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## Privately Empowered

Edwin, Shirin

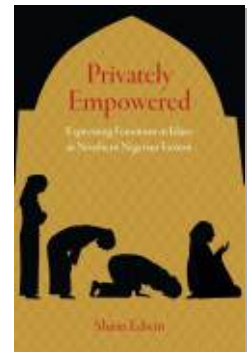
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This book would not have started without my husband Ayub's loving suggestion that I should write it. After trying to find a publisher for a dissertation in French in the United States, and finding none, I rather belatedly realized that our thoughts are imprisoned by language—and language itself by place. So I am forced to write in English. But Ayub's belief in me has exploded every line that can possibly be drawn by language, religion, or place. The odds that two people from two large minorities in an even larger country defy by living and laughing together on a daily basis are beyond the drama that a Bollywood film can ever hope to capture, and beyond my own linguistic abilities to describe, even in Hindi. On the other hand, I am able to express my deepest gratitude, if insufficiently, for the material ideas in this book that developed with a generous Enhancement Grant for Professional Development (EGPD) at Sam Houston State University (SHSU) in 2007. I am indeed fortunate to benefit from SHSU's continued support for my research endeavors. Over the years, I was fortunate to present some ideas in this book at the African Literature Association Conferences, the Modern Language Association Conventions, and other venues to capitalize on so many conversations with colleagues across the disciplines—Suman Venkatesh, Gaurav Desai, Anouar Majid, Lynn Ramey, Robert Barsky, and Nouri Gana, in particular, offered much-needed encouragement of my scholarly goals in the early stages of my career. Though not directly connected with this book, Carli Coetzee's incisive reading skills sharpened my critical thoughts on literature and literary criticism and reminded me to think more and ask more. I am grateful to her for her intellectual engagement and encouragement of my work on African literatures. Gabeba Baderoon and Shaden Tageldin offered me the opportunity to talk about the work in this book, exposing me to invaluable feedback and a community of academics that enriches my work in immeasurable ways. I am lucky to have colleagues at SHSU who have helped me along the way and friends whose work habits and intellectual drive inspire me to continue in my scholarly pursuits. Grateful thanks are due to April Shemak, Shuangyue Zhang, Hiranya Nath, Manuel Triano-Lopez, Sharon Murphy-Manley, Alejandro Latinez, and, more recently, Peter Gachanja. The Interlibrary Loan staff at the Newton Gresham Library at SHSU—Erin Cassidy, Ann Jerabek, Bette

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