al Khamissi tried to document the Kefaya demonstrations and to “write a book that expressed the tone of society in the moment, and the state of anger on the streets I saw very clearly” (Jacquette). Finally, the Kefaya demonstrations and slogans are described in El Shafee’s graphic novel *Metro*.
- 7 The *kifāya* narrative—or some of its features—are closely linked to what Tarek El-Ariss has called in an inspiring study the “Fiction of Scandal,” including for instance the Saudi-Arabian writers al-Sanea (Rajā’ al-Ṣāni’) and Khal (‘Abduh Khāl) (>El-Ariss, “Fiction of Scandal”).
 - 8 *Kifāya* rhetoric must not be reduced to narratives of violence, though they may appear as one of their distinct narratives because of the aggression depicted and exposed. This restriction with regard to violence is all the more important from a postcolonial perspective, since some Arab critics and authors, like Farghali and Rakha, criticize the biased literary representation of, and academic focus on, violence as neo-orientalist. However, instead of analyzing narratives of violence one might as well analyze *kifāya* rhetoric in narratives of kinship, sexuality, and love for instance.
 - 9 Alaa Al Aswany (b. 1957) is a dentist by profession, and a journalist and writer. His novel *The Yacoubian Building* became a bestseller in the Arab World and beyond, since translated into more than twenty languages. In 2006, a screen adaptation was shot that featured several stars, often referred to as the most expensive production in the history of the Egyptian film. Al Aswany has so far published two further novels, namely *Chicago* (*Shikājū*, 2007) and *Cars Club* (*Nādī al-sayyārāt*, 2013), several short stories, including the story collection *Friendly Fire* (*Nīrān ṣadīqa*, 2004), and finally several collections of his journalistic work, including *Why Don’t Egyptians Revolt?* (*Li-mādhā lā yathūr al-miṣriyyūn?*, 2010) and most recently *Did the Egyptian Revolution Go Wrong?* (*Hal akhta’at al-thawra al-miṣriyya?*, 2012).
 - 10 For the act of anal rape as an interrogation technique, see the widely debated case of a courageous young Egyptian man in the year 2007, who was the first victim to sue his torturers who were then sentenced to prison for three years (Mekay, Emad. “Torture Ruling Boosts Rights.” *Inter Press Service: Journalism and Communication for Global Change*. 8 Nov. 2007. Web. 12 Dec. 2013).
 - 11 Note the modification of Davies’ English translation that renders *tatamazzaq* as “ripped open.”
 - 12 This remark refers in particular to his *Study after Velázquez’s Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1953), showing a distorted version of Diego Velázquez’s (1599–1660) *The Portrait of Innocent X* (1650). On Bacon’s canvas, however, the pope’s portrait is barely recognizable. Instead, the viewer is overwhelmed by the pope’s intensive scream—which, one should note, Velázquez did not draw. “The entire body escapes through the screaming mouth. The body escapes through the round mouth of the Pope [...], as if through an artery” (Deleuze 28).
 - 13 Khaled Al Khamissi (b. 1962) is a journalist and novelist. His first literary work *Taxi* became a bestseller in the Arab World and has been translated into many other languages; in Cairo it has been recently adapted to the stage. His first novel is *Noah’s Ark* (*Safīnat Nūh*, 2009).
 - 14 In regard to genre, Al Khamissi refers in an interview to *Taxi* as a *maqāma* (session) in the style of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century socio-critical *neo-maqāmas*, e.g. Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī’s *A Period of Time* (*Ḥadīth ‘Isā b. Hishām*, 1907) (Jacquette).
 - 15 In a linguistically playful way of reasoning, recalling both French post-structuralist practices and classical Arabic usages of *ishtiqaq* (word derivation), El-Ariss draws his inspiring analysis from *faḍaḥa* in the sense of “to expose a misdeed,” but also in the sense of “awaking the sleeper in the morning” (*faḍaḥa al-ṣabāḥ*). Stemming from these findings of critical exposure and affective awakening or scandalization, El-Ariss uses several word forms, most notable *faḍāḥ* (exposer, scandalizer), where both meanings coincide (“Fiction of Scandal” 518–19). In my analysis the recurrent terms “to expose” and “to scandalize” draw on El-Ariss’ elaboration of the “fiction of scandal.”
 - 16 Note the modification of Wright’s translation that renders *ghill* as bitterness.

- 17 A note on terminology: The common English translation of the Aristotelian *eleos* is ‘pity.’ In contrast, Martha Nussbaum uses in her study ‘compassion,’ while she claims that all three English terms, namely pity, compassion, and sympathy, can be used interchangeably (301–04). Following the English translation of *Taxi*, I will use sympathy as the translation for *ta ʿāṭuf*.
- 18 At first glance, one might think here of empathy rather than of sympathy. Empathy, as Nussbaum defines it, is “an imaginative reconstruction of the experience of the sufferer” (327) that does not include a feeling for the sufferer’s plight nor does it involve a judgment of the sufferer’s plight as bad. With regard to the latter aspect, Nussbaum gives the example of a sadistic torturer who might well be (and most probably is) able to reconstruct the suffering of his victim or even uses his empathy in order to ‘improve’ the cruelty of his practices. Yet, the empathetic torturer probably does not consider the suffering of his victim as bad, but rather as good or joyful. Nevertheless, Nussbaum credits empathy as an important—but not necessary—for sympathy (329–30).
- 19 Ahmed Khaled Towfik (b. 1962) is a doctor, translator and writer for youth and adult literature, mostly in the realm of horror and speculative fiction. His immense oeuvre of more than two hundred books includes the literary series *Metaphysics* (*Mā warāʿ al-tabīʿa*, from 1992 till 2014) and *Fantasia* (*Fantāziyā*, started in 1995). While his serial works find a wide youth readership, Towfik gained attention among literary critics with his socio-political novel *Utopia*. His latest novel is the social thriller *Bayonet* (*Al-sinja*, 2012).
- 20 For a discussion of Arabic science fiction, see the studies of Snir, Hankins, and most recently and comprehensively Barbaro. See: Snir, Reuven. “The Emergence of Science Fiction in Arabic Literature.” *Der Islam* 77.2 (2000): 263–85. Print; Hankins, Rebecca. “Fictional Islam: A Literary Review and Contemporary Essay on Islam in Science Fiction and Fantasy.” *Foundation* 105 (2009): 73–92. Print; Barbaro, Ada. *La fantascienza nella letteratura araba*. Rome: Carocci, 2013. Print.
- 21 Note the relocation of this passage in the English translation to a different passage than that in the Arabic original (Towfik 103–04/131–33).
- 22 Magdy El Shafee is an illustrator, cartoonist and writer. His first graphic novel *Metro* was briefly banned after its publication for allegedly offending public morals. It was republished in 2012 and has been translated into English, Italian, and German. El Shafee edits *Dushma* (*Bunker*), a comic journal for young adults. While genuine Arabic comics have been published since the 1950s (Douglas and Malti-Douglas), artistic comics and graphic novels explicitly for adult readers emerged in the 2000s and became a burgeoning genre during and after the so-called Arab Spring (Gabai). See: Douglas, Allan and Fedwa Malti-Douglas. *Comic Strips: Politics of an Emerging Mass Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994. Print; Gabai, Anna. “Von Mickey Mouse bis Handala.” *Qantara*. 25 Jun. 2013. Web. 10 Dec. 2013.
- 22 Completing this essay in the post-post-revolutionary era during the reign of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, one has to add that some of the dissenting authors discussed here, like Sonallah Ibrahim and Alaa Al Aswany, have joined the ‘authoritarian turn’ of the Egyptian Intelligentsia, as a recent panel discussion organized by the magazine *Bidoun* and *New Directions Press* has aptly called the defense of the continuing state violence, especially against Islamists, by some Egyptian intellectuals (Rosetti). Against this background, the *kifāya* rhetoric of prose literature discussed here seems all the more to be a pre-revolutionary phenomenon, while one may wonder at the same time about affect and emotion involved in this ‘authoritarian turn’ and how they will—or will not—be expressed in future literature. See: Rosetti, Chip. “‘Baffling and Disappointing’: On the ‘Authoritarian Turn’ of the Egyptian Intelligentsia.” *Arablit*. 12 Sept. 2014. Web. 13 Sept. 2014.

Works Cited

- Abdel-Latif, Omayma. “Cairo’s Taxicab’s Confessions.” *Foreign Policy*. 16 Aug. 2007. Web. 12 Dec. 2013.
- Abel, Marco. *Violent Affect: Literature, Cinema and Critique after Representation*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2007. Print.
- Aristotle. *The ‘Art’ of Rhetoric*. Trans. John Henry Freese. London: William Heinemann, 1926. Print.
- al-Aswānī, ‘Alā’. *ʿImārat Ya ʿqūbiyān*. Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 2005. Print.
- Al Aswany, Alaa. *The Yacoubian Building*. Trans. Humphrey Davies. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006. Print.
- Böhme, Hartmut and Gernot Böhme. *Das Andere der Vernunft: Zur Entwicklung von Rationalitätsstrukturen am Beispiel Kants*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1985. Print.

- Deleuze, Gilles. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Trans. Daniel W. Smith. London: Continuum, 2003. Print.
- Demmerling, Christoph and Hilge Landweer. *Philosophie der Gefühle: Von Achtung bis Zorn*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007. Print.
- “Dissent.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. Print.
- El-Ariss, Tarek. “Fiction of Scandal.” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 510–31. Print.
- . *Trials of Arab Modernity: Literary Affects and the New Political*. New York: Fordham UP, 2013. Print.
- Elmarsafy, Ziad. “Alaa Al-Aswany and the Desire for Revolution.” *Resistance in Contemporary Middle Eastern Cultures: Literature, Cinema and Music*. Ed. Karima Laachir and Saeed Talajooy. New York: Routledge, 2013. 15–31. Print.
- Farghalī, Ibrāhīm. “‘Alā’ al-Aswānī...min namūdhaj al-mufakkir ilā šāni‘ al-brūbājāndā.” *Farghali Blogspot*. 28 Oct. 2010. Web. 1 Dec. 2013.
- Freud, Sigmund. “Das Unheimliche.” *Studienausgabe: Psychologische Schriften*. Vol. 4. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 2000. 243–74. Print.
- Hafez, Sabry. “The Aesthetics of the Closed Horizon: The Transformation of the City and the Novel in Egypt since 1990.” *From New Values to New Aesthetics: Turning Points in Modern Arabic Literature: Postmodernism and Thereafter*. Vol. 2. Ed. Stephan Guth and Gail Ramsay. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011. 109–37. Print.
- Jacquette, Elisabeth. “Khaled al-Khamissi on TAXI, the maqama, and Prime Minister Johnny Walker.” *Full Stops: Reviews, Interviews, Marginalia*. 1 Apr. 2013. Web. 3 Dec. 2013.
- Junge, Christian. “Emotion in Postmodernism and Beyond: Autobiographic Metafiction in Two Egyptian Novels of the 1990s (Nūrā Amīn and Muṣṭafā Dhikrī).” *From New Values to New Aesthetics: Turning Points in Modern Arabic Literature: Postmodernism and Thereafter*. Vol. 2. Ed. Stephan Guth and Gail Ramsay. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011. 139–65. Print.
- . “Genug. Schluss. Jetzt reicht’s! Der Kifaya-Gestus in der ägyptischen Literatur der 2000er Jahre.” *Lisan: Zeitschrift für arabische Literatur* 13/14 (2012): 128–37. Print.
- . “I Write, Therefore I Am: Metafiction as Self-Assertion in Mustafā Dhikrī’s *Much Ado About a Gothic Labyrinth*.” *Arabic Literature: Postmodern Perspectives*. Ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Andreas Pflitsch, and Barbara Winckler. London: Saqi, 2010. 444–60. Print.
- al-Khamīsī, Khālid. *Tāksī: Hawādīt al-mashāwīr*. Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2008. Print.
- al Khamissi, Khaled. *Taxi*. Trans. Jonathan Wright. Laverstock: Aflame, 2008. Print.
- Leys, Ruth. “The Turn to Affect: A Critique.” *Critical Inquiry* 37 (2011): 434–68. Print.
- Massad, Joseph A. *Desiring Arabs*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008. Print.
- Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002. Print.
- Nussbaum, Martha. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. Print.
- Rakha, Youssef. “In Extremis: Literature and Revolution in Contemporary Cairo (An Oriental Essay in Seven Parts).” *The Kenyon Review* 34.3 (2012): 151–66. Print.
- Rooke, Tetz. “The Emergence of the Arabic Bestseller: Arabic Fiction and World Literature.” *From New Values to New Aesthetics: Turning Points in Modern Arabic Literature: Postmodernism and Thereafter*. Vol. 2. Ed. Stephan Guth and Gail Ramsay. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011. 201–13. Print.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985. Print.
- Scott, James C. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1990. Print.
- El Shafee, Magdy. *Metro: A Story of Cairo*. Trans. Chip Rossetti. New York: Metropolitan, 2012. Print.

al-Shāfiʿī, Majdī. *Mitrū*. Cairo: Dār Malāmiḥ li-l-Nashr, 2008. Print.

Tawfīq, Aḥmad Khālīd. *Yūṭūbiyā*. Cairo: Dār Mīrīt, 2008. Print.

Towfik, Ahmed Khaled. *Utopia*. Trans. Chip Rossetti. Doha: Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation, 2011. Print.