Translatability in Contemporary Arab Women's Literature

by

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RÉSUMÉ

La politique de traduction et de la traductibilité ont figuré en bonne place dans les débats concernant la traduction des textes arabes en anglais. À travers l'analyse de trois romans contemporains écrits par des femmes écrivaines arabes, cette thèse examine les stratégies littéraires employées par les auteurs et leurs traductrices dans la négociation de la relation entre la langue, l'emplacement et l'identité. En regroupant les romans *The Map of Love* de Ahdaf Soueif, *Awrāq al-narjis* de Somaya Ramadan et *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī* de Hanan al-Shaykh, cette étude remet en question la construction discursive de l'arabe comme étant une langue difficile et impénétrable, tout en interrogeant l'adaptabilité cosmopolite qui est accordée à l'anglais. Par le biais d'un examen des textes originaux des romans de même que leurs traductions, *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* de Soueif, *Leaves of Narcissus* de Ramadan et *Only in London* de al-Shaykh, cette thèse affirme que ces textes permettent une ambivalence qui est à la fois linguistique et géographique, et qui remet en question la distance linguistique entre l'arabe et l'anglais. Employant une approche issue de la traductologie et de la théorie littéraire postcoloniale, cette étude analyse la présence d'éléments paratextuels tels que des glossaires et les notes, de même que les éléments textuels tels que la translittération, la traduction dans le texte et l'usage du dialecte et de l'accent. Bien que chacun des romans soient étudié au côté de sa traduction respective, les trois textes originaux contiennent tous des éléments de bilinguisme qui sont thématisés dans les récits eux-mêmes. Ainsi, les trois textes faisant l'objet de cette étude explorent la relation entre les langues arabe et anglaise, tant au niveau thématique que textuelle. Plutôt que de préserver les frontières entre les langues anglaise et arabe, cette thèse affirme que la traduction peut faciliter un continuum de transit entre ces langues, et finalement défier les notions puristes de langues en tant qu'entités distinctes.

ABSTRACT

The politics of translation and translatability have figured prominently in debates concerning the translation of Arabic texts in English. Through an analysis of three contemporary novels by Arab women writers, this dissertation investigates the literary strategies employed by the authors and their translators in negotiating the relationship between language, location and identity. By bringing together Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, Somaya Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis* and Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Landan yā ʻazīzī*, this study questions the discursive construction of Arabic as a difficult or impenetrable language, while interrogating the cosmopolitan adaptability that is granted to English. Through an examination of the original texts of the novels alongside their translations, Soueif's *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*, Ramadan's *Leaves of Narcissus*, and al-Shaykh's *Only in London* this dissertation argues that these texts give voice to an in-betweenness that is both linguistic and geographic, and one that questions the linguistic distance between Arabic and English. Using frameworks drawn from translation theory and postcolonial literary theory, this study analyzes the presence of paratextual elements such as glossaries and notes, alongside textual elements such as transliteration, in-text translation and the use of dialect and accent. While each of the novels is studied alongside its respective translation, the three original texts all contain elements of multilingualism that are self-consciously thematized in the narratives themselves. As such, the three texts examined in this study explore the relationship between the Arabic and English languages at both the textual and thematic level. Rather than preserve the boundaries between the English and Arabic languages, this dissertation argues that translation can facilitate a continuum of transit between languages and ultimately challenge purist notions of languages as discrete entities.

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NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

To standardize the transliterated terms for non-Latin terminology, all Arabic terms are transliterated following the International Journal of Middle East Studies, IJMES system, except in cases where a more commonly accepted version exists or when the person named has provided a transliteration. For example, first and last names of authors cited are written as they are commonly vocalized and do not follow IJMES. When citing directly from English texts that contain Arabic transliterations, I have retained the spelling of transliterated Arabic words as they occur in the text itself. In my theorization of these transliterated terms however, I follow the IJMES system in instances where I am not quoting directly from the text. In this dissertation I draw on both English and Arabic language texts and when citing the Arabic texts, I retain the Arabic script throughout the citation. Diacritical marks are used only to indicate the Arabic letters.

INTRODUCTION

ليمبو، كلمة أوفى لوصف تلك المساحة التي تتخلق عندما يتداخل عالمان

– Somaya Ramadan 2001, 61.

> Take the root q-l-b… Qalb: the heart, the heart that beats, the hearts at the heart of things… Then there's a set of numbers of forms – a template almost – that any root can take. So in the case of "qalb" you get "qalab": to overturn, overthrow, turn upside down, make into the opposite; hence "maqlab": a dirty trick, a turning of the tables and also a rubbish dump. "Maqloub": upside-down: "mutaqallib": changeable; and "inqilab": a coup… So at the heart of all things is the germ of their overthrow; the closer you are to the heart, the closer to the reversal.

– Ahdaf Soueif 1999, 82.

> تسيل كلماته الانكليزية في أُذُنها، أي تنفرط حرفاً حرفاً و تنزلق... الهمس في أذنها هو مداعبة حرف الراء يدخلها خاصة و نيقولاس يتركه معلقاً في الهواء كفمه، فتسمع Hia بدل Here، و Lova بدل Lover. الحرف تائه يريد الاستقرار عند أذنها، إنما يعززه الحرفان الأخيران من كلمة firstly التي تركت أيضاً شفتيه منفرجتين حتى تدخل لميس

– Hanan al-Shaykh 2001, 144.

The three texts examined in this dissertation incorporate the Arabic and English languages as multiply conjoined, treating these languages as both the objects of, and the means to, a narrative. In these three cases, Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* (translated by Fatma Musa as *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*), Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī* (translated by Catherine Cobham as *Only in London*), and Somaya Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis* (translated by Marilyn Booth as *Leaves of Narcissus*), writing and translation are simultaneously acts of linguistic cohabitation in which the proximity of Arabic and English lies at the heart of the text. This study brings into focus the instances of linguistic limbo, cohabitation of Arabic and English, and the use of multiple Arabic and English vernaculars in these texts and their translations.

These three novels interweave Arabic and English at the same time as they reflect on the relationships between the two languages. They also in different ways pose ques-

tions about the intertwined histories and dynamics of the Arabic and English languages. This study brings together three novels that self-consciously enact their own multilingualism. The English novel of Ahdaf Soueif and the Arabic novels of Somaya Ramadan and Hanan al-Shaykh, all set between the UK and the Arab world, thematize questions of language and translation and engage directly with the politics of language and the limits and possibilities of translation and translatability. All three texts bring to the fore the relationship between language, location and identity. These texts give voice to the in-betweenness of language and challenge the notion of languages as discrete entities by intermingling Arabic and English.

What can the focus on the relationship between Arabic and English in the novels of contemporary Arab women writers tell us about the Arabic language and the mobile cultures of the Arab World as they interact with English cultural and linguistic geographies? Here I explore how the relationship between contemporary texts by Arab women writers and their translations can be useful in interrogating simplistic categorizations of Arabic literature as foreign, exotic, different, controversial and embargoed.[1] Through close readings of three texts and their translations, I argue that the construction of the idea of the Arabic language as impenetrable contributes to the English language being granted a cosmopolitan adaptability that Arabic is denied, despite the mobility of its speakers in a globalized postcolonial context.[2]

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[1] See Said, "Embargoed Literature" and Aboul-Ela on the vexed politics of translating Arabic in the Anglo-American literary context. In the post-9/11 context of war on terror and security, the Arabic language has been characterized as an enemy language and its knowledge by US army personnel has been deemed a necessary warfighting skill. For more on the militarization of translation see Colla, "Dragomen and Checkpoints"; Pratt.

[2] Psycholinguistic studies conducted at Haifa University in Israel sought to uncover the cognitive differences in native speakers of Arabic, Hebrew and English. The research found that native speakers of Arabic presented a slower response rate to isolated letters that were flashed on a screen. The studies were conducted by projecting a combination of real words and nonsensical words from each language on a screen and tim-

In order to more fully explore the dynamics between the languages, I work with one novel first written in English, Ahdaf Soueif's *Map of Love* and two novels first written in Arabic, Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī*, and Somaya Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis.* As the epigraphs to this introduction indicate, all three authors draw on the proximity and interconnectedness of Arabic and English in ways that question the rigid distinction between the two languages. Through specific textual strategies, as well as narratives that explore the role of language, identity and location, the novels investigate the relationship between English and Arabic both textually and thematically.

I am interested in the ways texts and their translations move between languages, suggesting that the space between Arabic and English might be understood in terms of a continuum of transit rather than along the dichotomized lines of East/West, Arabic/ English, foreign/domestic. Postcolonial literary analysis and translation theory will be useful here in thinking through the ways in which texts move between the two languages both linguistically and politically. As such, the cohabitation of the English and Arabic languages in these texts does not mean that they are interchangeable, or that they lack differentiating characteristics. Indeed, a focus on the asymmetrical relations of power reminds us that such texts and translations are not on equal footing and that the political dynamics circulating between them often result in differentials of power that affect how the languages are imagined, read, written and translated.

Through my readings of these texts and their translations, I will show how they resist the idea of linguistic fixity and authenticity, and thus complicate the notion of

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ing participant responses. The researchers found that when reading Arabic words, the Arabic-speaking participants exhibited a cognitive delay in identifying words, leading the researchers to conclude that the "greater morphological and visual complexity" of the Arabic language results in a causal cerebral deficit. Compared to Hebrew and English, the researchers concluded that Arabic orthography represents a difficulty that is *uniquely* Arabic. For more on the study see Ibrahim and Eviatar.

languages as 'foreign' or 'domestic' through their interaction within a single text. Through the literary strategies of non-translation, transliteration and intertextuality, I suggest that *The Map of Love, Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī* and *Awrāq al-narjis* focus on the proximity of the English and Arabic languages, highlighting their intertwined histories and thematizing the colonial histories that have governed their interaction. The linguistic interaction within the texts brings to light the closeness of the English and Arabic languages; that is, the multiple spaces in which the languages cohabitate in a single text, a single geographic area, or even within the psyche of a single individual.

Corpus of Works Studied

I chose to examine these three texts together because of the extent to which the themes of language and translation figure in their narratives. Moreover, there are significant shared characteristics among the translations that are examined in this dissertation in that they preserve many of the instances of multilingualism and linguistic interaction that are present in the original texts. Additionally, the integrity and order of the narratives in the translations remains largely the same as in the original texts. The translators do not tend in these three works to strive to resolve the linguistic cohabitation present in the original texts, but rather aim to carry it into the translation. This raises an important question about the potential of translation to capture linguistic tension, rather than subdue it. I argue that by using methods that capture the interplay between English and Arabic texts, the translators attempt to *translate* and *transfer* the interventions that take place in the original texts.

A significant commonality between the translations is that the three translators of the novels discussed in this dissertation are all engaged with theoretical questions of translation and not only concerned with the practice. Marilyn Booth, who translated Somaya

Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis*, has written extensively about the process of translation and is herself an important translation theorist of Arabic literature.[3] Catherine Cobham has translated several works by Hanan al-Shaykh,[4] in addition to numerous titles by other authors of Arabic literature.[5] She is also a professor of Arabic and Arabic literature at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland and publishes scholarly articles on some of the translations she has completed.[6] Finally, Fatma Musa is Ahdaf Soueif's mother in addition to being her translator. Earlier in her career, she held an appointment as Chair of the English Department at Cairo University, among other academic positions. In an interesting chiasmus, just as Booth and Cobham (American and British scholars and academics) are deeply engaged, both personally and in their careers, with Arabic language and literature, so is Fatma Musa, an Egyptian academic, engaged with English literature, receiving a PhD from the University of London.

I argue that these texts function to highlight the proximity between Arabic and English, exposing them as deeply interconnected through usage and history. That the authors, translators as well as their protagonists navigate the in-betweenness of English and Arabic further suggests the importance of asking how translation provides a space for both the coming-together as well as the differentiation between languages. These texts work well

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[3] Booth's contribution to the scholarship of Arabic literature in translation in the last decade is seminal – her theorizations and reflections on the process of translating the Saudi novel *Girls of Riyadh* has been of particular importance to the field of Arabic literature in translation especially in relation to questions regarding the selection, translation and circulation of Arabic literature in English. For more see "Translator v. Author" and "'The Muslim Woman' as Celebrity Author".

[4] Cobham translated al-Shaykh's novels *Women of Sand and Myrrh* (1992) and *Beirut Blues* (1995) in addition to a collection of stories titled *I Sweep the Sun off Rooftops* (1998).

[5] Cobham has translated novels in addition to memoirs and journals by modern Arab writers; see translations of Naguib Mahfouz's *The Harafish* (1997), Nawal El Saadawi's *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* (2001), Iraqi writer Fuad al-Takarli's *The Long Way Back* (2007) and Mahmoud Darwish's *A River Dies of Thirst* (2009) among other translations.

[6] For more see her article on Mahfouz's *The Harafish,* "Enchanted to a Stone: heroes and leaders in *The Harafish* by Najīb Maḥfūẓ" and for her publications on al-Takarli see "Reading and Writing in *Al-Masarrāt wa-l-awjā'* by Fu'ād al-Takarlī."

for the study of how the Arabic and English languages cohabitate in the original texts and their translations as all of them undo geographic tethers of the English and Arabic languages, effectively calling into question the very notions 'domestic' and 'foreign' and further asking what the limitations of this dichotomy are for the theorization of Arabic-English translation.

Thematically, the three novels under investigation in this study explore the linguistic, psychological, historical and political implications of migration between the Arab world and the British metropole. They are also significant in the timing of their publication – all are *fin de siècle* novels[7] published between 1999 and 2001 and appeared in translation soon after publication. Like other novels published during this period[8] that take up the linguistic, cultural and political dynamics between Arabic and English, these narratives rethink the colonial relationship between Britain and the Arab world – a relationship that has itself been reshaped since Britain's colonial legacy in that region. These novels are thus examined not only as markers of the transitions and developments of Arab women's literature, but also in the significant ways they grapple with the contingency, indeterminacy and conflict between English and Arabic at both the linguistic and cultural levels.[9] I examine how the colonial relationship between the Arab world and Britain is

[7] Gauthier argues that *fin de siècle* literature has an ambivalent relationship with the present moment and is thus preoccupied with the past because the present which is "unknown, shapeless, and fragmented" poses a challenge to writers who have millennial misgivings (1-2). For Gauthier, *fin de siècle* literature undermines the "authority of any fixed reading of the past" because ill-founded Enlightenment concepts of a progressivist history have been shattered by the violence of colonialism and cultural violence in the twentieth century (141).

[8] In English, see Laila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999), Zeina Ghandour's *The Honey* (1999), Ghada Karmi's *In Search of Fatima* (2002). In Arabic, see Rachid al-Daif's *Lernin Inglish* (1998), Ibrahim Nasrallah's *Ṭuyūr al-Ḥadhar* (2000), and Bahaa Taher's *Sharq al-Nakhīl* (2000).

[9] According to Maleh, hyphenated Arab writers since the 1970s are part of the mass population movements witnessed globally and there are many reasons contributing to their exile. Arab writers in the British diaspora negotiate their identities "from a vantage-point with firm links to Arab history" and much of what they write reflects "a warm relationship to the homeland despite the authors' geographical distance from it" (13). For Maleh, the main characteristic of diasporic Arab literature from Britain is that it is mostly "fe-

not treated simply in terms of cultural encounters (i.e. east meets west) but how it is reconfigured linguistically in these three texts.

Having encountered each other most intimately[10] during the period of British imperial expansion, Arabic and English remain entangled in the vestiges of imperialism that linger on in linguistic and social relations. The historical context within which Arabic and English are imbricated is of critical importance both because of the respective languages of the texts in question but also because of the geographic location in which each story takes place. Furthermore, each of the texts engages with ways that colonial history pervades the contemporary relationship between the two languages and continues to shape them.[11] The entangled history of Arabic and English can also help shed light on the facility and ease with which certain texts are better able to claim a place in both Arabic and English literary canons.[12]

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male, feminist, diasporic in awareness, and political in character" (13). While Maleh exclusively cites the work of Anglophone Arab writers, her analysis can be extended to Somaya Ramadan and Hanan al-Shaykh who were émigrés to Dublin and London respectively despite writing their novels in Arabic.

[10] On the question of intimacy between Arabic and English specifically, see Tageldin, *Disarming Words*. Spivak theorizes the importance of intimacy and love in translation in her seminal article "The Politics of Translation".

[11] As Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin argue, "language is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language" (*Post-Colonial Studies* 283). The relationship between colonial history and language has been a central theme in critical theory for decades. Language is both a site of resistance to colonial power as well as a weapon of colonial dominance and oppression. The tension between the two is best exemplified in the debate between postcolonial theorists Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe. For Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o a return to the indigenous language is part and parcel of the decolonization process. In *Decolonizing the Mind*, he writes "the domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized" (16). For Achebe on the other hand, appropriating the colonizer's language (English) in order to make it "carry the weight" of his African experience is a form of resistance because it deems the English language "inauthentic" by decentering its Englishness ("African Writer" 434).

[12] Colonial conquest and expansion went hand in hand with the expansion and institutionalization of European (especially English and French) literary studies. Tageldin's *Disarming Words* addresses the relationship between Egyptian writers of the nahḍa period who were heavily influenced by their European colonialist counterparts providing an overview of how intertextuality works between the European canon and the Arabic texts of *nahḍa* writers. While Egyptian nationalists fought "the cannons of Napoleon" they did not resist the "canons of his culture" (109). For Egyptians, argues Tageldin, "the French occupation motivated Egypt to become 'modern' and French culture inspired them to rekindle the dying wick of their knowledge" (109). Another example of the ways that cannons and canons work hand in hand is in the case of India where knowledge of English literature was required for entry into the civil service and legal

The texts examined here are different in style, ranging from comedic to romantic to experimental prose, yet they bear similarities that make them compelling choices for a translation-oriented analysis. All three authors have garnered critical acclaim, and each has received recognition or awards for their novels. Somaya Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis* was awarded the prestigious Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature in 2002, Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī* was shortlisted for the British Independent Foreign Fiction Award in 2002, and Soueif's *The Map of Love* was a Booker prize finalist in 1999. The provenance of the prizes themselves is indicative of the extent to which these works have permeated the borders between the Arabic and English literary worlds.

The common thread that ties these texts together is that all three novels and their translations thematize questions of migration and cultural belonging and through their narratives offer a retrospective on the "continuity of preoccupations" that have characterized the colonial and postcolonial experience over the past century.[13] Importantly, discussions of languages, dialects, colloquialisms, fluency and accents recur in the narratives, at the same time as they are explored through the writing and translation of the texts themselves. The relationship between the English and Arabic languages is thus explored both at the textual level as well as through the narratives, functioning to expand the boundaries of each language and underscore the permeability of each one.

Of the three authors whose work is explored in this dissertation, Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* is the only text that was first written in English and subsequently translated into Arabic. Ahdaf Soueif makes use of transliterated Arabic terms in her novel, such as

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professions. Indeed, the passing of the English Education Act in 1835 officially required Indians to submit to the study of English. This act was preceded by the Charter Act of 1813 which saw the renewal of the East India Company's charter for commercial operations in India and further ensured Britain's heavy-handed role in relation to Indian education.

[13] Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin, *Empire Writes Back* 1-3 and *Post-Colonial Studies Reader*; Tiffin; Brydon.

religious expressions that contain the word 'Allah'. For the Anglophone reader, the transliterated word 'Allah' in Latin script carries different connotations than the word 'God', as the cultural significance of the Arabic word for God (in both a pre and post-9/11 world) evokes Otherness, difference, and a religious zealousness that is seen to be inherently Muslim in nature.[14] We might ask what effects are produced by Soueif's choice to preserve the Arabic term (albeit in Latin script) in the English text. Her use of transliterated terms and expressions containing the word 'Allah' demonstrates in the text that these expressions form an integral part of Arabic dialogue. By transliterating these familiar and discursively charged terms, Soueif's text challenges associations between the Arabic language and Islam interrupting the ideological repertoire normalizing these charged terms and their use.

Translation Studies offers theoretical paradigms that invite new encounters and connections between multilingual texts and subjects. As a field, it has questioned myths of linguistic equivalence and the neutrality of the translator.[15] At the root of my theoretical

[14] In his 1997 book *Covering Islam*, Said maps the process through which "Islam" became an "ideologically loaded label" and the ways the Arabic language became viewed as inextricably tied to Islam (9). In his 2011 book *Substance of Truth*, Olorunda's chapter "Words as Weapons" draws a comparison between the famous line from Bob Marley's "I Shot the Sheriff" and claims that in a discursive Western context where terrorist violence is understood to be in close relation to Islam, the words *Allahu akbar* carry "greater criminal weight" and anyone who "dare[s] utter such dastardly sentiments in public arouse[s] the interests of federal agents with swiftness" (90).

[15] For example, see Benjamin's essay "The Task of the Translator" which first appeared as an introduction to the German edition of Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens* in 1923. Emerging at the end of an era during which English translations of Russian fiction proliferated rapidly, Benjamin's intervention articulated new questions about the cultural as well as the linguistic implications of translating texts. Diverging from discussions of translation that focused on "fidelity" to either the original text or to the readership of the target language, Benjamin's article suggested instead that a translation should seek out a "pure form of language" (72). For Benjamin, this entailed translating with a view to reflecting the original language of the text without attempting to fit it into the structure of the target language. Drawing a distinction between "mode of intention" and "intended object", Benjamin argued that languages are not made up of interchangeable words and concepts. Likening the process of translation to a kind of textual death, Benjamin put forth the idea of Überleben, or afterlife, to describe the way a translated text lives on through its translation. The assumption that the translation is a text in its own right, autonomous from the text from which it derived is central to his thesis—for Benjamin, the translation is an independent work, albeit a derivative one.

approach is an understanding of translation in its direct relation to power, ideology, and empire building rather than as a straightforward process of making an "original" text transparent or "fluent".[16] My work is in conversation with this field in an attempt to probe some of the vectors of power that cross through the translations of the three novels in my study and their originals. It investigates the political implications that emerge from moments of multilingual tension in each. This approach locates *The Map of Love*, *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī* and *Awrāq al-narjis* as texts that oscillate between languages, geographic space and time, as well as texts that might intervene in what Lawrence Venuti has called the "hegemonic English language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others."[17] In doing so, I challenge the notion that cultural traditions, or a history or even gender is embedded in what we may call a single language or a single locale.

While the foreignization/domestication dichotomy can be useful in bringing questions of ethics and accountability to bear on the process of translation, understanding these concepts as a dichotomy fails to challenge the assumptions they presuppose. In order to undo the power of thinking about translation in terms of domestication and foreignization alone, I explore the significance of linguistic and paratextual techniques as vehicles through which to challenge purist notions of language as either inherently translatable or untranslatable.

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[16] See Simon and St-Pierre, Spivak, "Politics of Translation"; Venuti, *Scandals of Translation* and *Translator's Invisibility*.
[17] *Translator's Invisibility*, 20.

Chapter Breakdown

In addition to the literature review which follows, the dissertation is divided into four chapters. The literature review will consist of a more detailed exploration of the field of study in which this dissertation is situated and a longer discussion of its theory and methods including postcolonial literary theory and translation theory. Chapter One examines Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* and Fatma Musa's translation of it as, *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*. This chapter examines the ways that the mitigation of linguistic difference underlies the thematic as well as the textual elements in both the English original and Arabic translation. Chapter Two uses Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī* and its translation by Catherine Cobham as *Only in London* to think through the issue of dialects and accents, reading the movements of different "arabics" affects the relationship between the two languages defined as Arabic and English. In Chapter Three, I discuss the thematization of language and more specifically the use of transliteration in Somaya Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis* and the ways in which these are dealt with in Marilyn Booth's translation *Leaves of Narcissus*. The Conclusion then puts the analysis of these different works in dialogue with each other in order to make some suggestions about the permeability of languages. The conclusion further suggests that the cohabitation of Arabic-English/English-Arabic and the configuration and entanglement of multilingual identities have the potential to deterritorialize the monolingualism of English.

Methodology

I will begin my exploration of each novel and its translation at the thematic level. My analysis of the narrative of each text and its translation will first involve exploring the ways in which language appears as a subject in the texts and how fluency (and non-

fluency) of various languages, dialects, and accents work to explore the political, social and gendered boundaries that are defined by language. Language is used both symbolically and literally in the texts to delineate categories of belonging and difference, access and restriction. In Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, the process of language learning figures prominently in the narrative as the characters negotiate linguistic boundaries. Language learning is used metaphorically to describe the development of intimacy and friendship between the characters. Through the thematization of dialect, accent, and fluency, Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī* offers examples of elements and strategies that expand fixed notions of linguistic boundaries. While accent and dialect reflect a language in its most dynamic and malleable forms, fluency and non-fluency is invoked in the novel as a constant reminder of the linguistic boundaries that define native and non-native speakers of Arabic and English. The categories of native and non-native speakers in *Innahā* coincide with conceptions of belonging and foreignness as experienced in the British capital by the characters. In Somaya Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis*, the protagonist grapples with questions of identity and belonging through an investigation of her linguistic consciousness which is shaped by the intersection of different locations and languages.

My method of analysis begins with a close reading of passages that thematize language and translation in the original texts and the translations of the same passages. I employ this reading strategy in order to consider how the passages are rendered in the translation and how the language of language can move between Arabic and English. This method situates itself alongside scholarly analyses that have used side-by-side reading of texts and their translations in order to explore the process of translation. Some notable scholars who have employed this strategy are Amal Amireh, Marilyn Booth, and

Michelle Hartman.[18] In "Framing Nawal El Saadawi" for example, Amal Amireh conducts a case study of El Saadawi's reception in the West. Amireh critiques the omission and reordering of certain chapters in El Saadawi's Arabic text *Al-Wajh al-'ārī lil-mara'a al-'Arabīya* arguing that the changes to the English translation titled *Hidden Face of Eve* serve to satisfy the demands of a western literary market that imagines the Arab women as oppressed. At the same time, Amireh draws on the complexity of El Saadawi's location in the West where, despite the changes to her original text she also finds paratextual techniques through which to intervene in order to exert some control over the critique of her culture. Amireh mentions how El Saadawi adds a preface to the translation wherein the author insists on her anti-imperialist position vis-à-vis the West and support for the Iranian Revolution.[19]

My analysis is also informed by Marilyn Booth's work on the translation of Arab women writers into English. In "Celebrity Author", Booth like Amireh is interested in juxtaposing the "apparatus of publicity and public image-making" alongside the "less-visible process of actually producing the text of a translation."[20] By drawing on her own experience of translating *Girls of Riyadh* as a point of departure, Booth asks how the marketing of an authorial persona is related to the reception of a text. She further asks how the gendered marketing of texts by authors from Muslim majority countries positions them as providing sociological insight into the cultures they fictionalize.[21]

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[18] See Ettobi, "Aspects et enjeux" for a pertinent dissertation that employs a comparative method. See also Amireh, "Framing Nawal"; Booth, "Celebrity Author" and "Translator v. Author"; Kahf; Hartman, "Gender, Genre".
[19] Amireh, "Framing Nawal" 222.
[20] Booth, "Celebrity Author" 150.
[21] Ibid. 150.

The ethical and political implications of translating Arab women's literature in such a way as to avoid exoticism is also taken up in Michelle Hartman's work where she argues for an "ethics of difference" in studies of Arab women's literature in order to counteract what she calls a "flattening" of the translation of their work. Hartman's idea of flattening as a process of domestication in translation is similar to Booth's notion of "orientalist ethnographicism."[22] Both Hartman and Booth critique the ways that the highly commercialized and competitive Anglo-American publishing sectors reproduce and demand symbolic homogenizations of Arab culture. Hartman's analysis of Hanan al-Shaykh's novel *Misk al-ghazāl* examines the political and commercial processes that contributed to the novel's translation into *Women of Sand and Myrrh*. She argues that the novel in translation underwent a "scandalous" reordering of the chapters which had the effect of reshaping the narrative in such a way that it confirms many gendered orientalist stereotypes about Arab women. Much in the same way that El Saadawi's work was restructured and reordered,[23] *Women of Sand and Myrrh* similarly transforms the original narrative in order to emphasize the alienation and oppression of Arab women within the confines of the Arab world. Hartman argues that while the translation emphasizes the Arab woman "as oppressed and fleeing "traditional society" the original text emphasizes the Arab woman "as working within "traditional society" to make it her own."[24] Whereas the original text sends a powerful message and conveys the image of a strong and determined Arab woman, the translation reinforces a monolithic representation of Arab society as oppressive. Unlike the translations analyzed by Amireh, Booth and Hartman, the translations that I focus on for this dissertation do not reorder the original text in any significant

[22] For more on this concept see Booth, "Celebrity Author".
[23] See Amireh, "Framing".
[24] Hartman, "Gender, Genre" 38.

fashion. Nonetheless, I build on the work of Amireh, Booth and Hartman who have all analyzed how "the politics of translating Arab women's literature into English affect the resulting representations of Arab women"[25] and focus instead on politics of linguistic and paratextual strategies shift in the translation.

While these literary scholars use different methods in their comparative analyses, they all attempt to highlight some of the pitfalls of domestication in the translation of Arab women's literature. Although I consider the politics of domestication in my reading of the three texts and their translation, my focus in analyzing them is not based primarily on how domestication functions in translation. Rather, my analysis examines the interplay between Arabic and English drawing out moments of domestication and foreignization in addition to linguistic instances that allow us to think beyond these two categories. Elements of Hartman's, Amireh's and Booth's methods inform my own – I use side-by-side reading and textual comparison in order to ask how the translations might exceed the categories of the domestic and foreign.[26] Comparing original texts alongside their translated counterparts brings the results of translation into focus, giving it a visibility from which it rarely benefits when only one of the texts is considered. My method is also guided by Harish Trivedi's insistence that translation theories address the issue of language difference (and not only issues of cultural semblance) by looking at the polylingual aspects of the translations and the original texts.[27] My understanding of translation as a process there-

[25] Hartman, "Gender, Genre" 35.

[26] In addition to examining the role of domestication in the translation of Arab women's literature as in the work of Amireh, Booth, Kahf and Hartman, this method of reading and comparing of Arab women's literature against its translation in English has also been employed by many other literary scholars who do not necessarily focus on domestication as a point of contention between the two texts. See al-Nowaihi and Ghandour.

[27] See Trivedi for an argument for using the term "translation" in a textual and linguistic sense and not as a catch-all phrase in the cultural sense (284-285).

fore privileges the realm of language and the linguistic over realm of the cultural though I nonetheless understand the two as related.

My reading of the original texts alongside their translations helps to map the interaction between Arabic and English in both, paying close attention to how this interaction is shaped. One of the threads of analysis that I pay particular attention to are instances of multilingualism and moments of linguistic cohabitation in which words from a language other than the main language of the text are included. I locate these as indicated above by focusing on moments of linguistic tension, transliteration, where accents shift and are commented on by the narrator or the characters themselves. I further locate these moments in my analysis by honing in on the aspects of the text that directly reference language and linguistic difference between Arabic and English. Additionally, I also locate moments where words appear in the text as transliterations and compare this with other moments when the words appear without being transliterated into the script of the language of the main text. I consider what strategies are used to convey in writing nuances that are largely aural and furthermore how well these nuances survive in the process of translation. I analyze these differences in the text through an analysis that considers Venuti's paradigm of domestication and foreignization but my analysis attempts to offer a framework of analysis that considers the role of untranslatability and translation failure.

Examining the novels in both their original languages and translation requires us to contend with the fact of their multilingualism. The particularities of multilingual texts that are translated into the language that they reference blur the lines between the original language and the translation. The two languages at play in this dissertation, English and Arabic, are the languages of the original novels and the translations studied here. I will use

both postcolonial literary theory and translation theory in order to ask how the multilingual novel in drawing on more than one language and culture "very often defies our notions of an 'original' work and its translation."[28] The cohabitation of the two languages within the same text complicates the boundaries between original and translation in all of the novels studied in this dissertation.

[28] Mehrez, "Translation and the Postcolonial Experience" 122.

Translation Theory in/and Arabic Literature

The theoretical framework of this dissertation draws on translation theory and postcolonial literary theory as well as the growing body of scholarship that explores the overlap between the two. More specifically, my dissertation brings into focus the ways in which these frameworks apply to the study of contemporary Arabic literature and its translation. The challenges of translating Arabic in English are in many ways similar to the challenges that any language/literature must confront, yet the history surrounding the translation of Arabic texts into English weighs on contemporary Arabic literature in a particular way.[29]

The framework elaborated by Lawrence Venuti in *Scandals of Translation* and *Translator's Invisibility* suggests that translation strategies can have either foreignizing or domesticating effects on the texts they translate. In these texts, Venuti expands on Antoine Berman's essay "Translation and the Trials of the Foreign" in his theories of "foreignization." In the essay, Berman calls for an approach to translation that foregrounds foreignization which he calls the "ethical aim of the translating act," that is, to receive the "Foreign as Foreign" and to preserve its foreignness through translation.[30] Venuti draws on Berman's work and uses the term "foreign" in order to differentiate between the effects of domesticating and foreignizing strategies in translation. "I follow" Berman, Venuti proclaims in "suspecting any literary translation that mystifies this inevitable domestication as an untroubled communicative act. Good translation is demystifying: it manifests in its own language the foreignness of the foreign text."[31] Ve-

[29] The dynamics between Arabic and English in literary translation are explored in the important work of the following Arabic literary scholars: Tageldin, *Disarming Words*; Hartman, "Arab Woman Poet" and "Gender, Genre"; Booth, "Translator v. Author" and "Celebrity Author"; Allen, "Happy Traitor" and "Translating Arabic"; Jacquemond, "Towards an Economy"; Tanoukhi, to name a few.
[30] See Berman 285-286.
[31] *Scandals of Translation* 11.

nuti's project is based on an ethical stance that recognizes the asymmetrical power relations that govern any translation project.[32] For Venuti, translation "can never simply be communication between equals because it is fundamentally ethnocentric" – that is, because literary projects are often initiated in the domestic culture, the foreign text is thus selected to "satisfy different tastes from those that motivated its composition and reception in its native culture."[33] Whereas domestication reflects hegemonic cultural values, often those of the target culture, foreignization preserves the cultural and linguistic values of the source language. Venuti's ethical stance is also articulate in *The Translator's Invisibility* where he claims that translations between languages that occupy unequal power relations "resist dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign [source] text."[34] Venuti's intervention aims to challenge the "complacency in Anglo-American relation with cultural others, a complacency that can be described as imperialist abroad and xenophobic at home."[35] Foreignization then can be a form of resistance particularly in confronting Anglo-American expectations of translations that reflect fluency or the illusion of being originally written in English. Venuti illustrates how hegemonic translation strategies like domestication have facilitated the imposition of the value systems of translating cultures in an effort to "bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar" a goal that always risks the "wholesale domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self-conscious projects, where translation serves an appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, eco-

[32] Literary scholars like Hartman have theorized Venuti's "ethical" interventions into translation theory. See "Gender, Genre" where Hartman outlines an ethics of difference in translation and how it intersects with gender as a way of investigating the asymmetrical relationship between English and Arabic.
[33] *Scandals of Translation* 11.
[34] *Translator's Invisibility* 23.
[35] Ibid. 17.

nomic, political."[36] Domestication has the effect of "ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values" which not only limits communication by addressing a specific reading audience but also silences dissonant voices and overriding expressions of resistance in literature.[37]

Venuti's intervention becomes all the more urgent because it offers a corrective framework from which to understand translation into a global language like English. This is particularly pertinent given the structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages that were created by the expansion of English through what linguist Robert Phillipson has termed "linguistic imperialism."[38] Yet Venuti's terms "domestication" and "foreignization" have limitations. As Maria Tymoczko has argued, Venuti's terms do not fulfill their "resistant" goals because they exist as "a kind of absolute or universal standard of evaluation, with a sort of on/off quality rather than a sliding scale."[39] Mona Baker has further suggested that if these terms are to be useful, we must take into account that a single text will contain both foreignizing and domesticating strategies. Tymoczko has further argued that foreignization and domestication can both be made to function as "resistant" and serve "progressive" political and cultural aims, but also the opposite "[…] any translation procedure can become a tool of cultural colonization, even foreignizing translation."[40] As both Tymoczko and Baker have argued,[41] resistance in translation can be achieved both by domestication and foreignization. Tarek Shamma's *Translation and the*

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[36] Ibid. 18-19.
[37] Ibid. 19.
[38] See Phillipson. For more on the globalization of the English language see Crystal, *English as a Global Language*; Ang.
[39] Tymoczko, "Translation and Political Engagement" 38.
[40] Ibid. 35.
[41] For a full critique of Venuti's dichotomous distinction between foreignization and domestication see Baker, "Reframing Conflict" and Tymoczko, "Ethics, Ideology, and Action" and "Translation as Political Engagement."

Manipulation of Difference which looks at translations of Arabic literature in the nineteenth century also critiques Venuti's emphasis on foreignization as an ethical solution to domestication. In line with Baker and Tymoczko's critiques, Shamma says:

> If both domesticating and foreignizing strategies can have such varying uses, then the politics, as well as the ethics, of translation is an issue that cannot be minimized to one of technique, but must be seen as the outcome of a complexity of circumstances that incorporate the intervention of the translator and the choices that he/she makes (including, but certainly not confined to, the "foreignness", or lack thereof, of the translation), the larger context of reception, and the relation of the translated text to other texts in its cultural environment.[42]

Shamma examines Edward Burton's translation of the *Arabian Nights* and argues that in his translation, foreignizing strategies sought to "capitalize on his readers' curiosity about the exotic and perverse."[43] Burton overemphasized culturally alien customs and phenomena and anything that might be construed as sexual in an effort to offer a "rare insight into Oriental modes of thought and feeling."[44] Shamma's main contention is that it is very difficult to distinguish between foreignizing strategies and their exoticising effects.[45] Michael Cronin offers another critique of the foreignization/domestication framework by pointing out that foreignization is unsuitable as a translation strategy of minority languages threatened by major ones.[46] Of course, Arabic does not always occupy a minority position in all contexts, but the relationship between Arabic and English as manifested in translation indeed brings with it a particular history of cultural imperialism and dominance that makes these categories relevant.

Postcolonial translation studies emerged as a site within the field of translation theory that is concerned with the relationship between language, culture and imperialism, and

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[42] Shamma 80.
[43] Ibid. 82.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid. 65.
[46] See Cronin.

specifically with the transportation of words and texts from one language and culture into another.[47] In describing the postcolonial shift in translation studies, Maier and Dingwaney have suggested that questions of power and privilege must be foregrounded: "translation theory and practice has, in recent years, turned to "source" and "target" cultures as something to be studied before the translation of a work can proceed."[48] The publication of *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice* (1999) by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi argues in favour of bridging postcolonial and translation studies. Bassnett and Trivedi describe how postcolonial engagement with translation studies allows for a closer scrutiny of the extent to which historically, translation served as a "one-way process, with texts being translated *into* European languages for European consumption, rather than as part of a reciprocal process of exchange."[49] Drawing from postcolonial critiques of literature and anthropology, Maier and Dingwaney argue that the ethical implications of translation involve questions of the location and privilege of the translator: "In the translation of non-Western cultures (and languages), it is imperative that translators/ethnographers make their power and privileged vantage point evident."[50] Given that translation is the principal means through which texts come to be categorized under the headings "Third World" or "Postcolonial Literature," postcolonial translation studies also questions the effects of these categories on the reception of the literatures that they organize.

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[47] The "postcolonial turn" in translation studies has engendered a closer examination of the relationship between imperialism and translation. As Bassnett and Lefèvre famously announced in their introduction to *Translation, History and Culture* in the early 1990s, "neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational 'unit' of translation" as the focus shifts more on the intersection between colonialism and translation" (8). Following this publication, several translation theorists have also focused exclusively on this connection; see for example: Robinson; Dingwaney; Dingwaney and Maier; Thomas; Cheyfitz; Mehrez, "Translation and Postcolonial"; Niranjana; Simon, "Language of Cultural Difference".

[48] Dingwaney and Maier, 3.

[49] Bassnett and Trivedi, 5.

[50] Dingwaney and Maier, 9.

Scholars labeled postcolonial theorists have applied the concept of translation itself differently. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha suggests that the concept of translation can be extended to broader cultural phenomena and need not be limited to the realm of the linguistic. In contrast, postcolonial translation scholars like Harish Trivedi have argued for a more specific application of the concept of translation as a process that concerns language first and foremost. In "Translating Culture vs. Cultural Translation," Trivedi warns against using the term translation as a stand in for terms like exile, hybridity and diaspora and insists that translation involve "two texts from different languages and cultures" and not to mean the "process and condition of human migrancy."[51] Translation for Bhabha is the "performative nature of cultural communication"[52] – here Bhabha describes Salman Rushdie's novel *Satanic Verses* as exemplary of cultural translation, a novel written originally in English. The use of the term translation in this sense is problematic for Trivedi because he argues that the emphasis on translation as a primarily cultural process de-emphasizes language and bilingualism as inherent and central components of interlingual practices like translation. Carol Maier and Anuradha Dingwaney have noted that, "translations are one of the primary means (not the only means, to be sure) by which cultures travel"[53] and have thus argued that even texts "written in English or in one of the metropolitan languages, but originating in or about non-Western cultures, can be considered under the rubric of translation."[54] Although this dissertation privileges the linguistic as the primary site in which translation occurs, it is nonetheless concerned with the ques-

[51] Trivedi 284-285.
[52] Bhabha 326.
[53] Dingwaney and Maier 6.
[54] Ibid, 4. Soueif's *The Map of Love*, as a text written originally in English but "in or about" a non-Western location and culture would therefore fall under the rubric of translation according to Dingwaney and Maier. Hassan similarly argues for a reading of Soueif's work as "translational literature" ("Agency"). Hartman has also argued that French literature by Lebanese authors constitutes what she calls "writing as translation".

tion of how culture is translated alongside language. In the case of Arabic and English, it is vital that language remain central to an investigation of translation because of the weight of the discursive construction of Arabic as a "controversial" or enemy language.

In the study of Arabic literature in/and translation, postcolonial translation theory has provided a point of departure for scholarship that focuses on the specificities of the Arabic text as it moves across languages and cultures. In "Translation and the Postcolonial Experience", Samia Mehrez investigates bilingualism as it intervenes in the experience of the postcolonial writer. Mehrez begins with George Steiner's musings about his own plurilingualism, contained in the introduction to *After Babel,* in which he states that he has no "recollection whatever of a first language" and that he possesses equal knowledge of English, French and German.[55] Using a comparison between Steiner and bilingual Moroccan writer Abdel-Kébir Khatibi as a point of departure, Mehrez offers an analysis of bilingualism that takes account of the relationships of power between languages.[56] Highlighting the political dimensions of language acquisition in a (post)colonial context, Mehrez argues that multilingual writing involves "more than one culture, more than one language, more than one world experience, within the confines of the same text"[57] (122). Mehrez also argues that due to their "culturo-linguistic layering" postcolonial texts have succeeded in "forging a new language that defies the very notion of a 'foreign' text that can be readily translatable into another language" (121). Mehrez's notion of a 'new language' is informed by Khatibi's ideas of "radical bilingualism" where languages intermingle and constantly change, a process that is particularly relevant to this dissertation, which also

[55] Quoted in Mehrez 120.
[56] Mehrez 120.
[57] Ibid. 122.

seeks to investigate the ways in which writers and languages resist purist notions of language.

James McGuire's 1992 essay "Forked Tongues, Marginal Bodies" also takes up Khatibi's work by investigating how Arabic-French bilingualism is in and of itself an "act of translation."[58] McGuire and Mehrez both see postcolonial literature as posing a direct challenge to monolingualism. Mehrez argues, "the language of the Other comes to encode messages which are not readily decoded by the monolingual reader whose referential world continues to exclude, ignore, and deny the existence of other referential worlds that are crucial to a more global rather than "colonialist," "imperialistic" reading of the text." Similarly, McGuire argues that the challenge of postcolonial bilingualism to the monolingual reader juxtaposes the "presence of the 'other' language" alongside the "'intelligible' one," and necessarily calls attention to the "presence of a signifying "elsewhere" that must be acknowledged, if only by virtue of its incomprehensibility."[59] The notion of postcolonial bilingualism and by extension, multilingualism, pose a challenge to the monopoly of monolingualism and are particularly salient with regards to the novels under examination in this dissertation.

Writing on the cusp of two cultures and two languages has been described by Michelle Hartman in her exploration of Lebanese women writers using Arabic and French in *Native Tongue, Stranger Talk* as "writing *as* translation." In her study, Hartman attempts to complicate and move beyond an analytical framework that insists on reading literature either as "national" or "local."[60] Rather, Hartman maintains that her approach to reading the texts she investigates can be considered "Lebanese, Arab/ic, French, Francophone, post-

[58] McGuire 107.
[59] Ibid. 115.
[60] Hartman, *Native Tongue* 4.

colonial, and women's novels, among other things."[61] Hartman draws out the concept of "writing *as* translation" in how texts use strategies that are similar to those used "to produce resistant or foreignizing translations, in that they also resist the tendency to mask the identity of "foreign sounding" words and ideas and the ideological stances embedded in them."[62] Translation becomes part of the writing of the text and these texts constitute a different kind of postcolonial literature. As Hartman suggests, this literature does not necessarily "write back" against the former colonizer's language but rather uses multiple languages, including the colonizer's language, in a process of what she calls a "Bakhtinian novelization that makes creative use of permutations of many languages, registers and codes within texts."[63] Hence, as Mehrez suggests, in many ways "postcolonial plurilingual texts in their own right resist and ultimately exclude the monolingual and demand of their readers to be like themselves: 'in between' at once capable of reading and translating, where translation becomes an integral part of the reading experience."[64]

In explaining the relationship between colonialism and translation, Mona Baker suggests that translation was first and foremost a "form of intelligence gathering," used by colonizing cultures to secure and maintain a hold on the ideological battlefields on which colonial wars were fought.[65] Tageldin has described the association between literature and colonial occupation in terms of literary "canons" that accompanied colonial "cannons."[66] The role of translation in assisting the maintenance of prolonged colonial rule

[61] Ibid. 5.
[62] Ibid. 28.
[63] Ibid. 25.
[64] Mehrez, "Translation" 122.
[65] Baker, "Reframing Conflict" 117.
[66] Tageldin 109. In *Decolonising the Mind,* Nigerian writer Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o makes a similar analogy to describe the displacement of native languages as one of the primary means in which European colonization took place: "the night of the sword and the bullet were followed by the morning of the chalk and

has been a central concern in postcolonial translation studies,[67] yet the dichotomies of home/empire, colonizer/colonized and English/non-English that such analyses set up have also been called into question for the limitations. Given that the history of the Arabic language's relationship with English is inextricably tied to the various histories of colonial occupation of Arabic-speaking countries, contending with the colonizer/ colonized relationship is an integral question posed by Arabic translation studies.

Shaden Tageldin's *Disarming Words* problematizes the assumptions that such rigid notions of colonizer/colonized relations offer. Tageldin explores the cultural manifestations of colonialism in Egypt as well as the phenomenon of Egyptian authors who were compelled to produce works that corroborated Orientalist fantasies of Egypt. Borrowing from Jean Baudrillard's work, Tageldin describes this process as constituting a type of seduction in which the "polarities of subject and object oscillate such that they blur, and the mastered can fancy himself a master."[68] Tageldin offers a perspective on the field of Modern Arabic Literature that departs from what she calls the "resistance paradigm" of postcolonial studies. She argues that this paradigm has done "little to complicate the 'domination' paradigm that is its corollary."[69] Arguing against a one-sided conception of cultural imperialism in which the colonized are the passive receptors of imperial culture, Tageldin offers the concept of "translational seduction" as a framework for understanding the complex way in which translation was mobilized in colonial Egypt. The concept of translational seduction allows Tageldin to demonstrate that the power differentials between 'colonizer' and 'colonized' in Egypt, were not absolute, but rather were shaped by

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blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom. But where the former was visibly brutal, the latter was visibly gentle" (9).

[67] See Said 1978; Bhabha 1991; Spivak 1993.

[68] Tageldin 11.

[69] Ibid. 8.

instances in which the disempowered lost themselves in the delusory likeness of the empowered, thus creating the "illusory footing of equal exchange."[70] Orientalist discourses were therefore able to attract Egyptian intellectuals because they appeared to validate their cultures and traditions even as they disparaged them.[71] Locating translation at the center of this dynamic, Tageldin writes that "the case of Egypt […] suggests that cultural imperialism might be better understood as a politics that lures the colonized to seek power *through* empire rather than against it, to translate their cultures into an empowered "equivalence" with those of their dominators and thereby repress the inequalities between those dominators and themselves."[72]

The engagement with notions of linguistic resistance in the works of multilingual postcolonial writers has been famously articulated by Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe in what has come to be known as the Ngũgĩ-Achebe debate.[73] Ngũgĩ began his career writing in English before turning entirely to writing in his native language, Gikuyu. In *Decolonizing the Mind*, a work described as Ngũgĩ's "farewell to English," he suggests that writing in Gikuyu is "part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples."[74] For Ngũgĩ, writing in English came to represent a reinvigoration of colonialist subjugation. Ngũgĩ asserts the inextricable concatenation of language and cultural identity and argues that by utilizing English, formerly colonized peoples begin to adopt a colonizer's "distinctive culture and history."[75] The rejection of English by Ngũgĩ is important for ensuring that his native

[70] Ibid. 9.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid. 10.
[73] For further reading on the debate see Ngũgĩ's challenge to English literature ("Abolition of the English Department") and Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day*; see also Chinweizu and Madubuike.
[74] Ngũgĩ, 28.
[75] Ibid 14.

language survives yet it also exhibits a dangerous reliance on essentialist precepts of purity in language and culture.

In contrast to Ngũgĩ, the writings of Chinua Achebe view the language of the former colonizer as a means of accentuating "cultural difference" rather than essential cultural identity, and of transmitting and promoting cross-cultural dialogue about their particular experiences. In his novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe infuses Ibo cultural practices and concepts with English. Achebe uses Ibo representations of time through the language of agriculture: "Ikemefuna came to Umuofia at the end of the carefree season between harvest and planting."[76] The infusion of an Ibo concept of time into 'standard' English represents a radical act of destandardization for Achebe. This conceptual infusion challenges the political power of 'standard' English as it implicitly shows the relative ease of transmitting Ibo cultural practices through the English language, while it exhibits Ibo's ability to develop and transform that language. Moreover, the transformative injection of Ibo into English exemplifies postcolonial writers' ability to manipulate, through keen knowledge of the imperial language, the language of the former colonizer. Ngũgĩ's naturalized connections between language and identity, on the other hand, perpetuate a demarcation across cultural lines as opposed to articulating the experiences of oppression in order to forge change and raise awareness cross-culturally. The Ngũgĩ and Achebe both recognize the historical reasons for the ascendancy of English, but for Achebe, it is the responsibility of postcolonial writer to use their creativity so to enrich their "idiom and imagery" by drawing from their own tradition.

Speaking of his own experience of postcolonial multilingualism, in *Imaginary Homelands* Salman Rushdie explains that the "British Indian writer simply does not have the

[76] Achebe 26.

option of rejecting English."[77] After all, many postcolonial writers were solely educated in English, and the demands of the market for contemporary literature certainly position English as the most lucrative of literary languages. Rushdie argues that postcolonial writers instead have the possibility of "conquering English" through its use.[78] The key for Rushdie, as for Achebe, is to make the colonizer's language one's own, to incorporate it and transform it rather than to be incorporated by it. G.J.V. Prasad's article in Bassnett and Trivedi's anthology "Writing Translation: the strange case of the Indian English novel" echoes McGuire and Mehrez's idea that bilingualism can constitute an 'act of translation.' Prasad quotes Salman Rushdie's dictum that "all of us share the view that we can't simply use the language the way the British did; and that it needs remaking for our own purposes."[79] In his article, Prasad claims that much can be gained by reformulating former colonial languages like English into "new English." Prasad suggests that a resistant reformulation of English creates a "pollinated and enriched language (and culture) that results from the act of translation – this act not just of bearing across but of fertile coming together."[80] Translation, therefore, is a process that holds liberatory potential.

Helen Tiffin's essay, "Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse" puts forth the argument that postcolonial literatures and cultures constitute "counter-discursive rather than homologous practices."[81] For Tiffin, post-colonial counter-discourse is "dynamic, not static; it does not seek to subvert the dominant with a view of taking its place, but… to evolve textual strategies which continually 'consume' their 'own biases' at the same

[77] Rushdie 17.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Prasad 41.
[81] Tiffin 96.

time as they expose and erode those of the dominant discourse."[82] Tiffin suggests that it is possible for a postcolonial writer to write in the colonizer's language without necessarily reproducing colonial discourse. Rather, by adapting the language of the former colonizer, postcolonial writers create a new discourse that becomes a living language in itself. This counter-discourse is not solely based in the language, but also on the ideas and cultures themselves become counter-discursive as they infiltrate the English language itself. It is not only a transmission, but also a transformation of a living language and an act of linguistic appropriation.

In his 1990 article "Embargoed Literature" Edward Said uses the political concept of embargo to characterize attitudes toward Arabic literature in the Anglo-American literary context and describes this as one way that the vestiges of colonial ideology impact contemporary translated "third world" literature. As Said and others have argued, the reception of Arabic literature in particular is vulnerable to the impact of the dynamics that govern the Arab world-West nexus. In her incisive 1996 article "Publishing in the West," Amal Amireh identifies the acute problem of Arabic literary reception in the same context identified by Said particularly as it impacts Arab women writers. "So far" Amireh says, "the Arab world has been supplying the cultural raw materials which then get ground in the First World critical mill."[83] Ten years after Said's polemic, Hosam Aboul-Ela's article "Challenging the Embargo" takes up both Said and Amireh's claims and argues that the US book market remains largely interested in propagating stereotypes about Arabs through the meager availability of Arabic literature in English translation whose method is too often based on "literalism and whose final product must conform to the narrow ex-

[82] Ibid.
[83] Amireh, "Publishing in the West".

pectations of publishers and readers."[84] And Roger Allen more recently has made a similar claim – he says that the "contentiousness surrounding what books are chosen to be translated and what the priorities ought to be for translations of Arabic texts seem unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future."[85] The reception of Arabic literature in English translation has always been overdetermined by politics where social and political aspects of the texts are often privileged over the text's formal or aesthetical components. While some critics have marked the period following Naguib Mahfouz's Nobel prize in 1988 as a marker of increased interest and therefore demand for Arabic literature in the West [86] (Clark 2000, Altoma 2003) others like Amireh and Hassan (2010) remain skeptical of this interest and ask that Arabic literary scholar be mindful of the "horizons of expectation" in the United States and Britain that "limit the appeal of [Arabic] literature to its political, sociological, and anthropological dimensions to the neglect of its aesthetic qualities."[87]

In response to the "embargo" outlined by Said, Amireh and Aboul-Ela some scholars have called for the broadening of the field of Modern Arabic literature, particularly as it pertains to English and French translations thereof. In particular, Samah Selim[88] argues that Arabic literature is cut off from broader fields like comparative literature and translation studies and that the literature of the Arab world is often isolated

[84] Aboul-Ela 44.
[85] Allen, "Happy Traitor" 476.
[86] Allen refers to the significant increase of interest in Arabic literature in the West citing the emergence of numerous literary prizes that recognize both translations and non-translations of Arabic literature. Also, Altoma outlines the growing interest in translated Arabic literature and he divides the history of Arabic literature in English translation along three significant historical phases: 1947-1967, 1968-1988, and 1988-onwards. Prior to the last phase, Altoma argues that readers showed little interest in Arabic fiction because the Arabic novel was not yet fully evolved as a genre. Altoma calls the Post-Nobel phase where he, unlike Said and Aboul-Ela, refers to Mahfouz's prize marked the increased frequency with which Arabic literature is translated into English and its wide reception.
[87] Amireh and Hassan 416. Allen reflects on his experiences as a scholar and translator of Arabic fiction. One the one hand, he deplores the "domestication" that Arabic works suffer in the hands of commercial publishers; on the other, he observes that although "there is greater openness to the unfamiliar and 'foreign' in academic presses, too few of them publish Arabic works in translation.
[88] Selim, "Nation and Translation" 2-4.

within narrowly circumscribed notions of "national literature." Selim calls for "crossings" between disciplines and between the "optic of local translation histories" because this will allow literatures of the Arab world to be situated within a "comparativist framework that sees texts and traditions as porous and mobile historical and formal structures."[89] Selim is particularly interested in making this crossing between Arabic literature and translation studies or the "prism of translation as practice and as metaphor" claiming that the field of translation studies "offers a rich potential source of critical innovation and freedom from disciplinary constraints whose roots lie in nineteenth-century positivism – constraints which have been particularly poisonous for the field of Middle East Studies."[90]

Selim claims that this crossing between the fields has political as well as intellectual implications particularly at the present moment where "violent assertions of difference […] produce the kinds of fundamentalisms [that] allowed the Bush regime to wage war in the region in the name of seemingly absolute and untranslatable concepts like democracy and feminism" and where the Arab world's 'failed' modernity is a "failed project of translation." [91] For Selim, the postcolonial baggage of British and French rule in the Middle East can be potentially dealt with by means of resistance to the "great European Original" that set the terms of 'difference' in "an invisible hierarchy of knowledge and being."[92] Richard Jacquemond's work has also been crucial in examining possible nodes of resistance to the unequal power relations that govern translations of Arabic literature in French.

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[89] Ibid. 2.

[90] Selim goes on to argue that the "problem of translation has become increasingly central to critical reflections of modernity and […] is particularly relevant to Middle East Studies, where the region's modernity has been historically and discursively structured precisely in terms of a larger project of 'translation' of European technologies, cultural practices and epistemologies -- and moreover, within a field of power that marks anything less than strict equivalence as a sign of ontological backwardness and alterity, or even of barbarity" ("Nation and Translation" 2-3).

[91] Ibid. 3.

[92] Ibid. 12.

Jacquemond, like Said and others argues that Orientalism continues to determine how translations of Arabic literature are received in the West. He writes:

> The translation of Arabic literature remains determined by the global relationship between Orient, especially the Arabic Orient, and Occident. The latter's perceptions are biased by prejudices constructed through a long and complex mutual history. The Occidental reader prefers to turn to works which confirm his prejudices and his representation of the Orient.[93]

Jacquemond points out that with regards to French translation of Arabic literature, there exists a "quasi-monopoly over the representation of the Arab world in modern French culture" held by what he calls "the orientalist field."[94] For Jacquemond, translations from Arabic continue to play a decisive role in upholding a particular image of the Arab Other in the minds of Francophone readers.

Echoing the arguments of Said, Amireh, Aboul-Ela and Marilyn Booth, Jacquemond points out that the effect of orientalism on Arabic literature is that literary works are presented in the form of "ethnographic documents"[95] or testimonies whereby the imaginary sensibilities and conventions of contemporary Arab writers is widely lost.[96] Jacquemond further argues that the demands of the market on Arabic literature has forced many Arab and Muslim writers to compromise their values to the fundamental values of French culture, as there is every time a new political or ideological conflict between the West and the Arab world and/or Islamic world. Jacquemond says that some writers write in the language of the colonizer to gain attention for their work in the Western literary tradition. He says that Arab writers write according to the norms of the dominant master discourses of French.[97] He argues that because of the intended readership in French, and in

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[93] Jacquemond, "Translation and Cultural Hegemony" 154-155.
[94] Jacquemond, "Towards an Economy" 120.
[95] Ibid. 123.
[96] Booth refers to the same concept as "Orientalist ethnographicism" ("Celebrity Author" 151).
[97] Jacquemond, "Towards an Economy" 117-126.

order for these texts to receive attention from critics and in order for this literature to be recognized for literary awards under the category of Francophone literature, it has to be represented as an "ethnographic document." Jacquemond argues that this writing receives more attention if it emphasizes the difference of the other culture through certain stereotypes such as backwardness of Arabs and Muslims, their tyranny which must be set in contrast to the modern, democratic and liberal French culture. Jacquemond insists that "it is as if translation were condemned to oscillate between the two antagonistic, yet complementary, poles of *exoticisation* and *naturalization.*"[98]

Taking Jacquemond's argument further, Marilyn Booth (2010) and Jenine Abboushi (1998) have argued that the pervasiveness of Orientalist market demands on the economies of Arabic literature has led some Arab writers to the "temptations of self-orientalisation".[99] This process of self-orientalisation as argued by these critics has forced Arab and Muslim writers to constantly negotiate their position "in relation to the paradigms of traditional Orientalist representation and to renew their allegiances to the fundamental values" of what Jacquemond calls the 'orientalist field.'[100] Abboushi makes this argument more forcefully in her article "The Perils of Occidentalism" claiming that demands on publishers and translators yield to an increasing globalized tendency among writers from the Arab world to write specifically for an Anglo-American readership. She

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[98] Ibid. 123.

[99] More recently, al-Rasheed has argued that young Saudi women writers engage in this process of self-orientalisation because they are tempted by the "commercial, sensational considerations" imposed on them by the market forces in a "neo-colonial setting, namely the current Saudi context with its new scrutiny by global media, economic privatisation, and the commercialisation of literature and intellectual production" where young Saudi novelists aspire to become "celebrities rather than simply literary figures" (216). According to al-Rasheed, it is Saudi women "rather than foreign male 'orientalist' authors [who] produce images of idle Saudi women who are desperate for excitement, seduction, love, and adventure in a society that allegedly denies them all these pleasures" (216). Other Arab women novelists have already engaged in this genre, argues al-Rasheed, "producing work in response to market forces, consumption patterns, and the expectations of an international reading audience" (216).

[100] Jacquemond, "Towards an Economy" 123.

argues that the interest in Third World literary translations is by no means a representation of a Western audience that takes notice of Arab literature and culture.[101]

Michelle Hartman refutes Abboushi's claims which state that the "phenomenon of writing for translation" is what drives Arab writers to write for Western audiences. Hartman points to the dangers implicit in Abboushi's argument that "risks flattening the text in a parallel, if opposite way" to the traps of Orientalism that disproportionately places the burden of representation and authenticity on the Arab writer.[102] Moreover, Abboushi's critique risks reproducing an Orientalist narrative that insists on reading the work of Arab writers as political, sociological and anthropological testimony rather than for aesthetical conventions that Arab writers engage with.

The reception of texts written by "Third World" women authors began to receive attention as the fields of postcolonial theory and transnational feminism intersected with literary criticism.[103] The collections *Going Global* (2000) and *Intersections: Gender, Nation and Community in Arab Women's Novels* (2002) opened discussions regarding the Western reception of texts written by 'other' women, and intervened in the dominant discourses of literary criticism that sought to view these texts primarily as "sociological treatises granting Western readers a glimpse into the 'oppression' of Third World women."[104] As Mohja Kahf points out in her essay "Packaging Huda": Shaarawi's Memoirs in the United States Reception Environment" the history of the West's infatuation with the Muslim woman is long. Kahf argues that with the increased Western presence in the Muslim world by the end of the eighteenth century in the form of missionaries, travelers, and co-

[101] For more see Abboushi, "Perils" 8-9.
[102] See Hartman, "Gender, Genre" 21.
[103] Mohanty's "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" provided a critical stepping stone towards analyzing the Western reception of third world women's texts.
[104] Amireh and Majaj 7.

lonial administrators, there emerged a near consensus that Muslim women were victims of their culture and religion. Kahf suggests that discourses of victimization of Muslim women have determined Western reception of their texts. In accounting for the role that translation has played in shaping Western reception, Kahf argues that Margot Badran's English translation of Huda Sha'arawi's memoirs are indicative of the Western impulse to mine the work of Arab women writers for elements that confirm Western fantasies of the oppressed Muslim woman.[105] Kahf shows how Badran introduces words to the translation like "Haram women" that did not exist in the Arabic original.[106] "Given the poverty of a reception environment that wants to imagine Arab women only as victims, escapees, or pawns", writes Kahf, accounts by Arab women of positive relationships with their culture and religion become "hard to sell."[107]

The reception history of Arab women writers has played a significant role in the field of study of Arabic literature in translation. Scholarship on the topic of Arab women's literature is attentive to the ways that the translation of this literature has come to represent a symbolic 'lifting of the veil' – an obstruction with which Western culture is obsessed with penetrating.[108] Arguing within a transnational feminist framework allows Kahf, Amireh, Hartman and Booth to examine the ways that the circulation of Arab women's literature in English is part of highly gendered processes.[109] Indeed, one cannot ignore how the trajectory of Arab women's literature in translation today is inextricably tied to the

[105] Kahf 166.
[106] Ibid. 166-167.
[107] Ibid. 151.
[108] Lazreg offers examples of how French colonialism in Algeria made use of the veil and its "lifting" to give the impression of wide-spread popular support of colonial domination (68-69).
[109] See Kahf; Amireh and Majaj; Booth, "Celebrity Author" and "Translator v. Author"; Hartman, "Gender, Genre".

framework of colonial and postcolonial hegemonic discourses and practices that have shaped this literature both epistemologically and institutionally.

Drawing on her own experiences of translating Raja' Alsanea's *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* (in English as *Girls of Riyadh*),[110] Marilyn Booth tackles the intersecting dynamics of globalization, gender, and translation. In "Translator v. Author (2007)" Booth engages with Venuti's concept of foreignization and raises questions about the specificities of its applicability to the translation of Arab women's literature. Booth discusses the resistance she encountered from Alsanea's as well as the publisher, both of whom wanted an English-language version of the text that would cater to the demands of the North American market. Booth reflects on this process, suggesting that her attempts to privilege foreignizing strategies in translating the text were at odds with the goals of the author and publisher.[111] Ultimately, Booth's translation was transformed to reflect the vision of the author and the publisher.[112] Using her work on *Girls of Riyadh* as a point of theoretical departure, Booth argues that the work of translation is a cultural intervention as much as it is a linguistic one, and further stresses the ethical imperative with which translators of non-Western

[110] "'The Muslim Woman' as Celebrity Author"; "Translator v. Author".

[111] Booth justifies her reasoning for working against a domesticating approach in her translation of Alsanea's novel. She says, "For me as a translator-author, embededness in certain narratives – of US state and non-state engagement with Arab societies, of prevailing and homogenizing images of the "Muslim woman," and of cultural expression in Muslim-majority societies (images in which censorship, "tradition," and lack of creative output dominate)--spurred my resistance to a translation practice that might support those homogenizing images" ("Translator v. Author" 173).

[112] In translating Arabic literature into English translators have relied on both domesticating and foreignizing strategies in their translations. As Booth points out in her analysis of why her translation of *Girls of Riyadh* was rejected, there is certainly evidence of translations into English that have relied on domestication in order to secure marketability, at the same time not all translations of Arabic literature employ domestication for those purposes. For example, in translating the title of Emile Habibi's *al-Waqā'i' al-Gharība fī Ikhtifā' Sa'īd Abī l-Naḥs al-Mutashā'il* (1972-74) as *Secret Life of Saeed the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist* (1982) the translators retained Habibi's awkward and lengthy title into English. In so doing they privilege Habibi's politico-linguistic experimentations over a more compact, marketable or even memorable title. The satirical and absurdist sentiment of Habibi's tragicomedy is preserved in English with the play on words that partially merges "optimist" and "pessimist." What this translation choice accomplishes is a merger of domesticating and foreignizing techniques that interweave Arabic and English to create a title in translation that defies easy consumption while at the same time being catchy.

languages should contend.[113] Booth argues that the reception moment for a novel like *Girls of Riyadh* is "heavily determined by a discursive context in which "the Muslim woman" as a covered figure stands in for "Islam."[114] As such, both author and translator in this case are "embedded" in this framing.

Booth complicates Jacquemond's idea that Arab authors engage in a process of "self-orientalisation" saying how "differentially local the transnational marketplace of literary production is" and how the persistence of the "harem complex" in popular Western perceptions of the Middle East gives female authors from the region "distinct market authority" at the same time that this position is also one of commodity. Her experience of translating *The Girls of Riyadh* destabilized the dichotomy between foreignization and domestication, as it disrupted postcolonial understandings of the relationship between Western translators and non-Western authors. Translated texts are not only texts, but commodities, and as such the translator's approach is always susceptible to being overwritten by other forces.

The focus of Booth's article "On Translation and Madness" offers a different focus as she reflects on her translation of Somaya Ramadan's novel *Leaves of Narcissus*, and explores the collaborative potential of translation. Because of a shared vision of the text's translation, Booth suggests that the process is an example of the success of foreignization. Still, Booth points out that even in cases where the author and translator share a vision with regards to the text's translation, the application of foreignization as a practice is not a straightforward process. Rather than a set of principles that can be applied equally to any translation, Booth suggests that foreignizing strategies do not affect all languages

[113] See also Spivak, "The Politics of Translation".
[114] Booth, "Translator v. Author" 173.

equally. Booth's analysis underscores the particularity of the discursive landscape in which the Arabic language finds itself. She asks "What do you tell a publisher who is already hesitant to take an Arabic novel? Is it politically responsible right now to produce an English novel from an Arabic novel as a locus of difference?"[115] Booth's question is reminiscent of the response Edward Said received from the publisher in relation to his suggestion that Arabic novels be selected for translation into English that Arabic is a "controversial language" in the context of the Anglo-American literary world.

The question of how to contend with Arabic's difference and foreignness remains critical to an investigation of its translation. Taking my lead from Arabic literary scholars my dissertation asks how the process of foreignization risks causing the Arabic language to be doubly-foreignized. Are the categories of domestication and foreignization helpful in understanding strategies of translation that focus on the intersections, rather than distances, between languages? What are the terms that allow us to take into consideration the spaces that multiple languages inhabit simultaneously, rather than simply the distances that they travel?

[115] Booth, "Madness" 51.

CHAPTER 1
Linguistic Negotiation in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*

Set between London and Cairo, Ahdaf Soueif's novel *The Map of Love* interweaves Arabic with English at the same time that it offers reflections on the relationship between the two languages. The novel frequently pauses to pose questions about the intertwined history of the Arabic and English languages. Written in English and published in 1999, Soueif's *The Map of Love* is part of a new literature by Arab women writers living between the UK and the Arab world whose novels highlight the ways that the Arabic and English languages are negotiated.[116] Prior to publishing *The Map of Love*, Soueif's second novel *In the Eye of the Sun* (1992) received high acclaim and was the central focus of Edward Said essay "The Anglo-Arab Encounter: On Ahdaf Soueif."[117]

Educated both in England and Cairo, Ahdaf Soueif obtained a BA and MA at Cairo University and the American University in Cairo respectively before moving to England to complete a PhD in Linguistics at Lancaster University. The daughter of two Egyptian academics who completed their education in England, Soueif spent many of her formative years in London. While maintaining a literary career in London, Soueif has also participated in the political and cultural life of Arab cities like Cairo and Ramallah. She publishes a weekly column in the Egyptian daily al-Shorouk and in 2008 she founded the Palestinian Festival of Literature. Soueif has also translated Palestinian novelist and poet Mourid Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah* in 2000 as well as her own fiction and non-fiction. Soueif's work

[116] For more on the discussion of Anglo-Arab literature in Britain since the 1970s see Maleh, *Arab Voices in Diaspora* 13. Geoffrey Nash's *The Anglo-Arab Encounter* also focuses on this group of writers who incorporate Arab subjects and languages into their English novels. Other Arab authors who write in English and live/write between the UK and the Arab world like Soueif's are Jamal Mahjoub, Hisham Matar, Fadia Faqir, Leila Aboulela, Tony Hanania, Zeina Ghandour, and Ghada Karmi to name a few.

[117] Said's article with its focus on Anglophone Arab literature provided somewhat of a theoretical lens through which to read this literature and the article was the basis of Nash's book with the same title.

is emblematic of a generation of contemporary Arab writers who not only live in between physical borders but also write across them.[118]

Set in Egypt, Soueif's novel *The Map of Love* combines two plot lines situated between the early and late 1900s. As a *fin de siècle* novel itself, it juxtaposes two interlocking narratives and showcases the similarities and differences between Egypt on the brink of national independence on the one hand, and the implications of American imperialism in a contemporary context on the other.[119] The retrospective plot line is offered largely through the romantic and platonic relationships of the protagonists Anna Winterbourne and Sharif al-Baroudi and Layla al-Baroudi, as they grapple with the changing social and political landscapes around them. Following *In the Eye of the Sun*, *The Map of Love* is Soueif's second novel and remains one of her best-known works. It was shortlisted for a Booker Prize alongside J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*.[120] In addition to her two novels, Soueif has published two collections of short stories, *Aisha* (1983) and *Sandpiper* (1996) and two books of non-fiction, *Mezzaterra* (2004) and most recently *Cairo: My City, Our Revolution* (2012). In 2004, Ahdaf Soueif's mother, the renowned scholar and translator Fatma Musa,[121] translated *The Map of Love* into Arabic[122] with the title *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*.[123]

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[118] For more on Soueif see Chambers, British Muslim Fictions 245-250.

[119] Egyptian novelist and literary critic Radwa Ashour praises *The Map of Love* for the ways it juxtaposes the political tensions between the West and the Arab world saying that the novel goes "back to the roots of the problem. What we see happening now […] has been happening since the end of the 19th century" (qtd. in Edemariam). Ashour finds the novel particularly courageous in exploring the history of colonialism in the Middle East because it targets an English speaking audience.

[120] Some critics have accused the Booker Prize judges of discriminating against Soueif and believe that she would have won the Booker had her novel not been perceived as anti-Zionist—editors of the Egyptian literary magazine *Akhbār al-adāb* saw this as a punishment for the pro-Palestinian sympathies expressed in her novel and insist on dubbing the novel as the "moral winner". For more on the controversy see Mehrez, *Egypt's Culture Wars*.

[121] Musa obtained her PhD in English literature from University of London in 1957 where she focused on the influence of the *Thousand and One Nights* on Western literature and actively published in the field of Arabic and English literature until her death in 2007. She was also the director of translation in the Minis-

In an interview with Soueif in the Lebanese daily *Al-Akhbār*, she reflects on the ways that her own destiny as a writer is tied to her mother's trajectory as a scholar of English literature and translator of Shakespeare into Arabic.[124] Soueif suggests that literature was an inescapable aspect of her life and that she started to read an English translation of *Thousand and One Nights* at six years old – the work being the focus of her mother Fatma Musa's Ph.D. dissertation. Shortly after the publication of *The Map of Love*, Soueif and Musa collaborated on translating the novel into Arabic. Commenting on her translation, Musa expresses how she sought to render the Arabic "as close to the life of the English text as possible"[125] and she was conscious of the fact that this is the first time that a mother had translated her daughter's work from English to Arabic. When asked if she had any aspirations to be a novelist, Musa says that she had only marginally tried her hand at creative writing but that her wish was fulfilled by her daughter's achievements: "my own dream had come true." The collaboration between Soueif and Musa suggests that their interlocking careers and aspirations are not only tied by their familial bond but that they are also bound by an Arabic-English bilingualism that forms the basis of their extra-familial connection. This link between them is explicitly shown by the change of the dedication in *The Map of Love*. In the English version writes "to Ian" whereas in the Arabic translation, the dedication is to her mother:

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try of Culture in Egypt. In addition to translating her daughter's work, Musa is well known for translating numerous Shakespearean plays, among them *King Lear*. She was also among the first to translate the works of Naguib Mahfouz into English and is considered by some critics among the best to translate Mahfouz. For more on Musa, see Habūshī.

[122] In his interview with Soueif in *Guernica Magazine*, British-Sudanese novelist Jamal Mahjoub writes that *The Map of Love* has been translated into sixteen languages and that it has sold more than half a million copies in English alone.

[123] *The Map of Love* is Soueif's only novel available in Arabic translation. A selection of her short stories *Aisha* and *Sandpiper* were translated into Arabic and entitled *Zaynat al-ḥayāt*. Her journalistic accounts and reflections about her trip to Palestine appearing under the title *Mezzaterra* were also translated into Arabic—both translations were published by Dār al-Shurūq in 2010.

[124] Dina Heshmat, "Ahdāf Suwīf", *Al-Akhbār*, Feb 19 2009, 751: n.pg.

[125] My translation. Ibid.

"إلى أمي: فاطمة موسى منها بدأت، و إليها أرجع" (5).

The relationship between the Arabic and English languages is one of the primary prisms through which the Anglo-Arab encounter is explored in *The Map of Love* and *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*.[126] Language and linguistic difference function to outline the varied subject positions of the characters in relation to the colonial and postcolonial contexts in which they meet. In this chapter, I argue that the mitigation of linguistic difference underlies all of the relationships that the characters forge, where language functions as a reminder of difference as well as a means through which the characters negotiate their closeness to one another, express loyalty and love. I begin by locating *The Map of Love* within the broader landscape of postcolonial literature in order to consider the implications of multilingualism in the text. I then engage in an analysis of the role of language and linguistic difference both thematically and textually through a comparison of key excerpts in the English original with the same excerpts in the Arabic translation.

In order to examine the role of language and linguistic difference in the two texts, I have identified scenes and excerpts that focus specifically on translation, language learning and language choice. I locate these first in *The Map of Love* and then compare them to the same scene within *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*. My analysis focuses on scenes in the text where reflections on Arabic to English translation and the negotiation between the two languages take place between the main characters. In moments, linguistic tensions take the form of interior monologues, where the narrator meditates on both the promise and limitations of translation. In other places, the characters consciously choose to privilege one language,

[126] In her comprehensive study of Arab literature in the diaspora, Maleh characterizes Anglophone Arab literature in Britain from the 1970s to the present as "mostly female, feminist, diasporic in awareness, and political in character" (13). Maleh names Soueif as one of the most important of these Anglo-Arab writers.

while deliberately silencing another. And in other instances, the reader is not allowed to forget that the two Western protagonists, Anna Winterbourne and Isabel Parkman, are committed to learning the Arabic language. Finally, the narrative as a whole is woven around repeated instances of Arabic to English translation between the characters, and Anna's story would remain unintelligible to Isabel without Amal al-Ghamrawi's dual role as narrator/translator. These acts of linguistic negotiation and resistance in which the characters participate are defined by an acute awareness of the political significance of language and translation, and they put this awareness to work in forging affective bonds with each other.

On a textual level, there are two key elements on which my analysis focuses. The first is the transliteration of Arabic words in the English text that function to highlight the untranslatability of certain culturally specific terms, this also includes moments of what Emily Apter calls "creative failure" in translation – "failed" attempts of translational transfer from Arabic to English. For Apter, the aim of using untranslatable words and expressions is to activate "the poetics of translational difference" which for her "disrupt the fictional continuum" of translation which then allows for a meditation on the language politics that act as linguistic medium for the text.[127] Apter encourages us to pay attention to the creative potential of failure, to look at the tensions and stumbling blocks in translation because for her these are the most productive moments in a text – these moments have the potential of uncovering "the conceptual difference carried by the difference between languages."[128] In selecting excerpts for analysis, I follow Apter's call to pay attention to translational tensions and failures.

[127] Apter, *Against World Literature* 17.
[128] Ibid. 32.

Secondly, I examine the inclusion of an extensive glossary that acts as a companion to the novel, present only in the English version of the text and not the Arabic translation. By comparing the English and Arabic texts and considering the glossary entries, and lack of them, as well as the passages to which they refer, I consider how assumptions of cultural familiarity imprint themselves on the structure of the glossary itself. By bringing the role of paratextual elements in translation to the fore, I argue that the absence of the glossary in the Arabic text is reflective of Anglo-American cultural hegemony, while its presence in the English text works both to mitigate the presence of the Arabic language, as well as to create a space in which the two languages coexist in the novel. This chapter is divided into three parts: the first part is based on the thematic elements of *The Map of Love* – in this section, I will draw primarily on the English text for my analysis. The second part will be a textual comparative analysis between key passages in *The Map of Love* and *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb.* The third part examines the role of the glossary in *The Map of Love* and investigates the function of the glossary as a textual literary element in relation to its absence in *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*.

PART ONE: Thematic Elements of *The Map of Love*

The Map of Love has been characterized as a paradigmatic postcolonial text since its publication,[129] and Soueif's temporal juxtaposition of the colonial and postcolonial epoch creates a dynamic narrative that writes back to the discourse of colonialism and nationalism. In her article "Writing Out of Place," Samia Mehrez articulates the qualities that distinguish postcolonial literature from contemporary Arab literature that is not necessari-

[129] Muaddi Darraj asks whether there is room to be both an English and Egyptian writer in the literary landscapes of England and Egypt and describes Ahdaf Soueif as a "culturally sandwiched" novelist (92). Other critics like Waïl Hassan, Geoffrey Nash, Layla Maleh, Joseph Massad and Anastasia Valassopoulos have all characterized Soueif's work as quintessentially postcolonial.

ly postcolonial in character. Mehrez argues that postcolonial Arab writers like Soueif who occupy a hybrid identity simultaneously engage the dominant discourse of nationalism and colonialism and as such wage a "double battle" against authoritarianism.[130] The correlating narratives in 1997 and the early 1900s produce a kind of time tunnel through which colonialism as an organizing logic comes into focus. Additionally, Soueif's position at the cusp of British and Egyptian literature affords her a perspective that straddles the geographic locations and languages that figure in her novels. Susan Muaddi Darraj has described Soueif's work as creating its own "postcolonial brand of English"[131] because she infuses English with Arabic in her novel.[132]

Other critics have focused on the role of language in Soueif's text and argue that it is her multilingualism that is the key in labeling her as a postcolonial writer. Mohammed Albakry and Patsy Hunter Hancock examine the role of code switching between Arabic and English in *The Map of Love* and argue that the novel's interplay between the two lan-

[130] My translation. Mehrez, "Writing out of Place" 155.

[131] Muaddi Darraj's characterization of Soueif's work as creating its own brand of English is reminiscent of Achebe's famous declaration that English allows him to "carry the weight of [his] African experience" – but Achebe insists that "it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings" ("African Writer" 434).

[132] As postcolonial theorists and writers like Chinua Achebe, Bill Ashcroft, George Lamming, Helen Tiffin, Salman Rushdie, Sara Suleri and others have argued, postcolonial writing in English has undergone a process of creolization and in the words of Lamming, "English is no longer the exclusive language of the men who live in England" but rather, processes of literary and cultural transplantation, desegregation, and cross-fertilization have significantly altered the nature of what was once called "English literature" ("Occasion for Speaking" 16). Rushdie summarizes this concept of postcolonial English in relation to Anglo-Indian postcolonial literature as a necessarily hybridized language; he says, "Indian English is not English English, to be sure, any more than Irish or American or Caribbean English is. And it is a part of the achievement of English-language Indian writers to have found literary voices as distinctively Indian and also as suitable for any and all of the purposes of art, as all those other Englishes forged in Ireland, Africa, the West Indies and the United States" (*Step Across this Line* 164). Rushdie reiterates his position in relation to postcolonial English in his article "The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance" by saying that postcolonialism has created a situation where English is "no longer an English language, it now grows from many roots; and those whom it once colonized are carving out large territories within the language for themselves" (8).

guages is an exemplary characteristic of postcolonial literature.[133] Using Bhabha's definition of hybridity, Albakry and Hancock claim that Soueif uses a hybrid English and in doing so pushes the "frontiers of the English language […] as a way of finding a 'new English' a language between two languages."[134] They see this linguistic intermingling as a process of code switching that allows Soueif to participate in both worlds.[135] Comparing the use of Arabic in the beginning parts of the novel with the middle and end, Albakry and Hancock claim that Soueif increases the insertion of Arabic terms in the later parts of the text. They understand this increase as part of Soueif's "desire" to "ease the reader into the technique of lexical borrowing and appropriating Arabic terms."[136]

Another critic Waïl Hassan in his article "Agency and Translational Literature," nuances the characterization of Soueif's novel as a postcolonial text by introducing the concept of translational literature – which is a form of postcolonial literature that involves more than simply mixing two languages. Hassan argues that while all multilingual texts dramatize the ways languages interact, translational novels emphasize translation as "an essential component of cross-cultural contact."[137] Soueif's mixing of Arabic and English functions to confront the "Englishness" of the English language and challenges puritani-

[133] Albakry and Hancock claim that by writing in an English inlaid with Arabic and French "versus writing in her native Arabic language inlaid with English and French," Soueif's *The Map of Love* serves as an example of how "language boundaries begin to disappear" (230).
[134] Ibid. 233.
[135] Albakry and Hancock's essay is an intervention into the scholarship on language mixing between Arabic and English in the novel. Theirs is quantitative research that includes data from *The Map of Love* where they manually counted and coded all of the Arabic terms in each chapter of the novel as well as loan translations and direct expressions transferred from Arabic into the novel's English text. Their coding categorizes the occurrences of what they call "literary code-switching" which are instances in the novel of such culturally specific terms like traditional honorific titles and terms of respect, references to customs and traditions, historical references, greetings and conversational formulas, inter-language dialectal variation and translational transfer (223).
[136] Ibid. 224.
[137] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature" 754.

cal ideas of what falls into the category of English literature.[138] Hassan understands translational literature to be texts that not only straddle two languages but also texts that foreground, perform, and problematize the act of translation – texts that "participate in the construction of cultural identities from that in-between space."[139] Hassan's definition of the translational is useful in analyzing Soueif's text because his concept takes into account the asymmetrical relationship between Arabic and English Hassan examines the different linguistic registers at work in the novel[140] and argues that the stylistic element of translation functions "at once to maintain the theme of translation consistently before the readers, who are never allowed to forget the complexity of cultural and linguistic mediation, and to offer insights into the workings of the Arabic language."[141] Just as the reader is always confronted with translation both formally and thematically, language learning is equally prominent in the text. For Hassan, Soueif's *The Map of Love* is an example of translational literature because in addition to demonstrating the inner-workings of Arabic to English translation, it is also a text that invokes the complex colonial history that impacts the comingling of Arabic and English.

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[138] In advocating for English language education through English literature for Indian students Thomas Babington Macaulay, who appears as a fictional character in *The Map of Love*, claims that the English language "stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the west" and that it "abounds with the works of imagination not inferior to the noblest which Greece has bequeathed" with models of "every species of eloquence" that have "seldom been surpassed." Macaulay argues that "whoever knows that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth, which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations" (428). Macaulay's ideas about the superiority of English to 'native' languages in the colonies shaped Orientalist views of instruction and established education policies that eradicated the use of vernaculars.

[139] Ibid.

[140] From the distinctive "spoken Arabic of Upper Egyptian peasants (rendered in literal translation of their idiomatic expressions and turns of phrase), to middle-class Cairene speech (translated into standard English peppered with literally translated expressions), to classical belle-lettristic and Modern Standard Arabics; and from Anna's Victorian style to Isabel's American English to the clipped syntax of Internet communications, all of which is interspersed with French and Italian" (*Immigrant Narratives* 171).

[141] Hassan, *Immigrant Narratives* 171.

Most scholarship on Soueif has read the relationship between Arabic and English in *The Map of Love* as an example of the postcolonial literature because her novel challenges colonial and orientalist narratives about Egypt.[142] However, while Soueif attempts to rewrite the master narrative of colonialism in her novel, her exploration of the relationship between the Arabic and English languages in the novel challenges the dichotomy of Arabic as colonized and English as colonizer.

While Soueif is not the focus of her scholarship, the work of Shaden Tageldin is especially pertinent in analyzing the ways that the novel's characters move between resisting at times while embracing at others the Arabic and English languages. In *Disarming Words*, Tageldin critiques the ways that postcolonial literature is often read by critics more or less in terms of the dichotomies of home and empire, English and not-English, and colonizer and colonized. Tageldin is particularly critical of Saidian postcolonial studies that view cultural imperialism as "a mere extension of military imperialism."[143] For Tageldin, this approach to understanding the legacy of colonialism in places like Egypt perpetuates the image of the Arab-Islamic Orient as the "empire's feminized object" that is "done-to" and Europe as the "doer" or the "grammatical and political subject of empire."[144] What if, Tageldin asks, we were to "refuse Said's choice and take intimacy more seriously as a colonial force, enmeshed – through its semiotic avatar, translation, which Spivak describes as 'the most intimate act of reading' – in the West's confrontation with the Arab-Islamic East?"[145] Tageldin's insistence on understanding colonialism in terms of "intimacy," "love" and "seduction" between the colonizer and colonized, in addition to un-

[142] For example, see Valassopoulos "Fictionalising Post-Colonial Theory" and Nash "Re-Siting Religion" to name a few.
[143] Tageldin 7.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid. 26.

derstanding this relationship as one based on violence and pillage, is useful in examining why the protagonists in *The Map of Love* strategically oscillate between resisting the English as the colonizer's language and embracing it at the same time.

The act of re-imagining nations in *The Map of Love* as determined by multiple cultures, languages and nationalities is accomplished through the private and public histories of multiple characters. Soueif's novel is a tapestry of public and private voices in the form of letters, journals, and correspondences that are discovered, assembled and pieced together by the collective effort of characters from different cultural backgrounds.[146] In *Arab Voices in the Diaspora,* Layla Maleh claims that *The Map of Love* is influenced by the powerful imprint of Soueif's experiences in the diaspora which allows her to reformulate culture and subjectivity from an 'insider/outsider' perspective. For Maleh, diasporic writers are not "beholden to the dictates of the 'home' community" and thus are able to enter into dialogue with "past and present, the distant and the near."[147] In "Writing Out of Place," Samia Mehrez echoes this description of diasporic literature by Arab writers when she says that Soueif's work directly takes on the dominant discourses of colonialism and imperialism. For Mehrez, Soueif reimagines the Egypt's colonial past through the present and at the crux of this reimagination are the contemporary and historical stories and voices in Arabic and English that lie between East and West.[148] That *The Map of Love* simultaneously explores the experiences of Egyptian, American and the British characters exhibits

[146] In her analysis of what she calls "hybrid families" in *The Map of Love*, Wynne argues that Soueif's novel destabilizes the homogeneity of patriarchy and imperialism because several of Soueif's characters are nineteenth century British anti-imperialists. Thus, on the level of countering imperialist discourse, Soueif's novel achieves its anti-imperialist theme in terms of its politics. In her focus on the hybrid family, Soueif strives to "come to terms with making a space – real or imagined – amidst the complexities and problematics of history and representation in an imperial and postimperial context" (59).

[147] Maleh 15.

[148] My translation. Mehrez, "Writing out of Place" 161; 163.

Soueif's own argument against the consigned modes of authenticity, fixity and the demarcations of national identity based on limited cultural and linguistic terms.

Translation and language learning are some of the most explicit themes in the novel and they frame the narrative. Upon her arrival in Egypt in 1900, Anna befriends Sharif al-Baroudi's sister Layla, who teaches her about Egyptian customs while tutoring her in Arabic. Throughout the novel, Anna's story is developed through journal entries, correspondences with family and friends in England, and a collection of newspaper clippings. Anna and Sharif's story unfolds as Amal al-Ghamrawi, the novel's narrator and translator, and Isabel Parkman unpack the contents of a trunk filled with Anna's belongings during the 1997 narrative.[149] Like her great-grandmother, Isabel is a journalist.

The 19th century portion of the book tells the story of Anna Winterbourne, a widowed Englishwoman who decides to visit Egypt after the death of her husband. Having served as a general in the 1898 Battle of Omdurman in Sudan, Anna's husband returns deeply disturbed by what he witnessed during the bloody confrontation. The traumatic impact of the battle on her husband stimulates Anna's suspicion of the British colonial project.[150] Her growing skepticism is combined with an Orientalist interest in the Arab world, leading her to travel to Egypt in 1900. Anna initially plans to make her trip a short one, but instead remains in Egypt for fourteen years. During her time there, she falls in love with Sharif al-Baroudi, an Egyptian lawyer and nationalist activist. Britain's colonial rule in Egypt is called into question in the novel through Anna's perspective. Ultimately, Anna's

[149] A family tree provided at the beginning of the novel reveals that Amal and Isabel are distant cousins.

[150] Beginning in 1869 during the official installations of the Suez Canal, Britain's colonial rule over Egypt intensified as its dependence on trade with Eastern countries was destabilized due to the upsurge of India's anti-colonial movement. As its colonial domination in India was coming to a close, Britain looked to Egypt for renewing its colonial enterprise, seeking to establish economic ties with the Khedive of Egypt who was in severe debt over the Canal's construction. Thus the pretext of Britain's economic support for Egyptian debt paved the way for almost half a century of British colonial rule.

support for the Egyptian nationalist cause results in her collaboration with her husband Sharif by drafting letters and newspaper articles for the British press condemning Britain's occupation in Egypt.

The contemporary narrative takes place almost a century later with the arrival of Anna and Sharif's great-granddaughter, Isabel Parkman, in Cairo. While Anna's story contends with the question of Egyptian independence from British colonial occupation, the contemporary narrative is shaped by the dynamics of globalization as they interact with religious fundamentalism and American neo-colonial interests in the Arab world. Isabel, an American journalist living in New York, has inherited her great-grandmother's old trunk and brings it with her to Cairo in hopes of finding someone to interpret its contents. In a love story that runs parallel to her great-grandmother's, Isabel falls in love with Omar al-Ghamrawi, a renowned New York-based Egyptian-Palestinian musician and academic. After learning about the contents of the century-old trunk, Omar encourages Isabel to show the documents to his sister Amal who lives in Cairo. Amal becomes an interpreter of the trunk's contents, deciphering and contextualizing their meaning for Isabel, who is unfamiliar with the language, culture and history of Egypt.

The novel opens in 1997 with the arrival of Isabel Parkman to Cairo on a mission to interview Egyptians about their reactions to the impending millennium and to deliver her great-grandmother's trunk to Amal al-Ghamrawi. Amal, who is Omar's sister, has recently returned to Cairo from London following the breakdown of her marriage and is herself becoming reacquainted with the language and culture that she had left behind. Importantly, Amal has also translated novels from Arabic to English. Amal's character is shrouded in loneliness and abandonment; her children decide to remain in London with her former

husband and her brother Omar lives in the United States and visits infrequently. Though Amal is at first apprehensive about meeting a young Western journalist, her uneasiness gradually transforms into friendship with Isabel, a friendship that begins with Amal's role as translator of Arabic and as the interpreter of the historical narrative contained in Anna's trunk. Amal reflects on the process of unpacking the trunk's contents:

> Day after day I unpacked, unwrapped, unraveled. I sat on the floor with Isabel and we exclaimed over the daintiness of the smocking on the child's frock we found, the smoothness of the sandalwood prayer beads released from their velvet bag, the lustre of the candle-glass. I translated for her passages from the Arabic newspaper cuttings (11).

Amal's role is therefore as both a translator of language for Isabel who does not yet speak Arabic as also as an interpreter of the past–of the story told by the trunk and its contents. As the excavation of the trunk's contents progresses, Amal recognizes in Isabel a potential friend and companion capable of offering her the intimacy that she has longed for. As one of the novel's narrators, Amal acts as a translator of the two time periods in which the narratives take place, giving voice to each and offering reflections that shape the novel's metanarrative about the relationship between past and present.

The parallel stories are linked together in multiple ways, beginning with their shared geography in Cairo, despite unfolding a century apart. The interweaving of past and present lends a sobering effect to the tales of romance as the reader witnesses the repetition of misconceptions and conflicts of the past in the present-day narrative. In the *Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha describes the work of writers and artists who deal with themes of past and present saying: "the borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present."[151] This creates a sense of the new as an "insurgent act of cultural translation" because such cultural work

[151] Bhabha 10.

does not merely "recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent," rather, it renews the past by "refiguring it as an contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living."[152] In Soueif's text, contemporaneous characters like Amal are not looking at the past as a time of nostalgia or longing rather the past functions as a way of contending with the present – an essential way of negotiating the dynamics that govern how the present is lived out

The similarities between Anna and Isabel extend beyond their family bond, in that they are both Western women who share a naïveté about Egypt. Although the romance between Anna and Sharif develops in greater detail than that of Isabel and Omar, the two narratives place the progression of a romantic relationship at their centre.[153] Both Sharif and Omar are public about their political convictions with regards to national independence and anti-imperialism. Finally, Sharif and Omar both have sisters, Layla and Amal, who act as friends and translators to Anna and Isabel. In spite of their differences and preconceptions about each other, Layla and Anna during the nineteenth century and Amal and Isabel in the contemporary narrative find friendships with each other and these friendships facilitate a deepening of the romantic relationships between Anna and Sharif and Omar and

[152] Ibid.

[153] The theme of romance between Arabs and Westerners is a common one in Arabic literature – Tayeb Saleh's *Season of Migration to the North* is a classic example. For more on the topic see Boullata, "Encounter" 57; Siddiq. In addition to *The Map of Love* Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun* and *Aisha* explore cross-cultural romance. The theme of romance between different social groups in postcolonial literature is a familiar one recurring so often that these novels are considered a subgenre. Davis has argued that *The Map of Love* employs romance in a manner similar to many other postcolonial novels in which romance functions to resolve conflict between diverse national populations. In these novels, Davis writes, the "motif of lovers struggling to come together across barriers, whether of race, class, or religion, provided a narrative formula for gestures of conciliation between groups that had been positioned antagonistically within colonial hierarchies" (par. 2). It is interesting to note that whereas her first novel *In the Eye of Sun* foregrounds a love relationship between a Western man and an Arab woman, *The Map of Love* inverts this trope by foregrounding a relationship between Arab men and Western women – in both novels, romance between East and West ensues.

Isabel. Layla and Amal make the language and culture of Egypt intelligible for Anna and Isabel, thus highlighting the centrality of the themes of communication and language in the novel.

The Grammar of Multilingualism and Hybridity

In *The Map of Love*, the concept of hybridity provides a theoretical framework through which to understand questions of language, language learning and multilingualism. Amal's hybrid identity as an Egyptian-British woman is reflected in her Arabic-English-French multilingualism, used to unlock the story of Anna's trunk by interpreting its contents which themselves straddle the Egypt-England border. Amal identifies simultaneously with Victorian novelist George Eliot's archetypal heroine Dorothea Brooke and the latest hit in Arabic pop music by Amr Diab, claiming a strong cultural and linguistic attachment to both Egypt and Britain (26, 42). Through Amal's character, diasporic identity formations and the idea of in-betweenness are explored, and juxtaposed with Isabel's monolingual experience of a hybrid identity that leaves her unable to interpret the contents of her grandmother's trunk. Isabel's monolingualism is replaced by a nascent bilingualism as she endeavours to learn Arabic during the course of the narrative. Significantly, Soueif chooses Amal, a character who herself occupies a position of in-betweenness, to narrate the novel and her perspective shapes the representation of language and identity in the text. Amal contemplates the limits of identity, asking how one can know where one identity ends and another begins:

> Where is the line between blue and green? You can say with certainty 'this is blue, and that is green' but these cards show you the fade, the dissolve, the transformation – the impossibility of fixing a finger and proclaiming, 'At this point blue stops and green begins.' Lie, lie in the area of transformation – stretch your arms out to either side. Now: your right hand is in blue, your left hand is in green. And you? You are in between; in the area of transformations (66).

Amal's multilingual point of view shapes the narration of the story and offers a narrative perspective that itself seems to lie in between Western and Egyptian culture. The treatment of hybrid identities in the novel evokes Homi Bhabha's description of cultural identities as always emerging in the 'Third Space of enunciation' – a space where all "cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation" which for him makes "hierarchal claims to inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures […] untenable."[154] Bhabha argues that the productive capacities of this Third Space have "a colonial and postcolonial provenance."[155] Hybrid identities according to Bhabha participate in conceptualizing an "*inter*national culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures" but on the "inscription" and "articulation" of culture's *hybridity.*[156] Soueif herself has confirmed her own appreciation of the potential of hybrid identities saying that "There are so many hybrids now, people who are a little bit of this and a little bit of that. The interesting thing is, what we make of it, what kinds of hybrid we become and how we feel about it."[157] Despite Soueif's articulation of the promise of hybridity via the character of Amal, the conflicted and oftentimes paradoxical nature of hybrid identity is not ignored in Soueif's text, but rather is explored, and negotiated by the protagonists.[158]

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[154] Bhabha 56. Here Bhabha elaborates on what he means by "Third Space of enunciation" by saying, "it is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial and postcolonial provenance [...] We should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *inbetween* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves" (56).

[155] Ibid.

[156] Bhabha's emphasis.

[157] Quoted in Malak 133.

[158] For Wynne, Soueif's revisionist project of British and Egyptian cultural history in is both enabling and disabling – "not only are we still enmeshed in the legacy of empire but any engagement, fictional or otherwise, with the history of empire, raises proliferating complexities vis-à-vis representation" (65).

The family tree in the opening pages of the novel encompasses this complexity, where the family history reveals kinship between Egyptians, Palestinians, Americans and Britishers. The contents of the trunk, made intelligible by Amal's multilingualism and her ability to interpret both British and Egyptian culture provide the story that binds the characters to one another, linking their stories through time, space and language. Although it is Isabel who initiates the telling of Anna and Sharif's story by bringing it with her to Egypt, she is unable to tell the story herself because of the barrier of language whose transcendence require Amal's multilingualism. Herein lies the crux of the novel's emphasis on multilingualism and language learning. For Soueif, who suggests that the pivotal question is not whether hybridity exists but rather "what we make of it," hybridity is not a mere characteristic, but rather a quality that one must cultivate through language learning. In *The Map of Love*, the promise of hybridity lies in multilingualism, and in the process of linguistic acquisition to which it ultimately leads.

Multilingualism triumphs in *The Map of Love* and the emphasis placed on language in the novel reorients Bhabha's conception of translation. Whereas, for Bhabha, translation can take place in both linguistic and cultural contexts, the novel's emphasis on multilingualism foregrounds the realm of the linguistic in constituting hybrid identities in a postcolonial context. In the novel, Arabic-English-French multilingualism is part and parcel of how the hybrid identity can participate in "enunciating" the third space. The protagonists in *The Map of Love* demonstrate the importance of multilingualism as a crucial element of hybridity, and in doing so emphasize translation as a process that is primarily multilingual. Isabel's imminent bilingualism symbolizes what Bhabha has termed "culture's hybridity" which moves past the "exoticism of multiculturalism" or the "diversity

of cultures."[159] Language acquisition in *The Map of Love* highlights what we might think of as culture-in-process allowing us to reimagine Bhabha's concept of hybrid culture as processual. Through Isabel's path towards bilingualism, the novel accentuates the way that culture is not static but also that hybridity is within reach.

Friendship between Translational Ethics and Seduction

The friendship between the four female characters provides insight into the ways in which cultural and linguistic difference manifest themselves. Importantly, Amal's joint role as both narrator and protagonist affords access to her subjective experience of friendship in which the weight of her differences with Isabel is pondered. Although these relationships act as the primary medium through which the narrative unfolds, Amal's reflections on her companionship with Isabel interrupt the urge to accept the friendships as unproblematic instances of cross-cultural female bonding. At first, Amal is apprehensive about Isabel's request to meet with her: "Amal could not pretend she was not wary. Wary and weary in advance: an American woman – a journalist […] [she] braced herself: the fundamentalists, the veil, the cold peace, polygamy, women's status in Islam, female genital mutilation – which would it be?" (6). Amal articulates a political divide between herself and Isabel because she has a foreboding sense that that Isabel might share stereotyped preconceptions that she knows so many Westerners hold about Egyptians and Arabs. The fact that Amal's apprehension about Isabel is explored in the novel speaks to Gayatri Spivak's critique of the myth of universal female camaraderie. According to Spivak, "the presupposition that women have a natural or narrative-historical solidarity, that there is something in a woman or an undifferentiated women's story that speaks to another woman

[159] Bhabha 56.

without the benefit of language-learning, might stand against the translator's task of surrender."[160] In a reversal of the power dynamics that Spivak describes, Amal as the native speaker of Arabic is positioned as translator – in both the cultural and linguistic sense – for Isabel. It is Isabel who ultimately "surrenders" to the source language in striving to learn Arabic.

Anna Winterbourne's trunk is initially peripheral to Isabel's decision to travel to Egypt. The premise of Isabel's trip is to conduct a series of interviews with Egyptians in order to gather their perspectives on the approaching millennium for an article that she intends to write. As the story unfolds however, the trunk and its contents become a focal point of the narrative and constitute the means through which Amal and Isabel forge a friendship. Amal's combined roles as teacher, translator, and narrator allow her to reflect on her relationship with Isabel by relating their friendship to Isabel's increasing knowledge of the Arabic language. Isabel's efforts to learn Arabic symbolize for Amal a commitment to transforming and reinventing the power dynamics that Amal feared would taint their interactions.

Thus, in *The Map of Love*, the Arabic and English languages are thematically present in the narrative, functioning as vehicles through which the characters negotiate their relationships to each other and the world around them. Linguistic multiplicity is a key element in the novel, both at the level of the text itself, where Arabic and English coexist, but also through the characters, all of whom speak or eventually learn more than one language. When Anna arrives in Cairo, she is fluent in English and French, but endeavors to learn Arabic; Sharif speaks both French and Arabic, and although his resistance to speaking English stems from his anti-imperial convictions, his understanding of the language is

[160] Spivak, "The Politics of Translation" 205.

advanced enough to allow him to edit the articles that Anna writes for British newspapers. Amal also speaks Arabic and English, and becomes the gateway to bilingualism for Isabel, who, like Anna, learns to speak Arabic during the course of her stay in Cairo.

The relationship between ethics, love and translation explored by Gayatri Spivak can be extended to the intimacy with which Amal and Layla translate and teach the Arabic language to Isabel and Anna. In "The Politics of Translation" Spivak calls translation "the most intimate act of reading" and argues that an ethical translation is one that has the potential to incite the reader to learn the source language. Anna and Isabel's learning of Arabic is reminiscent of the role of intimacy and its effects on the translator's task as described by Spivak. The task of the translator is to "facilitate […] love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay."[161] For Spivak, translation is a highly intimate act that requires the translator to "surrender" to the source language. She understands the process of surrender in translation to be "more erotic than ethical."[162] This type of translation is one that Spivak argues would be liable to instill in the reader a desire to pursue knowledge of the source language and here we may think of knowledge both as acquiring understanding as well as in the carnal sense. Anna and Isabel's linguistic acquisition recalls Spivak's argument in where she draws out the political elements of translation and its interstitial connections with language learning. Spivak says, "if you are interested in talking about the other, and/or in making a claim to be the other, it is crucial to learn other languages […] I am talking about the importance of language acquisition for the woman from a hegemonic monolinguist culture" (215).

[161] Spivak, "The Politics of Translation" 205.
[162] Ibid.

Tageldin's notion of "translational seduction" is also useful here in understanding the power dynamics that "bind the colonized to the colonizer."[163] For Tageldin, the colonizer seduces by feigning love for the language and culture of the colonized – the colonizer thus makes the polarities of subject (doer) and object (done-to) "oscillate such that they blur" – making the "mastered […] fancy himself master." [164] According to Sabina D'Alessandro, Soueif challenges the genre of 19th century English women travelers like Lucie Duff Gordon and Anne Blunt who were responsible for "the spreading of 'orientalising' clichés" and representatives of the modalities that supported imperialism.[165] For D'Alessandro, Soueif rewrites these travel narratives by foregrounding the voices of Egyptian women in *The Map of Love,* particularly the voice of Amal al-Ghamrawi.

While Soueif does rewrite the familiar trope of the orientalist woman traveler to the 'Orient' by highlighting Anna's role in anti-imperialist activism and her desire to learn Arabic, in other places, we come across the markers of imperialist wealth that go unquestioned. In the first instance, we learn that Anna's curiosity about the Orient stems from an interest in the art of Orientalist painter Frederick Lewis which she sees in the South Kensington museum in England. On a broader scale, the economic and social circumstances that make Anna's travel to Egypt possible are never explicitly examined. On the one hand, these elements paint the portrait of an upper-class Englishwoman who narrowly avoids Orientalism in contrast to the experiences of women such as Lucie Duff Gordon and Anne Blunt. On the other, Anna and to a certain extent Isabel's, learning of Arabic and their commitment to political activism is, as Waïl Hassan suggests, "an index of their politics" so that "no provision is made for Orientalists with superb language skills who serve as the agents

[163] Tageldin 27.
[164] Ibid. 11.
[165] D'Alessandro 69.

of imperialism."[166] For Hassan, Anna and Isabel's interest in learning Arabic, a language with "lesser political power" than English or French, serves in Soueif's fiction to identify travelers to Egypt who have a "genuine interest" in understanding Egypt's language and culture.

In *The Map of Love* learning Arabic marks a political orientation against the status quo and symbolizes a departure from an allegiance with British or American imperial power. The process of learning the "other's" language must transmit for Spivak a form of love that "turns the other into something like the self."[167] In the case of Anna and Isabel, the political becomes tied to the personal and the desire to learn the language accentuates their commitment to their political activist lovers and anti-imperialism. Anna writes articles in British newspapers in hopes of rallying "British Public Opinion" against the occupation of Egypt (399). Layla describes the collaborative political efforts on her part as well as that of Anna and Sharif, she writes: "This letter, and my brother's introduction to it, I translated into French and Anna into English, and we sent it to Mr. James Barrington to use his good offices [in London] to get it published in the West" (467). There is a parallel between the political activism of the 19th century trio and that of Isabel's involvement with Amal's mission to fight against American neo-liberal policies in Upper Egypt (164,399). As such, in *The Map of Love* the process of language learning functions to abrogate the centrality of the English language.

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[166] Hassan, *Immigrant Narratives* 171.

[167] Here Spivak also critiques the practice in Western feminist discourse that presupposes sisterhood based on gender. She says, "the presupposition that women have a natural or narrative-historical solidarity, that there is something in a woman or an undifferentiated women's story that speaks to another woman without the benefit of language-learning, might stand against the translator's task of surrender" ("Politics of Translation" 205). Other transnational feminist scholars like Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, Chandra Mohanty, Valentine Moghadam and others have critiqued the presuppositions of global sisterhood by white feminists.

Colonial Seduction: Between English, French and Arabic

The political symbolism of language is explored through the lens of interpersonal relationships in the novel among which the romantic relationship between Anna and Sharif figures most prominently. They circumvent the relative difficulty of conversing in either Arabic or English by choosing to communicate in French. While there are hints in the text that Sharif knows at least some English,[168] we learn through Anna's journal that his refusal to speak the colonizer's language is a way in which he positions himself against the infiltration of British culture.[169] In the text, the French language is deemed "neutral" by the couple because it is a mother tongue to neither of them. In one passage, Anna asks Sharif whether he finds it troubling that she cannot speak to him in Arabic, to which he replies "No. It makes foreigners of us both. It's good that I should have to come some way to meet you" (157).[170] Ascribing neutrality to the French language seems incongruent with the political commitments of Sharif and Anna because of the French colonialism in Egypt. Thus, Sharif's linguistic resistance to English but not to French is contradictory and calls into question why French is constructed in this "neutral" light in the text. In fact, French is construed as enabling a kind of affective journey: it is the language that allows Sharif to travel to meet Anna and vice versa. Soueif positions the French language

[168] When Anna translates Sharif's letter addressing the British public, she asks him why he is reading her translation in English: "You are supposed not to know English, but you always read my translations?" (485).

[169] Sharif's stance against English recalls Ngũgĩ's problematisation of the language question in the debate about the usage of the English language in postcolonial literary production. Ngũgĩ states: "I believe that my writing in Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples. In schools and universities our Kenyan languages – were associated with negative qualities of backwardness, underdevelopment, humiliation and punishment" (*Decolonising the Mind* 28). Ngũgĩ's position is often compared with Achebe's approach which emphasizes the use of an English language that can reflect the African experience.

[170] According to Hassan, the French language, like English, enjoys the "prestige and appeal of the imperial powers whose languages they are, so it is not surprising that Egyptians learn them" (*Immigrant Narratives* 171).

unproblematically as a neutral one and evokes the imagery of a path on which the two lovers meet each other half way as suggested by Sharif.

The possibility of Anna acquiring enough knowledge of the Arabic language in order to communicate with Sharif is never explored let alone posed in the text leaving this burning question unanswered: why is their common language that of another imperial power? It is puzzling that given all of the narrative space given to highlight Anna's efforts in learning Arabic and her progress in learning the language, that Soueif did not choose Arabic as the language of communication between the couple to underscore their shared commitment to anti-colonialism. Were the lovers to choose Arabic as a common language, the concept of each character meeting the other half way would be disrupted by the fact that Arabic is Sharif's mother tongue. Perhaps it is indicative of Soueif's attachment to the idea that the characters should each "come some way" to meet each other that lies at the root of the choice of French as their common language.

The linguistic tensions represented by Anna and Sharif's relationship are complicated by French, a language they have in common. The British colonial presence becomes the focus of anti-imperialist sentiment in the novel, whereas the French language is granted a measure of distance from the former French colonial regime in Egypt because it functions as the only "neutral" language between Sharif and Anna. The immediacy of the struggle against British imperialism in which Sharif and his friends are involved sets up a comparative framework through which British and French colonialism is positioned in the text. The fight for Egyptian sovereignty pushes the symbolism of the English language to the fore, making way for French to be seen as less threatening. The

English language represents the force of colonialism in the novel whereas the French language is divorced from its colonial context in Egypt.

The symbolism attached to the English, French and Arabic languages is brought into focus in a scene in which Anna and Sharif seek to have their marriage recognized by the British colonial administration in Egypt where they are met with hostility. Anna and Sharif meet with the British Consul-General Lord Cromer, and bring with them the Arabic and French versions of their marriage contract. The scene showcases the linguistic tensions that symbolize the cultural and political rifts between the characters. Anna refuses to speak English during the meeting, even when Lord Cromer refuses to speak anything else: "She had been magnificent – not one word of English, not one concession" (324). Anna speaks in French, so that Sharif will understand, and Sharif speaks in Arabic with the assistance of a translator. The linguistic chasms correspond to political ones, but also underscore the powerful symbolism of Anna and Sharif's romance: they have a wedding contract in both French and Arabic, but their love remains unintelligible in English.

In *Disarming Words*, Tageldin's examination of the history of translation in modern Egypt characterizes the competition for colonial rule between France and Britain as a struggle for Egypt's affection. Arguing against the notion that the process of the colonization of the Egyptian people was the result solely of a unidirectional exertion of European force,[171] Tageldin suggests that an ideological courtship was at the root of the colonial strategies of the French and British. As evidence of the way in which seduction figured as a framework for colonial strategies, Tageldin offers an analysis of Lord Cromer's 1908

[171] Tageldin's argument stands in contrapuntal relation to Said's formulation of the impact of European cultural imperialism on the Arab world. For Tageldin, Said's relies on the dominant/oppressed binary and his understanding is impositionist in that the colonizers almost always impose and the colonized almost always oppose (17).

treatise Modern Egypt, in which Cromer likens Britain's colonial project in Egypt to a courtship. Tageldin describes Cromer's writing as containing "the sexualized tones of erotic competition", and underscores the manner in which Cromer thinks of England's failure in Egypt as a failed seduction.[172] In describing the obstacles that stand in the way of the success of the British colonial project, Cromer writes:

> The semi-educated Oriental... looks coldly on the Englishman, and rushes into the arms of the Frenchman... On the one side, is a damsel possessing attractive, albeit somewhat artificial charms; on the other side, is a sober, elderly matron of perhaps somewhat greater moral worth, but of less pleasing outward appearance.[173]

The personification of France and England in Cromer's text imagines the colonial competition as a romantic drama, in which the alluring demoiselle that is France seems destined to prevail over her less-appealing English counterpart. The language of romance and courtship that Cromer employs is striking and suggestive for Tageldin that the struggle for control over Egypt's land and resources was first and foremost a fight for Egypt's affection. For Cromer, England would have to reinvent itself in order to win Egypt's favour. Tageldin continues: "Cromer hints that to win Egypt, England must shed its matronly respectability and become an "attractive damsel" like France."[174]

Tageldin's argument begins with a theorization of the effect of Napoleon's proclamation upon his arrival in Egypt in 1798. The proclamation, which was written in Arabic, affirms not only the benevolence of the French towards the Egyptians but also claims that the French are themselves believers and defenders of Islam.[175] For Tageldin, the proclamation was meant to persuade Egyptians that the French were not invasive colonizers, but

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[172] Ibid. 153.
[173] Quoted in Tageldin 153.
[174] Tageldin 14.
[175] Tageldin argues that once Egyptianness and Arab-Islamicity appear "not extrinsic but intrinsic to Frenchness, the Egyptian Muslim will misrecognize France not as the Other who would rule as its colonial sovereign but as a validation, indeed an incarnation, of its precolonial sovereign self – and thereby permit French sovereignty, paradoxically, to replace its own" (37).

misunderstood compatriots, and that their goal was not to dominate Egyptians, but rather to celebrate their language and culture. Honing in on the questions of language and translation, Tageldin notes that Napoleon's words translated not just French into Arabic but also, "Christian Frenchness into Arab-Islamicity, and preceding the force of arms – disarmed Egyptian intellectuals." [176] For Tageldin, the residual effect of this initial seduction by the French is precisely the dynamic that Cromer names in his romantic dramatization of the colonial competition. Whereas the French effort to seduce Egypt allowed Egyptians to think of themselves as playing the role of suitor vis-à-vis France, it was in fact Egypt that was coming under the control of French masculinized colonial power. She writes:

> For more than a century after Napoleon's occupation ended in 1801, the narrative of Egyptian-European "equivalence" that his colonial proclamation activated would continue to seduce Egyptians into believing that they never had lost their cultural self-determination, that Arab-Islamic and European civilizations could engage one another as equals, free of the Napoleonic "pre-text" of domination.[177]

Tageldin's argument stands in contrapuntal relation to Edward Said's formulation of the impact of European cultural imperialism on the Arab world, which relies on a schema of domination where the colonizers "impose" and the colonized "oppose."[178] Tageldin contends that cultural imperialism might be better understood through the politics of "translational seduction," which is a dynamic that lures the colonized "to translate their cultures into an empowered 'equivalence' with those of their dominators and thereby repress the inequalities between those dominators and themselves" – this interplay seduces the colonized "to seek power *through* empire" rather than against it.[179]

Tageldin's reading of Cromer's text further explores the way in which language came to symbolize Britain's romantic defeat in relation to Egypt. If Cromer attributed

[176] Ibid. 14.
[177] Ibid. 14.
[178] Ibid. 17.
[179] Ibid. 10-11.

French success in Egypt to the heightened "attraction" of French civilization, this attraction was one that was primarily situated in language.[180] Cromer continues: "The French were aware that, if the youth of Egypt learnt the French language, they would, as a necessary consequence, be saturated with French habits of thought."[181] For Cromer, this "saturation" with French language and thought is the result of a lost battle for the affection of Egypt – a failed attempt at seduction. Cromer focuses on the role of language in the process of colonial seduction, and suggests that the prevalence of French in Egypt meant that French "habits of thought" were necessarily embedded in the minds of Egyptians. Tageldin's analysis of Cromer's Modern Egypt sheds light on the linguistic triad featured in Anna and Sharif's meeting with Lord Cromer, particularly in relation to the role of French and how it is put in competition with English in the Soueif's novel.

The meeting between Cromer, Anna and Sharif in *The Map of Love* reenacts the failed attempt at seduction that Cromer describes in Modern Egypt on several levels. The rejection of the English language by Anna and Sharif sends a clear message to Cromer: he may be present in Egypt, but he remains an unwelcome suitor. The scene symbolizes the failure of the British colonial project in Egypt through Anna's disavowal of her country and language, yet at the same time it honours the role of the French language by positioning it as a language that is both "neutral" in relation to Arabic and English, but also as a language that works to symbolically consummate Anna and Sharif's love. Tageldin's concept of translational seduction suggests that Soueif's positioning of French as a "neutral" language is representative of the successful seduction of Egypt by France.

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[180] Ibid. 152.
[181] Cromer 235-6.

The Unhomeliness of Multilingualism and Language Acquisition

Learning Arabic allows Anna and Isabel to navigate the linguistic chasm they experience upon their arrival to Egypt. They both develop a love for the language which also stems from falling in love with men whose mother tongue is Arabic. Anna's contemplation of the linguistic difference that separates her from Sharif becomes a way that their love can be articulated. She says:

> 'Hubb' is love, 'ishq' is love that entwines two people together, 'shaghaf' is love that nests in the chambers of the heart, 'hayam' is love that wanders the earth 'teeh' is love in which you lose yourself, 'walah' is love that carries sorrow within it, 'sababah' is love that exudes from your pores, 'hawa' is love that shares its name with 'air' and with 'falling', 'gharam' is love that is willing to pay the price (386).

Anna runs through the various words for different ways of characterizing love in Arabic, perhaps suggesting that the love she knows with Sharif extends beyond the lexical register of the English language. This lexical exploration serves as a metaphor for the emotional terrain that Anna discovers through her relationship with Sharif. Although they are conjoined in their love, their difference is continuously highlighted in the text. Her newfound vocabulary makes it possible for her to conceive of the world differently. Moments before we read Anna's journal entry, we are privy to Sharif's thoughts as he observes this "strange wife of his" as she busies herself in the house "*as though* this was where she had always wanted to spend her days" (386, emphasis mine). The "as though" that qualifies his thoughts critically situates Anna as an outsider, however closely she may resemble one who belongs, and however much he may love her.

The blurring of the boundaries between insider and outsider underlies the narratives and heightens the novel's focus on the dynamics of colonialism, as well as their contemporary manifestations and enduring effects. Homi Bhabha's concept of "unhomeliness" provides a way of theorizing instances of tension and collapse between the realms of

'home' and 'the world' – a phenomenon that Bhabha understands as characterizing post-colonial literature.[182] Bhabha suggests that these moments pervade the postcolonial literary text because of the emphasis that they place on the closeness of the foreign, and the proximity of the stranger. Through her love of Sharif, Anna transcends the borders of her mother tongue, attempting to name the emotions that their relationship evokes in her.

The coming together of Anna and Sharif is primarily predicated on her stepping into what Bhabha describes as the "unhomely." For Bhabha the unhomely moment captures "an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres [home versus world] of social experience are often spatially opposed."[183] Sharif's awareness of Anna as foreign informs his impressions of her, even as he considers the ease with which she moves about his family home. Before marrying Anna, Sharif is confronted by his mother about his choice in marrying a non-Egyptian woman. At first, this conflict instills doubt in him. Sharif describes going "round and round in the same circle" wishing that Anna was "Egyptian, French - anything but English" (280). But Sharif quickly resolves "[…] very well, so she is English, there we are, does this mean it is impossible, it cannot work? I don't know. What I know is that she has entered my heart and she refuses to leave" (280). In explaining his decision to marry Anna to his mother, Sharif criticizes Egyptian mores and customs for making it difficult to meet a local woman (280). Sharif is able to embrace the "unhomeliness" of Anna's Englishness not only because he loves her but because "she was brave enough […] to fly in the face of her Establishment. Perhaps even to take pleasure in defying it" (280). Sharif's mother reminds him that if he marries Anna, "her whole life will change. Her people will be angry with her. And the British [in Egypt]

[182] Bhabha 13.
[183] Ibid. 19.

will shun her […] she will be torn off from her own people. Even her language she will not be able to use" (281).

Sharif's mother's warning of Anna's imminent severance with her ties to Britain, even her English language, at first suggests that Anna will have to choose between becoming Egyptian or remaining British. Yet, her marriage to Sharif facilitates the creation of a new connection to Britain that she had not known before. Through her anti-colonial journalism, which she does by translating Sharif's Arabic articles into English, Anna forges connections with journalists in Britain who share her anti-colonial sentiments and assist her in publishing the text in British newspapers. Anna's translation of Sharif's writing into English signifies an "unhomely" act of translation as it challenges the binary between Arabic and English as locations and identity markers. Even though English remains the marker of colonialism, Sharif and Anna repurpose the English language in order to advance their shared political convictions.

Ultimately, Anna finds a way of using her unhomely positionality as a place from which to continue to speak to her home. This time, however, she is using English that is the result of a translation from Arabic. In this way, the unhomely position occupied by Anna in the novel serves not only to theorize the closeness of the foreign but also demonstrates how unhomeliness can create distance with the familiar. On the one hand, Anna and Sharif's relationship and political activism collapses the distance between their positionalities and complicates an easy distinction between home and away. On the other hand, Anna's awareness of herself as British brings about a shift in which she situates herself in opposition to the political loyalties to which that identity supposedly refers. If Anna's relationship with Sharif brings their respective homes closer together, it also brings about

a shift in how each relates to their cultures of origin. Sharif chooses to marry an English-woman which, as his mother indicates, signifies a departure from the cultural expectations surrounding marriage. Similarly, Anna marries an Egyptian nationalist and takes up the anti-colonial cause, deviating from the expectations of her culture and class.

PART TWO:

The Politics of Translating the *Jadhr* in Arabic

The political significance of language and the ability of the characters to forge relationships in spite of the linguistic chasms that separate them shape both the narrative and the textual elements of the novel which contains several passages in which Arabic and English words are compared and defined by the characters. Both the author and her characters persistently pose the question of how the Arabic and English languages relate to one another. This linguistic exploration is not peripheral but rather part and parcel of the story itself. In following section, I will analyze the textual elements of the novel by comparing key passages in the English text with the Arabic translation. The comparative analysis aims to examine the differences and similarities between the two texts in order to better understand the interplay between the Arabic and English languages. In comparing *The Map of Love* with *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* my goal is to show that the two texts approach the theme of Arabic language learning differently. Through this then we can also see how foreign learners of Arabic learn the language differently than speakers of Arabic learn it.

Key differences between *The Map of Love* and *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* are significant because they highlight the ways that the two novels explain the Arabic language to their respective readerships. Anna's contemplation of the word *ḥubb* in *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* appears italicized just as in *The Map of Love*, cited above, setting apart Anna's voice as read

through her journal entries (525). Anna's reflection on the meaning of *ḥubb* harkens back to Waïl Hassan's definition of translational literature as texts that "straddle two languages, at once foregrounding, performing, and problematizing the act of translation."[184] Her meditation on the word can be understood as a key translational moment in both the English and the Arabic texts. As she lists different terms in Arabic, the English word 'love' is repeated alongside varied definitions of *ḥubb* thus emphasizing the contrast between the English word that remains the same and the Arabic words that are never quite synonymous with one another. In the Arabic text, what comes through is a translation of a translation; that is, the translation of the text from English into Arabic of a passage in which Arabic terms are translated into English creating a linguistic chiasmus. This linguistic reversal of Arabic to English in *The Map of Love* and then back to Arabic in *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* brings questions of translation to the fore both in the narrative and through the text's translation.

In the Arabic text, Anna's discovery of the different variations of the word *ḥubb* begins with the conjugation of the verb to love: "Love, I love, you love" – this insertion exists only in the Arabic translation and not in the English original. Adding the conjugation of Anna's newly learned verb functions perhaps as a way of highlighting the learning of the Arabic language by foreigners. In comparing the English text with the Arabic translation, it becomes evident that the latter explains the Arabic language to the Arabic reader differently than how the English text explains the Arabic language to the English reader. This difference has implications on the politics of translating a text that, in its original form, translates the linguistic matrix behind the system of the Arabic language to an English audience whereas its Arabic translation omits this process.

[184] Hassan, "Agency and Translational Literature" 754.

This passage on the different ways of saying love is a particularly good example to show how the Arabic translation disregards Soueif's project in explaining Arabic language systems to the reader. In the English text, the word 'hayam' (*hiyām*) is explained as "love that wanders the earth" (386). The word for this type of love shares its meaning with the verb to wander in Arabic and both share the same root ه\ي\م. In the Arabic text however, the definition for *hiyām* is as follows: هيام هو حب يطوف الأرض. The use of the word *yaṭūf* (يطوف) to describe what *hiyām* (هيام) means warrants a pause because it does not convey or reinforce the linguistic relationship between words of the same root that Soueif attempts to communicate in the English text. Instead of using a word that shares the same root ه\ي\م, which would in effect reinforce the linguistic matrix behind the triliteral root system in the Arabic language, the translation is literal. The use of the word *yaṭūf* to explain *hiyām* departs from Soueif's attempt to explain the system because the translator introduces another verb with a different root (ط\و\ف) and in effect is a root that while has the meaning of "to wander" is not related to the root ه\ي\م in the same way that the word *yahūm/hāma* (يهوم\هام) is. The verb *hāma* shares the same root with the *hiyām* form of love – it has a double meaning, it could mean "to wander" and also "to be in love". Here, the translator privileges a literal translation which sidesteps the linguistic connections Soueif attempts to accomplish.

Furthermore, the entry on 'hawa' is explained in the following way in the English text: "'hawa' is love that shares its name with 'air' and with 'falling' (387). In the Arabic translation, the following is offered as the translation for *hawā'*:

"هوي هو حب يشترك بالاسم مع الهواء ومع السقوط" (525).

The use of the word *al-suqūṭ* once again departs from the triliteral system which allows Arabic to emphasize the relationship between words that share the same root. Why use *al-suqūṭ* which has a different root (س\ق\ط) than (ه\و\ي) to explain the meaning of *hawā'* when the word itself means "to drop, fall, tumble." Another example can be demonstrated with the word "teeh" (*tīh*) that Soueif uses to show the multiplicity of words that mean love in Arabic: "'teeh' is love in which you lose yourself" (386). Again, the translation opts for a word that is not related to the root ت\ي\ه to explain the meaning of *tīh*:

"تيه يعني حب تفقد فيه نفسك" (525).

The use of the word *tafqid* (تفقد) which has the root (ف\ق\د) deviates from the repetition of same root words found in the English text. Indeed, the root ت\ي\ه means both "to lose one's way" and "to be bewildered" by love. In *The Map of Love*, Soueif attempts to retain as well as give an echo of the Arabic root system in English, whereas *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* on many occasions omits this process altogether.

Comparing the passage on "ḥubb" between *The Map of Love* and *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* allows us to locate two main aspects of the Arabic language that are being translated in Soueif's English text. The first is the semantic – a set of words and concepts – and the second is the root system. As such, Soueif's English text conveys both the denotative and connotative aspects of the Arabic language. The root system that Soueif attempts to reflect by switching between transliterated Arabic words and the English language shows how root words have meanings that entwine and allow one to generate different words that are also related. Whereas the English reader would see these as synonyms all translating as "love," in Arabic the root system is part of a linguistic matrix that operates on the myriad connections between words sharing the same root. The passage on "*ḥubb*" shows that

there is a range of ways to say love in Arabic because each of the words comes from different roots. Thus, the main point of this passage is not simply to show that there are different words for love, but rather to show that in Arabic there is system in conceptualizing love in so many different ways. In an attempt to translate this back into Arabic, the translation succeeds in translating the semantics or the denotative elements of the passage. However, the translation does not succeed in conveying that the second point of this passage is not just to show that there are different words for love in Arabic but more importantly that there is a context in which these different words are being generated and this context is the root system that intertwines words together.

Fatma Musa's translation of these passages shows that for her, the act of being faithful to the original text means being literal in translation. However, the English text explicitly shows the connotative component to explaining Arabic root systems. Soueif shows that the triliteral root system is used not only to teach foreigners the language but that it is also the way that Arabs understand their own language – this element is lost in the Arabic translation. In the passage on 'ḥubb,' Musa could have used the same root to give the definition of the words themselves instead of relying on different unrelated roots and words to convey the meaning. The translation sacrifices the resonance and relationship between the different words that share the same root. It does not draw out the parallelism that is used in the English text. For example, had Musa written:

هيام هو الحب الذي يهوم ...

it would have allowed her to convey the root system at work in the English text which would thus bring out the parallel structure that Soueif relies on in *The Map of Love*.

Untranslatables in Arabic and Translation Failure

Language and translation as metaphors for cultural exchange and encounter are made explicit in the novel, in which characters engage with these questions alongside the development of their stories. Importantly, the ability of translation to successfully transmit meaning is never fully endorsed, leaving a lingering ambivalence most aptly described by the narrator Amal. At Anna and Sharif's wedding celebration, Amal reflects on the impossibility of finding an adequate English correlate for the word "*tarab*". She poses her ambivalence as a question, but a question that is twice articulated in the passage:

> How do I translate tarab? How do I, without sounding weird or exotic, describe to Isabel that particular emotional, spiritual, even physical condition into which one enters when the soul is penetrated by good Oriental music? A condition so specific that it has a root all to itself: t/r/b. Anyone can be a singer – a mughanni – but to be a mutrib takes an extra quality (332).

In this moment of linguistic contemplation, Amal repeats, "How do I?" Although her question is the same both times, the intention behind it reads differently. In the first instance, her tone is seeking and genuine, articulating an honest question about the possibility of translating this culturally specific term. The second time, her question is rhetorical, and we sense that in the few words since its first articulation, she has confirmed that there is no answer. The question Amal asks shifts from being one about translation to being one about translatability – at first she asks how tarab can be translated – to wondering if the concept can be translated at all.

As explored in the discussion above, Emily Apter's development of the concept of untranslatability signifies a form of creative failure that generates an unintended result. She recognizes "the importance of non-translation, mistranslation, incomparability and

untranslatability"[185] in thinking of creative failure. Rather than simply failing to achieve what it sets out to do, untranslatability leaves open the possibility of considering what occurs in lieu of the perfectly executed translation. In the example of "tarab" and its (un)translatability, the inability to fully render the term leaves us with a rich atmosphere of ambivalence that better explains the term than an English equivalent.

Amal's reflection on the translatability of "tarab" also offers us insight into her own awareness of the delicacy of her task as a translator to Isabel. In her desire to avoid an explanation of 'tarab' that would imbue the term with orientalist exoticization, Amal also reveals her sensitivity to the political nuances that surround her friendship with Isabel. In Fatma Musa's translation of this passage in *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*, she translates "weird" and "exotic" as *gharīb* (غريب) and *gharā'ibī* (غرائبي) – a choice that warrants attention. For both words, Musa selects terms that have the same root غ\ر\ب – a root that shares the same stem as words like West and Westerner, foreign and foreigner, strange and stranger. In Margot Badran's "Foreign Bodies," she argues that the word "*gharbī/yya*," which contains the root غ\ر\ب, is a "heavily loaded term for foreigner" because the term carries "associations with colonialism and thus is freighted with overtones of the culturally imperialistic."[186] The term is also used to express a polarity between an "inauthentic" Westerner and the "authentic" native – unlike other terms for foreigner like *ajnabī/yya* or *'ajamī/yya*, the term *gharbī/yya* "sets up a distinct distancing that implies cultural and political difference."[187]

Musa's choice to use *gharā'ibī* to translate exotic captures the essence of difference that this word implies in the English text. In English, 'exotic' carries with it an implicit reference to the history of orientalism and Musa attempts to carry this nuance

[185] Apter, *Against World Literature* 4.
[186] Badran 97.
[187] Ibid.

through in the translation by the use of *gharā'ibī*, a word that also suggests otherworldliness.[188] In reflecting on the translation of 'tarab,' Amal is aware of the politics that surround her relationship with Isabel and in articulating a fear of "sounding exotic," Amal reveals that she remains wary of her culture and language being consumed by an Orientalizing western gaze. Musa's task here is to carry across the rhetoricity of Amal's use of the word exotic to capture a similar sense of otherness and difference as is suggested by the English text.

In Edward Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, the entry for the root غ\ر\ب does not contain the words weird or exotic in any of its definitions or derivations.[189] In Hans Wehr's standard dictionary, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, the word *majlūb*, which has the root ج\ل\ب, is given as the definition for exotic. To have translated exotic as *majlūb* instead of *gharā'ibī* in Musa's text would have meant the loss of this important nuance and suggests that Amal's friendship with Isabel remains slightly tinged with suspicion as it did at their first meeting. Interestingly, in *Lisān al-'Arab* the entry for the triliteral root غ\ر\ب is comprised of seven pages while the entry for ج\ل\ب comprises of two pages.[190] The number of pages suggests that the former is a much more historically and culturally significant root as is argued by Badran.[191]

Language is intertwined in the story of Amal and Isabel's friendship so that Amal uses grammatical concepts to illustrate their deepening bond and growing trust. Grammar becomes a vehicle through which their friendship is narrated and provides a language that

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[188] غرائب and عجائب are used to refer to the marvelous, curious, odd and peculiar and is often evoked in reference to the *Thousand and One Nights*.
[189] See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon, g-r-b.*
[190] See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, غ/ر/ب and ج/ل/ب.
[191] The root غ/ر/ب is related to words having to do with foreignness, strangeness, oddity, curiosity, difficulty to understand something, obscurity, but not exoticism. See *Lisān al-'Arab*, غ/ر/ب.

Amal employs to reflect on the significance of their bond, despite its seeming impossibility. In one passage, Amal teaches Isabel about the triliteral root system in the Arabic language focusing on the Arabic for heart, *qalb*:

> Everything stems from a root. And the root is mostly made up of three consonants – or two. And then the word takes different forms [...]. Take the root q-l-b, qalb. You see, you can read this?' 'Yes.' 'Qalb: the heart, the heart that beats, the heart at the heart of things. Yes?' [...] Then there's a set number of forms – a template almost that any root can take. So in the case of "qalb" you get "qalab": to overturn, overthrow, turn upside down, make into the opposite; hence "maqlab": a dirty trick, a turning of the tables and also a rubbish dump. "Maqloub": upside-down; "mutaqallib": changeable; and "inqilab": a coup...' So at the heart of all things is the germ of their overthrow; the closer you are to the heart, the closer to the reversal. Nowhere to go but down. You reach the core and then you're blown away (81-82).

The exploration of the ق\ل\ب root suggests that as Amal and Isabel's friendship develops they unravel the histories that bind them to seemingly oppositional identities. One is a Western woman with only peripheral knowledge of the language and culture of Egypt and the other is an Egyptian woman suspicious of the Orientalist lens through which Westerners view Egypt. And yet, through a kind of reliving of the history contained in the trunk, they uncover new possibilities for the present. As Amal explains the tenets of the Arabic language, she also reflects on the relationship language has to social change, political resistance, the past and the present. The explanatory moment of the Arabic triliteral root system becomes a metaphor for the emotional experience that Amal has in the friendship that felt impossible but which ultimately flourishes. Amal realizes that root, heart and political overthrow are all connected and that the kernel of their connection is language. The way the root system relates words to each other helps Amal explain and understand her experiences with Isabel. In this reflection we see the narrator pause on the words "heart" and "overthrow" – as opposed to other words that derive from the ق\ل\ب root. The focus on these two derivatives suggests an awareness of the emotional bond that Amal feels to-

wards Isabel and the connections between love, politics and language that maps out her world.

In *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*, Musa's translation of how the root ق\ل\ب is related to a series of words follows a similar pattern to her translation of the numerous terms for *ḥubb*. In translating the extensive derivations of *qalb* Musa uses words with different roots in order to explain the meaning of words that contain the root. In this passage, Amal explains to Isabel the inseparable connection between love and political overthrow – where both as she suggests, emerge from the heart, the 'qalb'; she says, "at the heart of all things is the germ of their overthrow". In the Arabic translation, Musa translates this sentence in the following way:

"في قلب الأشياء جميعها بذرة سقوطها" (117).

The translation of "overthrow" as *suqūṭ* (سقوط) diverges from the use of a word that shares the same root as *qalb* – a task that Soueif undertakes in this passage itself. Instead of *suqūṭ* the word *inqilāb* (انقلاب) would have communicated the way that the language is organized to reflect the connections between words with the same root. Amal and Isabel have a conversation about how to speak the language of love and by extension, the way to speak *with* love. Yet, in Musa's translation, accuracy and faithfulness to the original text suggests a privileging of literalness as opposed to resonances. In Soueif's text, her technique of explaining the Arabic language to English readers carries the echo of the Arabic language in the explanations and in the way that they are explored by the characters. In Musa's translation, the task is different because here the language is being translated back into Arabic and thus, explaining the way the language functions to native speakers of the language

might seem like a redundant task, however, this is achievable by using the same roots to explain the words.

For example, when Amal brings Isabel to meet her friends at a café, a dialogue takes place in which the speakers oscillate between English and Arabic in such a way as to allow the reader to imagine that the conversation takes place in Arabic. It remains intelligible to the English reader who does not know Arabic, however, with the assistance of the glossary. In one exchange a character responds to another's question by saying "Haram 'alaik, ya Doctor […] Ya'ni everything we're doing will come down to nothing?" (221). Another example of the ease with which characters move back and forth between Arabic and English is when Omar, Amal's brother, signs off on an email exchange with her by writing, "Much love w'mit bosa" (477) – in both of these instances, the transliterated expression is explained in the glossary (522, 528). Yet, in the Arabic translation, not only is the glossary omitted, a point that I will return to later, but the multilingualism of these passages is elided. Omar's greeting to Amal reads in the following way:

"مع حبي. مائة قبلة" (650).

The Arabic translation formalizes the informality with which the email style is written in the English text by translating the transliterated word "bosa" to *qubla* (قبلة), the latter being the more formal way of saying the word "kiss" in Arabic. Moreover, the font that is designated in the English text for email exchanges is Courier but the font is not carried over or translated in the translation, rather the font for emails is an italicized Times New Roman. Interestingly, the italicized Times New Roman font is the only one in both the English and Arabic texts that distinguishes Anna Winterbourne's journal entries from other voices in the narrative. Hers is written in a distinctly Victorian style and the italics are meant to

stand in for that style. As such, the Arabic text renders the informal email style visually identical to Anna's Victorian style.[192]

In *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*, the translator uses transliteration in referring to concepts and expressions in English that are assumed to be familiar to the Arabic reader. The absence of an explanation in the text as well as the absence of a glossary has the effect of naturalizing the presence of the English language and American culture in the Arabic translation. This allows the translator to provide cultural references that are often representative of hegemonic English-language popular culture. For example, a passage describing an episode of the American talk show Jerry Springer is inserted in without explanation or translation (39). While the transliteration of English words in Arabic at times act as reminders of the proximity of the Arabic and English languages, a theme that Soueif attempts to repeat throughout the novel, the Arabic translation does not successfully sustain this commitment which as I argue preoccupies the original text.

PART THREE:

Out of the Margins into the Center: On Glossaries and Paratexts

Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* contains a twenty-page glossary which constitutes another textual element which is also worthy of analysis. The absence of a glossary in the novel's Arabic translation raises further questions about glossaries as tools of cultural mediation. In this instance the English language is the text's source language but the presence of the glossary suggests that Arabic is the source culture effectively blurring the

[192] In both texts, there are different fonts used in the narrative to distinguish between different voices. The English text uses four different fonts and the Arabic text uses three fonts. They are as follows: Anna's voice is italicized in the Arabic and English texts, Layla's voice is in a sans-serif font in the Arabic and English texts, emails are in Courier font in the English text but are italicized in the Arabic text, and the rest of the narrative in both texts is in a serif font.

lines between the source and host languages. The strategy of translation of Arabic expressions and concepts in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* functions to counter-act in the English literary context misconceptions of the Arabic language as an inaccessible language, or a language that is impervious to change and this for Soueif is an intervention she is making in order to challenge Orientalist notions of the Arabic language in particular and Arab culture in general.[193]

In both its size and scope, the glossary in *The Map of Love* is unusual and makes a significant statement. It raises questions not only about the role of the glossary as a literary mechanism, but also about how the borders of the literary text are positioned to exclude such seemingly peripheral material. With a total of 200 items and spanning ten pages, the glossary in *The Map of Love* is a vital lexical companion to the novel's non-Arabic speaking readers. The Arabic translation *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* does not contain a glossary, despite the presence of transliterated English words in the text. The focus of this exploration of the glossary in *The Map of Love* will therefore use this discrepancy as a point of departure, and take only the English text as its object of inquiry. The absence of a glossary in the translation raises a different set of questions, primarily about the presumption that there is no need to translate or explain the English terms to the Arabic reader.

While the presence of the glossary seems on the one hand to be a logical choice for an English language novel that includes so many Arabic terms, Soueif uses it to extend far beyond its function as a lexical companion. Although some of the entries resemble dictionary-style definitions, many of the entries exceed the simple definition of a term and offer detailed descriptions of the socio-historical contexts surrounding various Arabic

[193] See Shouby, "Influence of Arabic Language". According to Shouby, "Arabic literature […] stands aloof from the new imports of non-Arabic cultures and civilizations" (287).

words used in the novel. Furthermore, many of the longer entries also include explanations of the linguistic matrices of the Arabic words used in the text, making the glossary a space of definitional information as well as of linguistic exploration. Moreover, the glossary also contains terms that do not figure in the text of the novel at all, suggesting that the glossary serves not only as a lexical guide to the novel, but also as a space in which Soueif engages in a form of cultural translation with her English-language readership.

The extensive glossary in the English version can be understood as an extension of the authorial voice – one hyperaware of the power of translatability and untranslatability and negotiates the asymmetrical relationship between Arabic and English. The glossary in *The Map of Love* functions as a tool that supports the use of Arabized English in the novel and creates a space for "a second level of discourse" alongside the text of the narrative itself.[194] The particularities of the glossary in *The Map of Love* blur the boundaries between glossary and text, and raise the question of how Soueif has repurposed the glossary in order to accommodate and support the Arabic-infused English of the novel, as well how she utilizes the glossary as an apparatus of linguistic intervention.

The glossary brings to the fore the role of what Gérard Genette has termed paratextual elements in negotiating linguistic difference and proximity. "More than a boundary or a sealed border", writes Genette, "the paratext is, rather, a threshold […] a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction."[195] While Genette does not deal directly with translation in his cataloguing of paratextual elements

[194] Genette 328

[195] Genette 1. Also the term "transaction" is used in Rastegar, where it is a lens of analysis for making a direct correlation between what he terms "transactional texts" – texts that circulate between languages and genres – and the defining role of translation in that process. Transactional texts for Rastegar are texts that "arise is part from their willful appropriation of textual materials from other social contexts, often through direct or approximate translation" (81).

in his book *Paratext*, he does recognize it as a practice "whose paratextual relevance seems to me undeniable."[196] The importance of the paratext in relation to translation "lies in *their* special role as mediators between the text, the reader and their potential influence on the reader's reading and reception of the works in question."[197] Genette's concept of the paratext emphasizes that the meaning produced by a text is achieved not only through what we commonly consider as constituting the text or narrative itself – but that paratexts provide devices and conventions both within and outside the book itself that create a complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader.

The glossary in *The Map of Love* seems in the first instance to take the form of a conventional glossary: it appears at the end of the novel with a list of alphabetized terms and is differentiated from the novel's 29 chapters by the title "Glossary". Although the structure of the novel might orient the reader towards an understanding of the glossary as lying outside of the realm of the novel's text, the scope and style of the glossary's content challenges the clear divide between what Gérard Genette has called the "text" and the "paratext". Through his examination of the paratextual in literary texts, Genette argues that the paratext is "an often indefinite fringe between text and off-text."[198] While Genette does not examine the glossary as an example of the paratextual, his examination of authorial notes lends itself to a theorization of the glossary in *The Map of Love*. The authorial note for Genette is uniquely situated between "text and off-text [and] lies between the two" which for him "perfectly illustrates [the] indefiniteness and […] slipperiness" of the paratext.[199] The function of the authorial note for Genette contributes to "textual depth"

[196] Genette 405.
[197] Kovala 120, italics in the original.
[198] Genette 343.
[199] Ibid.

of a text and its chief advantage is that it "brings about local effects of nuance […] effects that help reduce the famous and sometimes regrettable linearity of discourse."[200] For Genette, the authorial note belongs to the realm of the text and functions to 'extend,' 'ramify' and 'modulate' rather than comment on the text. Thus, we might imagine Soueif's glossary as constituting a chapter in the novel itself – a section without which the text's meaning cannot be fully grasped.

According to Genette, our present-day practice of note inclusion remains "highly varied" where notes can be placed in the margins, between the lines, at the end of a chapter or book, in a special volume or a mix of all or some of these.[201] For Genette, glossaries and notes have a similar function in a given text – he points out the historical trajectory of the author's note in which the word 'note' replaced the older word 'gloss' (*glose*) by 1636 but continued to refer to a similar phenomenon.[202] Even though Soueif's glossary is not given the formal title of author's note, her authorial voice permeates the entries in the glossary as though it were a collection of notes. In reading Soueif's glossary, the reader shares in the work of understanding and learning about the culture and language that she represents in the novel. Therefore, I suggest that the application of Genette's theorization of the authorial note allows for a deeper investigation of Soueif's linguistic intervention and her insistence on language learning – themes that preoccupy the novel's narrative.

Haram/Haraam

Soueif's glossary contains similar narrative strategies as the novel. She gives extensive explanations that explain and draw connections between the root of the words, their de-

[200] Ibid. 328.
[201] Ibid. 320-1.
[202] Ibid. 320.

rivatives and sometimes their evolution. For example, when explaining the term *ḥaram*, Soueif writes: "the root ح\ر\م denotes a sacred or inviolable space. The haram of a mosque is the space within its walls. The haram of a university is its campus. The haram of a man is his wife. A man is referred to as the 'zawg' or 'the other half of the pair' of his wife" (522). In a single page of the glossary Soueif includes five different derivations from the root ح\ر\م, they are: "haraam" "haraam 'aleik" "haram" "haramlek" and "harem" – for each entry a nuanced explanation that distinguishes each meaning from the other is included. The entry on "haraam" – a word that is often defined as "forbidden" – offers an explanation that goes beyond an attempt to find an English equivalent and seeks to define the nuances of the expression. She writes that "haraam" means "it is sinful, it is pitiful, it is arousing of compassion, it should not be done" (522). Importantly, Soueif takes care to differentiate between the word *haram* with a short vowel "a", a word that is more familiar to English speakers, and *harām* which has a long vowel "aa (*ā*)." Soueif highlights the distinction between the different pronunciations of the word in the glossary by using the different spellings and by pointing out the difference to the reader.

In comparing Soueif's glossary with British-Lebanese novelist Zeina Ghandour's glossary in her English language novel, *The Honey*, published the same year as *The Map of Love*, important distinctions emerge. The two glossaries include a number of similar entries but their corresponding explanations and definitions by the respective authors are different – and it is this difference that requires further investigation. With regards to the entry on the greeting "ahlan wa sahlan" in Ghandour's *The Honey* only the translation "welcome" is provided whereas in *The Map of Love*, Soueif writes: "welcome. Literally '[you are among] your people [and on] your plain' (519). A similar pattern appears with

the entry on the word "umm" in both texts. In *The Honey* the concise definition "mother of" is provided and resembles the style of all of the entries in Ghandour's glossary. In *The Map of Love* on the other hand, the same entry on *umm* is introduced as "umm/u" – the "u" is meant to distinguish between the Modern Standard Arabic pronunciation "*umm*", and the Egyptian colloquial pronunciation "*ummu*". Soueif first defines the term as "mother" and follows with an explanation that "In traditional society a woman, rather than being called by her given name, is called umm followed by the name of her oldest child. Similarly a man is called abu (father of) followed by the name of his oldest child. This is considered more respectful than using the given name" (528). Ghandour's entries are short and succinct compared to Soueif's that contain information that would help the reader contextualize the word and understand how it is used in everyday speech. Soueif focuses on usage while Ghandour's entries are definitional and brief.

Furthermore, in comparing the entry in Soueif's glossary for the word *Basha* with that in Bahaa Taher's novel *Sunset Oasis*, there are some key differences worth mentioning. Taher's novel offers an interesting point of comparison because it covers a historical period similar to that which appears in the 19th century narrative that Soueif foregrounds in *The Map of Love*. Because the novels are set during similar time periods, there are common words that appear in their glossaries, among these words are: basha, feddan, gallabiya, and Khedive. In Soueif's glossary "basha" is explained as follows:

> Ottoman title, roughly equivalent to 'Lord.' Can be placed at the end of a name or in the middle. The titles in use in Egypt – and all countries subject to Turkish Ottoman rule – were 'Efendi' (an urban person with a secular education and wearing Western dress – although not Western himself), 'Bey' and 'Basha' (Turkish: Pasha). The last two were conferred formally by the Khedive in Egypt or the Sultan in Constantinople. The Khedive, alone was known as 'Efendeena' (or Our Efendi). The Arab titles, acquired through attaining a degree of learning, were 'Ustaz': master; and 'Sheikh': head or principal (520).

In Bahaa Taher's glossary, the explanation of *Basha* reads as follows: "Arabised form of Pasha, a Turkish title awarded to high-ranking officers of the administration and army in the Ottoman Empire."[203] Whereas the entry in Taher's novel explains the basic definition of the word, Soueif's entry is not only extensive but also contextualizes the word and de-constructs it in relation to other similar words like Bey and Efendi. She further historicizes the term, both in relation to its political relevance, as is the case in Taher's glossary, as well as in relation to other elements like dress.

"Tā' Marbūṭa" in "'Umdah"

The glossary expands on both the thematic and textual foregrounding of the linguistic matrix of the Arabic language in *The Map of Love*. It also underlines the novel's emphasis on language learning. One of the main aspects that sets Soueif's glossary apart from other glossaries is the way that she not only gives definitions of words but also explains their grammatical underpinnings. As such, some of the entries read like short lessons in Arabic grammar and are much broader in scope than a simple definition of a word. Soueif's glossary includes explanations of how certain terminology is used in Arabic including plural and gendered forms of the language.

The glossary emphasizes the distinction of gender into masculine and feminine which is an important feature of Arabic. Forms of address along with their gender distinctions are included, for example: 'khawagaya' and 'khawaga,' 'ingelisi' and 'ingeliziyya,' 'fallah' and 'fallaha,' 'abeih' and 'abla'. The 'a' ending or the *tā' marbūṭa* is a special morphological marker marking a feminine ending of a word. The acknowledgment of this distinction in the glossary becomes a gateway through which Soueif includes important

[203] Taher 309.

information about women's rights and gender equality in Egypt. For example, the entry on the title 'umdah—a title for the headman of a village, does not include a corresponding feminine noun because the word itself is a feminine noun that ends with a *tā' marbūṭa* in Arabic. In Soueif's glossary, the entry on 'umdah does not only define what an 'umdah is but also includes the following explanation: "in 1997 a law was passed making it possible for women to hold the position of 'umdah." The double usage of the noun 'umdah both as masculine and feminine allows Soueif to address gender inequality in her glossary by detailing changes to the status quo of women in Egypt and their ability to participate in traditional male vocations. Soueif discusses grammatical distinctions between feminine and masculine nouns as well as draws attention to the gendered dynamics in Egypt, thus making an interventionist point, perhaps even a feminist one. Thus, Soueif's glossary is experimental in that it expands the usage of the *tā' marbūṭa* making room for explorations that go beyond the simple definition of a term or a grammatical concept. In this way, Soueif's glossary reimagines the common usage of glossaries in Arab writing in English and in translations of Arabic literature in English. Rather than domesticating her use of Arabic in *The Map of Love*, Soueif's use of the glossary enables her to privilege non-translation of certain Arabic terms in her text.

Additionally, the glossary allows Soueif to emphasize the ways in which languages other than English have interacted with Arabic. For example, Soueif explains that the Arabic word "bass" meaning, "stop it" or "enough" probably originates from the Italian word "basta!" In this instance, Soueif also emphasizes the apocryphal nature of etymologies. In other instances, she explains how countries subjected to Ottoman rule were influenced by the Turkish language, evidenced in the Turkish suffixes that permeate

the Arabic language (*e.g.* "suffragi" and "arbagi") (520/526). The inclusion and emphasis on Arabic's diverse linguistic history expands the definition of the glossary in the context of Arabic to English translation. Thus, Soueif's is not purely an *Arabic* glossary rather it is a glossary that fuses together many languages that have interacted with the Arabic language.

Translating Allah

Significantly, Soueif's glossary includes over twenty-five terms and expressions that include the word "Allah". The entries for these terms carefully avoid a straightforward explanation using English equivalents and work to capture the nuanced way in which the terms are used in both religious and non-religious ways in the text. For example, in explaining the expression "la hawla wala quwwata illa b-Illah," Soueif writes: "there is no power or strength but with the support of God. Said when matters go beyond what you can help. It is a kind of 'I am absolved of responsibility in this'. An expression of helpless sadness as one watches matters get out of hand. Also of exasperation as an opponent refuses to see sense" (524). In offering multiple uses of the term, Soueif challenges the assumption that the Arabic language reflects the religious convictions of its speakers by unpacking and explaining both the secular and religious uses of the terms. As Andrea Rugh articulates in the introduction to her 1994 translation of Siham Tergeman's *Yā māl al-Shām*, which she renames, *Daughter of Damascus*, the prevalence of the word "Allah" in the Arabic language is all too easily transposed onto Arabic speakers making them all seem very religious in English translation. Among the difficulties of translating Arabic that she cites is what she perceives as the abundance of terms and expressions that include the word *Allah*. She compares Arabic with English saying that Arabic "exaggerates to

make a point […] whereas English prefers understatements". And while "Arabs call on the name of God continuously to support veracity... Westerners might say "really" or "indeed."" She continues: "in the same way that the Arab's world is pervasively filled with God, so is the [Arabic] language ever a reminder of that omnipotence."[204] In her attempt to situate the invocation of Allah in relation to the Arabic language, Rugh adopts what might be thought of as an Islamo-centric way of understanding the Arabic language, one which forecloses the possibility of a secular invocation of God. Soueif's explanation of "la hawla wala quwwata illa b-Illah," functions to interrupt the discourse surrounding the word 'Allah' that pervades Western discourses on Arabs and Islam.

In *Against World Literature,* Emily Apter offers an analysis of the invocation of the word Allah in the English language. Apter refers to Palestinian visual artist Emily Jacir's 2003 billboard "TRANSLATE ALLAH" which appeared in New York City as an illustration that combats Islamophobic associations with the word Allah. For Apter, Jacir's billboard is an insertion of "visual checkpoints and language barriers into public spaces where they are least expected."[205] Apter argues that "TRANSLATE ALLAH" challenges Islamophobia and uses language as a "site-specific medium limning the volatile bounds of translational interdiction, the obligation to translate or not to translate and the politics of offense."[206] By leaving the word Allah untranslated, the billboard challenges the ways that the American media has "effectively isolated (and Othered) it as an Arabic word used only by Muslims to refer to God."[207] Thus, untranslating Allah functions to expose the

[204] Rugh xxvii.
[205] Apter, *Against World Literature* 99.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.

way that American media obscures the term's reference to the Jewish and Christian God in Arabic.

Soueif's entries on the various terms containing the word Allah in her glossary highlight another important dimension that is overlooked by Rugh which is the non-religious usage of the term. By confronting the untranslated Allah, Apter argues that Islamophobia can be combatted which is a strategy employed by Soueif's explanations in her glossary, a position that challenges Rugh's understanding of Allah's usage, which she takes at face value and offers a literal translation that is limited to the religious understanding of the term.

CHAPTER 2
Linguistic Turbulence in the Metropole

صياح الراكبة أميرة :"ويلي ويلي" يطغى على عبارات "الله أكبر، الله أكبر":الأدعية الدينية التي تعلو من أفواه بقية المسافرين و الطائرة تعلو و ترمي نفسها و كأنها يويو.

– *Innahā Landan ya ʻazīzī*, 5

> Amira's shriek, 'Woe is me, woe is me, woe is me', drowned out the chorus of 'God is most great, God is most great' from the other passengers as the aircraft hurled itself up and down like a yo-yo.

– *Only in London,* 1

Al-Shaykh's *Innahā Landan ya ʻazīzī* opens with a scene in an airplane making a turbulent descent into London's Heathrow airport as it arrives from Dubai. In this opening scene the four central characters are thrown together, forging the beginnings of the relationships that carry the narrative forward. One of the protagonists Lamis is an Iraqi immigrant returning to London after an unsuccessful attempt at establishing a business in Dubai. The Moroccan Amira is a high-class prostitute who masquerades as a princess from the Gulf returns from a short business trip to Dubai where she hoped to improve her earnings by acquiring affluent clients. Samir is Lebanese and is on his way to London via Dubai in search of opportunities for improved economic circumstances but mostly a chance to explore his homosexuality free from the presence of his wife and children. The fourth character is Nicholas, the only British protagonist traveling home from a trip to Oman. The novel opens at the very moment that the plane begins its descent; the moment at which the characters' transition from the Arab world to England is complete yet this transition is not a smooth one and the chaos aboard the plane is suggestive of the challenges they will face on land. The novel tells the stories of these four characters as they forge friendships, fall in love, and struggle to make a living in the British metropole.

Born in Beirut in 1945, Hanan al-Shaykh began writing at a young age and by sixteen had essays published in newspapers such *al-Nahār*. She later attended the American College for Girls in Cairo from 1963-1966 during which time she wrote her first novel *Intiḥār Rajul Mayyit* later published in 1970. After living in Cairo, al-Shaykh returned to Beirut to work in television and as a journalist for the magazine *al-Ḥasnā'* and then at al-Nahār until 1975. After the start of the Lebanese civil war, al-Shaykh moved to Saudi Arabia in 1976 and in 1982 moved to London where she currently lives. Al-Shaykh published *Ḥikayat Zahra* in 1980 which was met with acclaim. The novel centres on the deterioration of the protagonist Zahra's life which is set against the horrors of the civil war in Lebanon.[208] The publication of her second novel *Misk al-ghazāl* was also very successful as the novel was short-listed by *Publishers Weekly* as one of the fifty best books published in 1992 and al-Shaykh was subsequently invited to promote her novel on a tour in the US.[209]

Amal Amireh describes al-Shaykh's success as the first of its kind to be undertaken by any Arab writer in the West.[210] Both *Ḥikayat Zahra* and *Misk al-ghazāl* (1988) were translated into English as *The Story of Zahra* (1994) and *Women of Sand and Myrrh* (1992). The publication of her novel *Barīd Bayrūt* in 1992 was immediately followed by a translation the same year. Similarly, *Innahā Landan ya 'azīzī* published in 2000 was translated by Catherine Cobham in 2001 as *Only in London* and short-listed for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize in 2002. The Arabic and English editions of al-Shaykh's novels have been reprinted several times. One of al-Shaykh's latest works is a memoir about the life of her mother titled *Ḥikāyati sharḥ Yaṭūl* published in 2004 and translated by Roger

[208] Cooke 2.
[209] Ghandour, "Hanan al-Shaykh" 231-232.
[210] Amireh, "Publishing in the West" n. pag.

Allen in 2009. In 2011, she also published a translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* into English titled *One Thousand and One Nights: A Retelling*.

With the publication of *Innahā Landan ya 'azīzī* (hereafter *Innahā*), al-Shaykh shifts her focus from writing about Beirut to writing on London in her novels and according to Syrine Hout, since 1995, al-Shaykh has introduced new elements to her oeuvre among the most significant is a focus on exilic Arabs in London.[211] Reviews of *Innahā*'s English translation have noted that al-Shaykh's status in England and her "media image is very much that of an English writer."[212] According to Hout, critics do not attribute the "Englishness" of *Innahā* to the fact that it was translated by a "first-rate translator" like Catherine Cobham but rather to *Innahā*'s convincing style and content which is "a mixture of Ahdaf Soueif [and] Helen Fielding."[213] In an interview about writing *Innahā* al-Shaykh comments on her status as a novelist writing in Arabic from the British metropole saying "I write in Arabic and my writing looks at the English from an outsider's point of view."[214]

Al-Shaykh's most recent novel which is published in 2014 follows this shift and is titled '*Adhārī Landanistān* and similar to *Innahā* is situated in London and tells the story of Arab characters who emigrate there. The novel will be translated as *The Virgins of Londonistan* and is due to be published in 2016. In a recent interview with al-Shaykh, she situates herself within a body of Arabic literature written in the 1920s from the perspective of Arab authors who lived or visited cities like London and Paris. Noting her own shift in focusing solely on the experiences of the Arab diaspora in London rather than on

[211] Hout, "Going the Extra Mile" 31.
[212] Woffenden n. pg.
[213] Hout, "Going the Extra Mile" 32.
[214] Quoted in Hout, "Going the Extra Mile" 32.

Lebanese characters living in Lebanon, she says, "If I want to write about Arab characters living in the Arab world... I have to spend more time [there]. I can't just write about the things I can remember... I have to be contemporary."[215] Al-Shaykh notes her own move in focusing on Arab characters in exile, but she is insistent on using the Arabic language to capture this experience. In interviews, al-Shaykh is often asked about her choice to write in Arabic as opposed to English because interviewers assume that her decades-long residence in England would cause her to shift to using English.[216]

In this chapter, I examine the use of accents and dialects in al-Shaykh's *Innahā* and ask how these elements work to disrupt a cohesive sense of language within the postcolonial landscape of the British metropole imagined by al-Shaykh. Beginning with the opening scene of turbulence in the novel, I suggest that the imagery of turbulence mirrors the linguistic turmoil in which the novel's Arab protagonists find themselves. I argue that accent functions to confuse rigid notions of home and that the challenges of immigration that each of the Arab characters contend with are mirrored in the difficulties with accent that they experience in exile. Language in both *Innahā* and *Only in London* encapsulates the vulnerabilities of the protagonists as they negotiate the web of relationships that they encounter on their paths to settling and finding a home in London. At the same time that accent functions to encapsulate how the Arab immigrant characters experience difficulties in London, I will argue that accents also allow them to negotiate these difficulties. The three Arab characters hold very rigid notions about Englishness and Arabness and it is through these different accents that they use and manipulate that their notions about self and other are challenged and eventually deteriorate. The metaphor of turbulence carries an

[215] Stoughton n. pg.
[216] See Schlote; Wagner.

important implication in *Innahā* because while the characters choose London as home, they constantly negotiate what it means to live between multiple languages and dialects. The themes of transition, translation and linguistic belonging figure prominently in *Innahā*, and also in *Only in London* not only through the literary mechanisms used in the texts themselves, but also in the themes of language, dialect and accent which are explicitly present in the narrative.

The emphasis on the interplay between different accents and dialects in both Arabic and English sets al-Shaykh's *Innahā* apart from the other novels examined in this dissertation. Each of the three Arab protagonists confronts the limitations and possibilities of these different accents as they navigate love and work in London. Amira oscillates between her native Moroccan accent and the Egyptian and Gulf dialects – each accent providing her access to different social and economic possibilities. Similarly, Samir struggles to communicate in English because of his limited knowledge of the language and this limits his access to an English boyfriend. Lamis works hard to suppress her Arabic accent in English and to speak in "the Queen's English" (123) in order to establish England as her "first home" and erase her native Iraq from her memory (53).

Finally, I will examine how the nuances of dialect and accent are translated in Catherine Cobham's translation of *Innahā.* I argue that Cobham employs a combination of domesticating and foreignizing techniques in rendering the text in English. In order to capture the nuances of the elements of accent and dialect, my methodology in this chapter consists of reading passages in the original Arabic and its English translation alongside each other in order to ask how these elements were preserved or flattened and whether domesticating or foreignizing strategies were employed by the translator.

Turbulence, Uncertainty and Migration

The arrival of the characters in London is marked by turbulence, chaos and anxiety. The scene of turbulence at the beginning of *Innahā* opens with a scream from Amira. Her shriek ويلي ويلي drowns out the chorus from the other Arab passengers who are all praying and praising God by saying الله أكبر (*Innahā* 5). The experience of turbulence is ultimately what brings the characters together and identifies their descent into London as the beginning of their shared narrative. In this way, their arrival demarcates the novel's point of departure. The turbulent opening chapter of *Innahā* is untitled, unlike each of the other sections in the text. The untitled "prologue" is emblematic of the suspended and deterritorialized pre-London that the characters experience together. The turbulence causes the passengers to lose their composure:

> Their senses continued to work overtime, picking up on any slight tremor, especially now that they had been made aware of what was so familiar that they usually forgot about it: they were roaming through the great unknown in a tin box with wings (1).
>
> و يجعلهم يتحولون إلى رادر يلتقط أيّ اهتزاز ولو متخيَّل و بخاصة أنهم وعوا أنهم داخل علبة من صفيح، تحلّق بهم بواسطة جناحين اصطناعيين، و تهوم في الفضاء الواسع بين الغيوم و المجهول (5).

The shared trauma of the turbulence facilitates a unique bond among the characters. The novel opens with a moment of uncertainty, cloudiness and the first scene emphasizes the great unknown and the *majhūl* (مجهول) that defines their experiences as they land in London. Yet, it is ultimately through the turbulent events that the characters encounter that their lives become intertwined through the narrative.

Although the opening scene is comical, it is offset by the starkness of the material circumstances in which the characters find themselves. The title of the novel in its original Arabic itself reflects this sarcastic cynicism: *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī*, or "indeed it is London my dear". We may ask of the Arabic title who the "*'azīzī*" to which it refers is meant

to be. Who is the "*'azīz*", if not the Arab immigrant, arriving in London with expectations of finding refuge, opportunity, and perhaps acceptance?[217] The particle *inna* (إنّ) which comprises part of the title in Arabic is often used for emphasis in a similar manner to the English "indeed" or "verily" – the Arabic title seems almost to signal a warning to an unknown *'azīz* who requires a reminder and implies a relationship between a speaker and an audience at the same time that it registers a particular attitude about London. The English title on the other hand conveys more of an attitude towards the setting itself and the context that can "only" happen in London. The "only" in the English title suggests that the opening scene is not just about arrivals, but also about departures, about what is, or can be, left behind "only" in London. Lamis hopes to leave not only her patriarchal Iraqi former husband behind, but also her Arabic accent, believing that perfecting an English accent will allow her to achieve her goals in London. In contrast, Amira hopes to leave behind her Moroccan accent in order to acquire a Gulf one, which she believes will provide her access to an affluent lifestyle. Samir seeks freedom from his family in order to experience same-sex relationships in what he imagines will be a liberal Western environment.

Despite the climate of anxiety aboard the airplane, the coming into view of British soil inspires a sense of security and calm for the characters. In awe of the seemingly endless greenery, the Arab passengers express amazement at the contrast between the lushness of British soil and the arid monotony of the Gulf landscape they left behind in Dubai. From the plane, the Arab passengers "craned their necks and exclaimed in wonder" because from their vantage point "everything was green" (4). The unique impact of arriving

[217] Hout claims that the English title of *Innahā* (*Only in London*) echoes a famous phrase "only in America" which suggests that "certain events can only take place in the U.S. because of that country's unique socio-political and economic makeup" ("Going the Extra Mile" 33). However, Hout also focuses on the dynamics of cross-cultural encounters that occur between home and exile and is suspicious of the totalizing idea that these encounters can only happen in London.

"home" even affects Nicholas. Contemplating the sprawling green landscape beneath him, he finds himself breathless before the beauty of the English scenery; he had "forgotten how much he missed the presence of green, and how it made him feel at one with the world" (4). Earlier, it was Nicholas who calmed the Arab passengers during the episode of turbulence. His reaction as the flight prepares to land is juxtaposed particularly with that of Amira who shrieks and prays:

> "God preserve me! God preserve me! My blood pressure's going down. I feel dizzy. Please bring me a piece of bread, a bit of chocolate" (4).
>
> "الله يستر، الله يستر... ضغتي نزل... أحسّ بدوار، أرجوكم قطعة خبز، قطعة شوكولا" (9).

Here the dichotomy between the "irrational" Arab and the "calm" and "composed" Englishman is exaggerated. Al-Shaykh highlights the juxtaposition of the unbridled release of emotion exhibited by the Arab passengers with Nicholas's quiet retention of sentiment as he approaches his homeland. The almost magical quality ascribed to Britain is satirised when Nicholas recollects:

> "The doctors in the Gulf had actually been known to prescribe a summer in England for their patients" (4).
>
> "فعلاً كان الأطباء في الخليج يدوِّنون على روشتة المريض: صيف في ربوع انكلترا" (10).

He remembers how "every patch of green was looked on as a miracle" in Oman, further suggesting that in the eyes of the Arab protagonists, Britain promises not only opportunity, but also miracles.

At one point during the turbulent flight, Lamis realizes that her British passport has been lost. After a moment of panic when Lamis fears that her plans to begin a new life in London will be thwarted, Nicholas finds the passport and returns it to her in an exchange that lays the foundation for their eventual love affair. Afterwards, Lamis reflects that "the Englishman had given her back her life" (2). The contrast of the Arab protagonists with

their composed British counterpart emphasises their foreignness. At the same time, the novel also explores the pitfalls of imagining London as a safe haven for immigrants. Samir's obsession with finding a blonde-haired blue-eyed British boyfriend is symbolic of his belief that Englishness and proximity to Englishness constitute means through which he can attain freedom. Amira's insistence on using an English cab driver as opposed to an "immigrant" driver allows her to play the part of a rich Saudi princess at the same time that it exposes the extent to which what she deems "authentically" English is unattainable to her. Amira, who is constantly anxious about being discovered, revels in the convincing-ness of her charade when an English cab driver refers to her as "Your highness" and asks: "can you help me get cheap petrol, since you're from one of the oil states?" (258).

The opening scene of the novel foreshadows the events to come – the instability of immigration and in the case of the three Arab protagonists, the obstacle of a foreign language and the tumultuous nature of transition. The theme of linguistic turbulence frames the novel: it opens with Amira's nearly indecipherable words "ويلي ويلي" (*Innahā* 5), a frantic version of "يا ويلى" "woe is me" (*London* 2) and ends with Lamis' resolve that "she wouldn't bother trying to make her accent fit her conversation" (275). In the opening scene, Amira drowns out the calls for الله to make smooth an otherwise rough plane ride, Amira's frenzied cries add to the cacophony. Nicholas the Englishman attempts to calm Amira and the other panicked Arab passengers with common sense reassurances about the safety of air travel (*Innahā* 5/*London* 2). As the novel closes, Lamis acknowledges that to survive in London she does not need to perfect the Queen's English, but rather she needs to come to terms with the reality that mixing between Arabic and English is part of what it means to live in the postcolonial metropole. Lamis comes to terms with her imperfect

English which is thick with her Arabic accent:

> "She would copy Samir, who could carry on a discussion, even when instead of 'et cetera, et cetera' he said 'in cetera, in cetera' and added 'innit?' after every sentence" (276).
>
> "تَعَدُ لميس نفسها بأنها لن تهتم بتطبيق لهجتها على حديثها... ستقلد سمير الذي يحاور حتى عندما يقول بدل اكسترا اكسترا ان سترا ان سترا، و لفظة: in it بعد كل جملة" (407).

The turbulence on the plane that opens the novel is thus literal and linguistic – expressions in various languages and dialects collide with each other some passengers appealing to good reason and others to الله.

Even as London is depicted as being a place of opportunity and new beginnings, al-Shaykh tackles the difficulties that accompany immigration. Despite the humour with which the novel is infused, *Innahā* tells a rather grim story about Arab immigrants in London. The novel is not celebratory of the English metropole, but exposes the ways in which immigration and displacement can be humiliating and frightening experiences. Al-Shaykh puts forth a narrative that does not mirror a perfect multicultural mosaic but rather focuses on the shortcomings of this imagined multiculturalism. Importantly, the sense of estrangement felt by the Arab characters is interrupted by moments of belonging as shown by Lamis upon her arrival at her ex-husband's vacant flat. Feeling like "an exile returning home" she contemplates kissing the ground "just as she'd thought of doing when she landed at Heathrow" (7).

> "تخرّ على الأرض تريد أن تقبّلها، كما أضمرت أن تفعل ما إن تصل إلى لندن، تماماً كما يفعل العائدون المبعَدون عن بيوتهم و عن بلادهم قسراً" (15).

The notions of home and exile are questioned through Lamis' story as she is the only Arab character who definitively asserts a break from her Arabness claiming London as her new home.

The recurring references to the British Telecom (BT) Tower in the novel bring into

focus the duality of London as a city of leisure for some and danger for others. Exemplified in Lamis' observation that the tower changes in appearance from a "Disneyland creation studded with coloured lights" at night, to a "dismal grey watch-tower" by morning, al-Shaykh depicts a London that is fantastical and luxurious for those who can afford it, but where for others the threat of deportation looms constantly (54). Within this duality, the reader also glimpses the way in which London succeeds in encompassing both of those extremes at the same time. Each of the Arab protagonists, in turn, expresses anxiety that they will face deportation at different moments in the novel, and yet they are each drawn to London as a land of opportunity that is almost miraculous in nature. Telling his son that in London even "dogs have identity documents and medicine certificates, and all their names are entered on a computer," Samir expresses the dual sentiments of anxiety and debasement that plague him and the other Arab characters in the novel (246). On the one hand, London is a place where they are made to feel no better than dogs; while on the other hand, the unease of being in a climate of surveillance puts into focus the precariousness of their status in Britain. Serving as a point of reference and anchor for Lamis, the BT Tower captures her attention during key moments in the novel. That the BT Tower is a communications tower foregrounds the issues of communication and language in the novel.

Although London is foreign to them, the Arab characters describe the ability of the British metropole to encompass other home-like places within its borders. Samir is taken aback when driving through an Arab area of London shortly after landing, remarking that he felt as though they "could have been back in Mazraa street in Beirut" (23). London is therefore a city of contradictions, in which the characters encounter references to "home",

even as they are reminded that they do not fully belong. Even in terms of language, London seems to offer the ability to accommodate those who do not speak English. As the protagonists are riding a shuttle bus from the airport, a sign appears, inviting passers-by to "Come in and you'll find what you're looking for. We speak Arabic" (23). The transposition of restaurant and store names (e.g. 'Maroush', a famous restaurant in the Hamra neighbourhood of Beirut) further indicates that London is a city where references to elsewhere are part and parcel of the city's landscape, confusing notions of 'home' and 'abroad'.

In contrast to the difficulties encountered by the Arab immigrants as they attempt to navigate the English metropole, al-Shaykh highlights the ease with which Nicholas circulates in Arab speaking contexts. As a Westerner, we learn that Nicholas often travels to Oman in his capacity as an employee of Sotheby's, yet the reader knows that Nicholas's ability to speak Arabic is nearly non-existent. After first meeting Lamis, Nicholas, wanting to know the significance of her name in Arabic calls his secretary in Oman waiting on the phone until she returns and explains that it means "soft to the touch" (46). This passage signals the beginning of Nicholas's love affair with Lamis and exemplifies the imbalance of the protagonists' experiences vis-à-vis language in the novel. For the Arab protagonists, the navigation of English in London is a heavy burden to bear while access to the Arab language and culture is remarkably easy for Nicholas.

Al-Shaykh's depiction of London and the immigrant experience in the city is varied where the characters move in intertwining circles as they attempt to make sense of themselves and the worlds they inhabit. Very little is static in the novel, and the reader is introduced to a variety of different Londons, each prompting different reactions from the protagonists as they move through their new homes. The myriad of relationships that the

protagonists negotiate recalls Tageldin's description of the colonial encounter between East and West as one of seduction. While each protagonist's experience in London is marked by a struggle to belong, their struggles are all characterized by a projection onto the city leaves the characters longing to be seduced. The London they encounter is alluring in moments, but also at times reveals itself to be unkind, uninviting, and difficult to navigate. When overcome with feelings of loneliness and isolation, Lamis wonders why it is that she seems unable to find companionship in London, asking, "How is it that I don't know a single English person to invite for a cup of tea or a beer?" (13). Describing a feeling of insurmountable distance between herself and the people from whom she seeks acceptance, she concludes that, "They are out of bounds to me, just like the city" (13). Rather than a straightforward repetition of the colonizer – colonized relationship, al-Shaykh depicts a world where desires circulate and gazes shift in convoluted and changing ways.

Al-Shaykh's novel does not represent Arabness as a monolithic or even monolingual category and highlights the different accents and geographic origins of the Arab protagonists. In this way, al-Shaykh sheds light on the entangled web of relationships within Arab communities in the diaspora. The novel redirects attention from the East-West prism by focusing on Arab-to-Arab relationships as they interact in the British metropole. *Innahā* complicates the category of Arab not only on the basis of identity and nationality, but also on the level of dialect and class. For example, al-Shaykh draws attention to class differences between certain Arabs from the Arab/Persian Gulf and certain Iraqis in describing how London becomes a tourist destination for some and not others. Lamis thanks God for having spared her life upon her arrival in London, whereas the wealthy clients that Amira seeks to attract visit the city as tourists looking for a vacation destination

that will allow them to drink alcohol and have sex freely. Although many of the episodes involving linguistic tension in the novel are sober in tone, al-Shaykh also makes frequent use of humour. The hilarity of many of the scenes in the novel have the distinct effect of lightening the ideological baggage surrounding the Arabic language, interrupting common associations with it as a "hostile" or "embargoed" "language of terror."[218] In an interview with Richard Swift, al-Shaykh describes the neutralizing effect that humour can have, saying that it "makes everything and everybody naked" (interview with Swift).

Accent and Dialect Profiling: Vowels of Difference

In the novel, accents operate as passcodes such that the characters variously try to acquire accent as a way of disguising themselves while others attempt to adopt accent as a way of gaining access into another identity and culture. Through Amira's story, al-Shaykh introduces a range of differentiated Arabic to the novel including Egyptian, Levantine, and Gulf dialects. These dialects are distinguished from the MSA al-Shaykh uses for the third person narration of the novel. Unlike the other characters in the novel, Amira's ability to interface with the world around is marked by her ability and ease with which she uses multiple Arabic dialects. The role of dialect is crucial in the novel because it illustrates not only the diversity of dialects and accents amongst Arab speakers, but also the hierarchy that exists between them. Importantly, the Moroccan dialect is the only one that we never read in the novel. Rather, the reader is merely made aware of when Amira switches from her Moroccan accent and dialect to adopt another:

> "I've missed you all like mad. It was a lousy trip" said Amira, switching her Moroccan accent to an Egyptian one" (35).
>
> "وحشتوني موت. كانت سفره مهببة. (تُبدل أميرة لهجتها المغربية إلى لهجة مصرية)" (54).

[218] Shohamy 131.

Even in the Arabic text, the reference to Amira's switched accent is merely parenthetical. It is also of crucial importance that none of the other Arab-speaking characters speak to her in her dialect; it is always incumbent on her, as the Moroccan, to privilege Egyptian and Levantine dialects when conversing with others.

The interplay between various dialects underscores Amira's longing to belong to a unified Arab identity as opposed to being identified only as a Moroccan. Yet it is also through Amira that conceptualizations of the Arab world as a region that is unified by an ideology of linguistic, cultural and political sameness is disrupted in the novel. Amira's friendships with her Egyptian best-friend Nahid and the Lebanese Samir, who Amira takes in to her home, are established on the basis of their economic similitude – all escape to London to reinvent themselves and make a better living. However, none of them have financial security and are constantly struggling to earn money. Amira, Nahid and Samir do not have friendships with Lamis and Nicholas who are both middle to upper class. Thus, the camaraderie established between immigrants from different parts of the Arab world is based on class lines and this becomes strikingly crucial when Amira is almost murdered for pretending to be not only a Saudi, but a wealthy one. Thus, while there is a fantasy among the Arab immigrants that Arabness transcends dialect, class and national lines, they are constantly reminded that sameness as opposed to diversity prevails.

Language and dialect serve as a prism through which the question of pan-Arabism is considered in the novel. While Amira expresses a desire of transcending national and class divisions, her wealthy Saudi clients are attached to their Saudiness not because of purely nationalist loyalties but because of class loyalties. In studying for her role as a Saudi princess, Amira and Nahid frequently visit the famous upscale Dorchester Hotel on

Park Lane to study the behaviour and dialect of the real princesses from the Gulf who stay there. In a scene that takes place in the Dorchester Hotel as Amira and her close friend Nahid sit observing Saudi princesses, the terms of the pan-Arab debate are laid out. Studying the Saudi princess' minute vocal inflections in an attempt to get her accent just right, Amira does not feel a part of the world that she is observing. Watching the princess closely, Amira suggests to Nahid that the princess "looks Moroccan," to which Nahid responds "and Egyptian" both express a desire that the princess share a national affinity with them (69). But the exchange between them ends with both Nahid and Amira's articulation of how being Arab transcends national divisions: Nahid says "We're alike. Aren't we all Arabs?" to which Amira responds "يا ريت يا ريت" / "I wish, I wish" (101/69). Although Nahid addresses Amira, her question reads as a rhetorical one. Both women fantasizes about Arab unity, but their Saudi clients prefer women of the same nationality and class: "However much a man such as the one from the Gulf wanted a fling with a foreigner, he was attracted by women of his own kind; it was they who held an aura of distance, of mystery. Or this is what Amira surmised" (75).

Amira goes to great lengths to masquerade not only as a Saudi but as a wealthy Saudi because in London her clients could

> "get what they wanted, in their own surroundings, and their own language, not in an English that either condescended to them or stole their money" (75).
>
> "كل ما يريده سيحدث ضمن محيطه، لغته، لا انكليزية متعجرفة أو انكليزية تسرقه" (110).

The word "English" in the Arabic text conveys the female gender because the word itself is a feminine adjective describing the feminine noun "language" – therefore in the Arabic text, the ambiguity or double meaning is encapsulated in the word "English" to mean both the language and the women that are referred to in this passage. The English transla-

tion is not able to carry this double meaning or ambiguity because adjectives and nouns are not in and of themselves gendered in the English language. Moreover, the preposition and particle "in an" before the word "English" in the translation also makes the meaning definitively about the language and does not leave open the possibility that the word "English" be a noun describing both the language and the people of England.

In order to pass as a princess, Amira must secure a driver, an entourage, and wardrobe befitting a princess. Most importantly, Amira must mask her Moroccan accent and speak using a convincingly Saudi one. Unlike the other Arab characters in the novel, Amira longs not to become English or be perceived as English, but instead works to maintain a Saudi accent that masks her native Moroccan one. Through Amira's story al-Shaykh complicates the relationship between Arabic and English and exposes the reality that even within a postcolonial context language is not unidirectional; the Arab immigrant does not always or only desire Britishness but rather complex dynamics of class and nationality are at play within different dialects of the Arabic language itself. Amira's character explores the class implications of accent within a single language. For her, making it in London is about becoming Saudi and not about becoming English – this is where Amira locates success We learn early on in the novel that this type of masquerade is not unfamiliar to Amira: "ever since she had watched Egyptian films as a child, with their crafty and coy and glamorous film stars, she'd felt that life with an Egyptian accent would be infinitely more fun" (35). Amira has therefore perfected her ability to switch effortlessly to an Egyptian accent and the Saudi accent represents another prop to acquire.

Part of her masquerade as a Saudi princess also involves convincing the English that she is royalty. "Your highness" one of the English drivers had said to her, "can you

help me get cheap petrol, since you're from one of the oil states" (258). Amira perfects an English accent that plays a vital role in staging herself as a princess. It is her ease in speaking the English language that allows her to hire a car and driver that are supremely English. She demands to have a Rolls-Royce and shouts "I want an English driver. Not Indian English, Arab English, African English, Chinese English, Polish English, Scots English or Irish English. English one hundred percent with a cap and jacket" (114). Demanding that everything from the make of the car she will be driven around in to the driver himself be English, Amira's mastery of the English language is what facilitates her transformation into a different kind of Arab and allows her to carry out her role as a princess.

Amira's efforts to perfect the lifestyle of rich Saudis go hand in hand with the energy she expends at perfecting the Saudi accent: "Amira had been inspired to reinvent herself as a precious jewel, accessible only to those who knew the secret. She would present herself as a princess, since she deserved to be one anyway" (76). The irony behind Amira's chosen name which literally means 'princess' in Arabic would be obvious to a reader of the Arabic original but is not made explicit in the English translation. Her decision to play the part of a princess and to reinvent herself as a "precious jewel" is obviously linked to her choice of name in the Arabic text. When we finally learn her real name, its revelation is linked to a violent scene in which a man seeks retaliation for the disguising herself as a Saudi princess. After she has been discovered to be a fraud by a Saudi prince, he lays out a trap by responding to her advertisement and beats her as a "warning" about what will happen if she continues to deceive men by pretending to be a princess (254). Reading out her name – "Habiba Mustanaimi" – after he has beaten her, she

rises to her feet instinctively, "as if she was at school" (254). Although the prince who discovers her real identity has confirmation that she is in fact Habiba and not Amira, he is at first confused by the convincingness of the role that she plays: "Everything about her made the situation more confusing for him: her clothes, behavior, voice, accent, manner, smell, but he had her registration documents in front of him" (252).

Importantly, it is Amira's failure to intonate the word "television" in a perfect Saudi accent that ultimately gives her away in front of the punter/prince. In an effort to make the prince "flustered, to convince him, and to give herself the courage to continue with her charade" Amira pretends to call her assistant saying:

> "What did you have to eat? Tell the driver to go to Maroush to get food, and then pick me up at the hotel in an hour. And turn off the television" (252).
>
> "ويش كلتو، خللي السوّاق يروح حق مطعم مروش. أيوه، و بعد ساعة يجيني الفندق، و التليفزيون تصكيه" (377).

In the Arabic text, Amira feigns the Saudi accent by swallowing the alif that would appear on the verb *akala* (أكل) in MSA when she asks "ويش كلتو". She also uses specific words, turns of phrases and inflections like "حق" and "أيوه" that are distinctly Saudi. Yet, when it comes to the word "television," Amira pronounces it with a French inflection. Instead of pronouncing it "التلفزيون" Amira adds an extra vowel after the letter ل making it التليفزيون – a pronunciation that is closer sounding to the French "television". Moreover, by adding an extra vowel after the letter ل, the ن at the end of the word is swallowed and essentially disappears from the pronunciation whereas the pronunciation without the long vowel makes the pronunciation of the final letter more noticeable. Here al-Shaykh adds the long vowel ي to indicate Amira's French pronunciation – an addition that is excluded from the English translation. The extra vowel here is a marker of difference and gives Amira away as a Moroccan in an instance where the influence of French colonialism in

North Africa plays a role in her being found out as a fake: “One word had given her away: television” (253). In the Arabic text:

" كلمة واحدة أوقعتها؛ الطريقة التي لفظت بها التلفزيون" (378).

The narrative includes two moments of how Amira (mis)pronounces the word television, in the first instance when she asks to speak on the phone in front of the prince in order to appear more convincing before him, and the second instance through the third person narration that reflects back to the reader her pronunciation and thus makes more obvious the distinction between how she pronounces the word and how she *should* have pronounced it by spelling the word differently. In the English text however, the word television is spelled the same in both instances appearing as “television” in both whereas in the Arabic the difference is indicated in the spelling. One way that the English text could have indicated this difference is by spelling the word in French.

Significantly, of all the words that Amira mispronounces, it is the foreign word that gives her away. What we see in this scene of being found out is a colonial genealogy of the Arabic language and the trajectory of French influence on Amira’s Moroccan Arabic. This scene is perhaps the novel’s most graphic assertion that the linguistic divisions, however diligently one might work to conceal them, are not transcended by the illusion of a unified Arabness that Amira fantasizes about. Amira’s vulnerability is underscored by this passage where previously she triumphs by embodying different accents and social classes. The prince punishes Amira when he finds out her true identity – his anger towards her stems from her transgression of class boundaries.

Later in the novel, when Amira is confronted and beaten by the Saudi prince who has uncovered her real identity, Nahid’s question “Aren’t we all Arabs?” returns with

poignancy. The prince recognizes that Amira's pronunciation of the foreign word "television" was not Arabized enough which raises doubts about his earlier conviction that she is a Saudi. Previously, Amira's near-perfect Saudi accent gave her access not only to a royal clientele, but also to a lifestyle that she longs for and feels that she deserves: "She would present herself as a princess, since she deserved to be one anyway" (75-6). After beating her, the prince scolds Amira, saying "it's very wrong for an Arab woman to play such tricks" exposing his double-standard and his expectations of a universal "Arab" notion of morality (254). The prince at first expresses outrage that an Arab woman would act dishonestly towards other Arabs, but he is ultimately angry because she tries to pass as one of his own: "At least next time, say you're a princess from your own country. Don't involve our country in your degrading behaviour" (254). The prince's arrogance is striking on numerous fronts. Not only is the beating brutal, but we are struck by the ridiculousness of his suggestion that she act like a princess "from [her] own country." The distance between their realities, both economic and social, is evident even as he punishes her.

Although the prince has made it clear that they are not from the same social class, Amira's internal monologue during the beating allows us to understand that enduring violence at the hands of men is, for her, an experience that crosses national and cultural boundaries. As she is being beaten, she thinks of her aggressors: "He was her father, brothers, cousins, any number of men from home beating her up" (253-4).

"إنها بين أيدي والدها و إخوتها وأولاد عمها، ورجال الجيران ورجال المخفر ورجال بلدتها، يضربونها ضرباً مبرحاً" (379).

The answer to Nahid's question reverberates in this passage: they are not, as it turns out, "all Arabs", but they are, however, all women. Amira comes to terms with the reality that

she has joined the ranks of other foreigners, and that her fancy clothes and expensive jewelry have not saved her.

"أصبحت الآن في مصاف الأخريات الأجنبيات والإنكليزيات" (381).

Even her political allegiances which had previously dictated her choice of clients had not mattered in the end:

> "She refused to sleep with Iraqis after they invaded Kuwait, then stopped sleeping with Kuwaitis because they drove other Arab nationals out of Kuwait" (255).
>
> "لم تشفع لها مواقفها، فهي أبت أن تضاجع العراقيين بعد احتلالهم الكويت، ثم توقفتْ عن مضاجعة الكويتيين لأنهم طردوا من بلادهم جنسيات عربية أخرى" (381).

Ultimately, she concludes that as a sex worker, she is not a "part of society," regardless of the affiliations, dialects and accents she might adopt (255).

Broken/Monkey Language

Samir's character introduces an element of humour into the novel. Returning to the narrative emphasis on language and accent, Samir's humorous mixing of Arabic and English as well as his lack of knowledge of English becomes the subject of many of the novel's funniest moments. The mistakes that Samir makes in his attempts to either speak or interpret English form the context for the repeated frustrations that he encounters as he searches for same-sex love and companionship in London. Samir's infatuation with Englishness is underscored in the novel particularly in his fantasy of London as a gay utopia:

> "He'd imagined that, as soon as the plane set down in London, he'd see rows of English boys undulating like golden ears of wheat, and the red jeans or leather trousers, walking hand in hand" (88).
>
> "كان تصور أنه ما إن تحط الطائرة في لندن حتى يرى صفوفاً من الشباب الانكليز، تماماً مثل سنابل قمح ذهبية تموج بسراويل حمراء و جلدية يسيرون اليد في اليد" (129).

But when he doesn't find what he came to London for or when he is lost, Samir always finds other Arab immigrants in the city: "The best thing would be to go to the Tabbouleh take-

away where the Lebanese boys were. He understood them, and they understood him" (84). Samir seeks out the Arabic food joint to reorient himself in the city whereas for the character Lamis, Arabic food is a source of disorientation and it makes her lose her grip on surviving in the city. In his attempts to find a British boyfriend, Samir must master an English vocabulary capable of relaying the nuanced messages of gay male courtship. As such, accent is not of particular concern to him. Rather, he becomes frustrated at the difficulties he has in making his requests and desires for male companionship understood. In one instance, Samir mistakes an AIDS clinic for a male escort service. Phoning the clinic, he tries to ask about hiring a male sex worker saying:

> "Hello, I want a man, but a woman. Do you understand? A man who doesn't like women, a man who is a woman. Do you understand? I'm not a woman, I am a man, but I'm like a woman" (90).
>
> "هللو، أريد رجلاً، لكن امرأة، هل فهمت؟ رجل لا يحب المرأة على أن يكون امرأة. هل فهمت، أنا لست امرأة، أنا رجل كالامرأة" (131).

His repetition of the question "Do you understand?" highlights Samir's frustration and results in the clinic's receptionist hanging up the phone receiver without responding. When he decides instead to visit the clinic, the climate of miscomprehension continues as Samir marvels at the orderliness and sterility of what he believes at first to be an English brothel: "Everything here is done according to laws and protocol, even you-know-what, he thought" (91). When the clinic's receptionist asks Samir to wait until James, a staff member who speaks Arabic can meet with him, he believes that he is waiting for his escort to become available, wondering to himself if he should "ask if James had blonde hair" (92). In the end, Samir leaves the clinic equipped with a box of free condoms and literature about sexually transmitted infections and, despite the hilarity of the scene in the clinic, the reality of Samir's inability to communicate in English retains a somewhat tragic as-

pect of his experiences in London. Even when he is confronted about his clandestine sexual activities by his wife, who follows him to London with their five children, even his wife misunderstands him. Convinced that he has been cheating on her with another woman, Samir's wife refuses to accept his explanation that his possession of women's undergarments and makeup are for his job as an entertainer: "You bastard," his wife yells, "do you think I am stupid enough to think you need lipstick for your job, and panties and bras?" (244). While his wife's suspicions that Samir has not been faithful are correct, her misreading of the situation adds to the curse of miscommunication and misunderstanding that surrounds his narrative. Even his attempts at deception are misinterpreted.

All of his attempts of courtship and flirting are halted due to his inability to communicate clearly in English. In another instance Samir believes that it is divine intervention that prevents him from finding a boyfriend.

> God is punishing me again, Samir thought. Even the man I hired this room for has turned out not to be worth it. All of this because I couldn't find the right words. I said, 'Smoke me like a cigarette,' and now he's laughing as if he's lost his mind (247).
>
> الله ينتقم مني من جديد. حتى الذي دفعته ثمناً لغرفة الفندق هذه لم تكن في موازاة لذتي. كل ما فعلته هو أني ابتهلت إلى التلميذ بكلمة 'أرجوك أرجوك'، و لم أعثر على الكلمة، و طلبتُ منه أن يدخّنني كالسيكارة. طار صواب الصبي من الضحك (370).

Samir's relationship to the monkey that he was hired to transport from Dubai to London becomes increasingly intimate as the novel progresses. At first, Samir's guardianship of the monkey is merely a transaction through which his arrival to London is facilitated. As the pair weathers the difficult experience of integration in their new city, the bond that forms between them takes on a deep emotional significance for Samir. Samir takes comfort in their shared inability to communicate with those around them and begins to identify with the monkey. In fact there are numerous instances in the novel where the line is blurred

between Samir and the monkey:

> Samir shouted, or was it the monkey? He ran along behind the taxi, his eyes starting out of his head as he watched the couple recede into the distance. He stopped another in the crush of traffic, and fright made his words come out indistinctly (82).
>
> يصيح سمير لعلّه القرد؟ يركض سمير أو ربما القرد؟ عينا سمير تقفزان خلف التاكسي، و خلف آخر كلمات الرجل، و عينا السعدان توقفان تاكسياً، و بين الضجيج والخوف تتلعثم جمل سمير (121).

At the end of the novel, the monkey inadvertently escapes from Samir and makes his way into a wedding reception at a hotel. When one of the hotel employees, attempting to capture the monkey, arrives with a stepladder, Samir shouts "Let me go up. I understand monkey language" (248).

"دعني أصعد... أنا أفهم لغة القرود" (371).

This assertion reveals not only Samir's attachment and filial connection to the monkey, but also adds to his sense of going beyond human language – an articulation of the unrestrained nature he feels in London that makes him a speaker of "monkey language."

In *Trials of Modernity*, Tarek El-Ariss argues that by going back and forth between *junūn* as a mental disorder and as an expression of homosexual desire, as in "*raḥ jinn*" or "I'm about to go mad, I will go mad," Samir in al-Shaykh's *Innahā* unsettles modes of social and political normativity in both Lebanon and England.[219] Using the framework of *junūn* El-Ariss sees Samir's madness as a site of his sexual articulation as well as a site of rebellion, transgression and social subversion. Samir's relationship to the monkey for El-Ariss operates as a "performative utterance" that frames Samir's expression of desire in London "as the advent of unrestrained acts of social and sexual transgression, monkey-like."[220] For El-Ariss, Samir's constant reference to going mad implies "that he is about to act like a monkey" once he lands in London and that this is not merely an expression of

[219] El-Ariss 123.
[220] Ibid. 126.

mental illness. Expressing his desperation at being unable to retrieve the monkey is symbolic of the hopelessness of his situation in relation both to the city and family in which he does not feel he belongs. As he cries at a nearby bus shelter, Samir says that, "It should have been the monkey who talked and called me Dad" (249). Samir longs for the monkey more than his own children, and significantly, wishes that the monkey could have had the gift of speech, for which he himself still pines. Importantly, when Samir expresses to his son that he wishes that the monkey had been his child, replacing the five children he has with his wife, he reveals that fatherhood was for him a way of assuaging his guilt for being gay (249).

"هو ابني بس. نعم هو ابني، لا انتَ و لا خيّك ولا أختك و لا خيّك. ما بعرف ليش جيتو و من وين جيتو، خايف العالم تحكي عليّ إني بحب الرجال، كلما حبلت مرتي "أم أربعة و أربعين"، انزاح الهم و تأنيب الضمير عن ظهري سنة" (372).

Although al-Shaykh's inclusion of a gay character is celebrated by El-Ariss,[221] Samir nonetheless takes on the role of a buffoon; providing comic relief throughout the novel, thus replicating what Hanadi Al-Samman has characterized as a "trope denoting failed national aspirations as well as dysfunctional Arab masculinity."[222] Samir's identification with the monkey heightens our sense of him as infantile and laughable and his own affective trajectory is rarely treated with dignity in the text itself.[223] Rather, Samir's quest for love provides the basis for a humorous narrative thread.[224]

[221] For more, see El-Ariss 114-44.

[222] Al-Samman 277.

[223] Al-Samman argues that in contrast to Arabic medieval literature, modern Arabic literature depicts homoerotic desire as a substitute to and deviation from the heterosexual norm and as a "symptom of societal and economic degeneration" (277). Whereas in medieval Arabic literature, homoerotic desire was meant to be "complementary to heterosexuality, and not substitutive or egalitarian to it" (276).

[224] Ingraham argues that Western popular culture makes use of the trope of the comic gay male character and relegates the status of gay characters to the realm of the infantile and laughable. Battles and Hilton-Morrow make a similar point, arguing that characters who have the most subversive potential in a text vis-à-vis the heteronormative framework in which they find themselves are infantilized and their experiences revolve around unfulfilled sexual longing and delayed consummation (90).

Desire in/and the Queen's English

Through the romantic relationship that develops between Lamis and Nicholas, al-Shaykh attempts to capture the shifting dynamic that Lamis has with her own language and culture. We learn early on that Lamis has very good command of the English language and is able to speak and comprehend English very well. Rather, it is a disdain for her Arabic accent that compels her to hire an English tutor to aid in altering her Arabic accent which will ultimately allow her to speak the Queen's English.

During their first meeting, Lamis' language tutor cautions her that once she starts to unlearn her Arabic pronunciation of English, Lamis' personality will change as well. "If you take lessons with me" the tutor warns, "it's not only your way of speaking that will change. The movements of your tongue, everything related to your voice and larynx will have to change their habits radically" (53).

"هذه الدروس لن تبدّل لهجتك فقط، بل الطريقة التي سوف يتحرك بها لسانك. كلُّ ما له علاقة بصوتك، وبحنجرتك، سوف يتبدّل" (80).

She goes on to warn Lamis that because Arabic is her mother tongue "altering the way you speak affects your personality inside" (53).

"ليست مسألة نطق فقط: إنها أعمق من هذا... فالعربية هي لغتك، وتعديل الطريقة التي سوف تتحدثين بها ستؤثر في شخصيتك بالضرورة" (80).

Lamis assures the tutor that she understands these risks but wonders whether it is possible to learn to speak English with an English accent: "Surely it's not impossible to learn to speak English like the English, without these dire warnings" (53).

"هل أن إتقان اللهجة الإنكليزية كما ينطق بها الإنكليز معجزة" (81).

The novel foregrounds Lamis' story which is centered on her mission to acquire the English accent which she perceives to be impossible. Unlike Samir, her quest is more

concerned with speaking "proper English" an "English like the English" rather than learning the language (54/81). Although Lamis' English skills do not pose an obvious obstacle to her integration into London, she believes that her Arabic accent is a constant reminder that England is not her true home. Believing that her Arab identity is the source of her inability to bring about change in her life, she feels that Arab culture is backwards. In an attempt to purge herself of the remnants of her Arab identity, Lamis goes so far as to refrain from eating Arab food, an interdiction reiterated by her English tutor. Lamis' project of acquiring the "perfect English accent" / "إتقان اللهجة الانكليزية" provides a key narrative thread in her story (31/79). Shortly after arriving in London, she draws up a list of tasks whose completion she hopes will help her put an end to leading a temporary life. Learning English "properly" replaces "look for a flat to rent" in terms of priority (19).

"البحث عن شقة للآجار. (تشطب البحث عن شقة للآجار و تكتب): ...إتقان اللهجة الانكليزية" (31).

Importantly, we learn that Lamis already speaks English and her interaction with the English tutor becomes a focal point in the narrative and encompasses not only Lamis' struggle to perfect her English accent but also her attempt at assimilation. The reader follows Lamis' daily routine as she learns and practices her new accent. The tutor's recommendations also play an important role in Lamis' perceptions of what it means to belong to English both linguistically and culturally. Indeed, the tutor's suggestions extend beyond those expected from a language instructor, and include instructions about diet and social life. Her tutor advises her to "keep away from anything Arab, even in your mind. You should stop eating Arab dishes, because subconsciously you will be saying their names" (54).

"ابتعدي بأفكارك عن كل ما هو عربي. امتنعي حتي عن المأكولات العربية لأن عقلك الباطن سينطق بأسمها" (81).

While she is determined to assimilate in London, Lamis finds it difficult to divorce herself from her language and culture and the comfort they provide. She tries to convince herself to "stop eating Arab food – not because the garlic and coriander make my breath smell, but because this kind of food makes me feel safe and secure and reminds me of childhood and home" (19).

"عليّ التوقُّف عن الطعام العربي، لا لأني آكل الثوم والكزبرة وخائفة من رائحة أنفاسي، بل لأن الطعام العربيّ يمنحني الطمأنينة و الأمان. يذكّرني بأيام الطفولة والبيت" (31).

Despite Lamis' unrelenting efforts to rid herself of her Arab accent, she finds that she is unable to do so. Suggesting that Lamis' inability to pronounce the English "r" and "th" is related to her essential nature as an Arab, the tutor explains that "Showing the tongue is one of the taboos in your culture. That's why you have difficulty pronouncing "the" properly" (94).

"آها آها. فطنتُ أنّ إظهار اللسان هو من الممنوعات في ثقافتكم؟ لذلك تجدين صعوبة في لفظ الـ 'The' كما ينبغي" (140).

When Lamis' English tutor is frustrated with her inability to swallow her "r" in an English manner she suggests that she use a piece of wood to hold down her tongue. Giving up on Lamis' ability to properly pronounce more than "five words out of seven" her tutor instructs her to remove Arabic both from her vocabulary and psyche: "When you leave here you don't think one sentence in Arabic, or everything we've achieved will be wasted" (179).

"عندما تنزلين سلالم بيتي ألا تفكري بأي شيئ عربي. جملة واحدة في العربية، وكل ما أنجزناه يذهب سدى" (265).

Not surprisingly, Lamis develops a fixation on those English letters that for her are most challenging, studying the way the letters flow out of English mouths with ease.

As she begins her love affair with Nicholas, his English pronunciation becomes one

of the traits that she desires in him. When Nicholas speaks, Lamis watches closely: "His English words were flowing into her ears. They broke up into separate letters and slid in, one by one, feeding the little hairs with delicious food so that they demanded more" (97). Nicholas's pronunciation becomes intertwined in their courtship, taking on a character that is intimate and decidedly erotic at times:

> there was the flirtations with the letter 'r', which Nicholas often left hanging in the air, like his lips, so that she heard 'hia' instead of 'here' and 'lova' instead of 'lover.' The letter was lost as it tried to settle in her ear, but the word 'firstly' left his lips parted. She squeezed herself in between the last two letters so she would be close to his vocal cords. She saw them like ropes for raising bridges (97-98).
>
> تسيل كلماته الانكليزية في أُذُنها، أي تنفرط حرفاً حرفاً و تنزلق... الهمس في أذنها هو مداعبة حرف الراء يدخلها خاصة و نيقولاس يتركه معلقاً في الهواء كفمه، فتسمع Hia بدل Here، و Lova بدل Lover. الحرف تائه يريد الاستقرار عند أذنها، إنما يعززه الحرفان الأخيران من كلمة firstly التي تركت أيضاً شفتيه منفرجتين حتى تدخل لميس. و ما إن ينبعث صوته حتى تكون قريبة من أوتارها، تراها كحبال ترفع الجسور (144).

Reflective of a desire for both Nicholas and his Englishness, Lamis' obsession with pronunciation is also indicative of the struggle with her own Arab identity. Nicholas's interest in the Arabic language and Arab culture compliment and complicate Lamis' fixation on Englishness. On the one hand, Lamis' "new life" requires her to forget her attachments to the Arabic language and to Arab culture. As her English tutor warns, "altering the way you speak affects your personality inside" (53). On the other hand, her lover's interest in Arab culture and language, an interest that is both personal and professional, pulls her back towards her Arab identity in a conflict that seems to pit her past against her future. As such, meeting and falling with Nicholas who not only idealizes her Arabness but also her ability to speak Arabic, complicates Lamis' relationship and attachment to the language and her eagerness to belong in London.

Despite her belief that her Arabness is an obstacle to be overcome, she finds that Nicholas's infatuation with the Orient brings her a sense of importance that she has only

rarely experienced. We learn that Lamis' insecurities around language are not limited to English and that because of the multiple displacements that she endured as a refugee leading her from Najaf to Beirut, she has had very little formal Arabic education. As such, "the rules of Arabic grammar were a mystery to her" (123). Her Iraqi accent was also a source of anxiety for her as a child, differentiating her from her peers and causing them to make fun of her (123). When Nicholas asks her to translate the Arabic text on an old manuscript that he has come across, Lamis reacts first with defensiveness and reluctance, thinking to herself "too bad. I'll read it without the proper endings if he asks me. He can't read Arabic anyhow" (123). As she begins to read, her insecurities vanish and her heart is filled with yearning for the language that she has been working so hard to suppress. As he presses her to interpret the manuscript, Lamis feels "a sharp pang of regret, when she'd been in Dubai, she'd thought that being Arab was an obstacle in her life" (125). She reads the text with ease and as she reads is carried away in the memory of her grandfather and of her early childhood in Najaf. Confirming her contention that language and memory are inextricably linked, Lamis says that she has been unable to learn English as she had hoped because "My memory is all in Arabic" (180). Importantly, her reading of Arabic is experienced by Nicholas as arousing, underscoring the role that language plays in their attraction.

After first meeting on the plane, Lamis and Nicholas meet again by chance when they both visit Leighton House Museum, a museum that houses the private collection of the Victorian artist and Orientalist Frederic Lord Leighton. The location of their second meeting is deeply significant, and sets the stage for the romantic relationship that will blossom between them. Lamis and Nicholas' relationship is mediated through the legacy of

the enduring relations of power that have their roots in colonial histories. Their chance meeting at the Leighton House Museum is a literalization of colonial contact, complete with its fantasies, objectification and exhibitionism. Both Lamis and Nicholas are drawn to the colonial history that they have come to see on display at the museum, and they find a common ground in the narrative of their difference that the exhibition offers. Even in a context in which their imagined differences are dramatized, the language of Orientalism, colonial contact and the desire for proximity to the Other establishes the grounds for ensuing romantic relationship between Lamis and Nicholas.

As discussed in Chapter One, Tageldin's *Disarming Words* argues that Orientalist discourse attracted Egyptian intellectuals because it appeared to valorize Arab-Islamic culture and language even as it denigrated it. In this seduction plot, "what seduces is the attraction of seeing oneself as subject, as sovereign – and not […] that of believing oneself the object of the sovereign's desire."[225] This plot for Tageldin is what facilitates the ways that the Egyptian imagines himself on an equal footing of exchange with his European colonizer. The colonizer's mastery of and apparent reverence for, the Arabic language and its literature becomes ideological bait with which to coax colonial subjects into cooperation.[226] Colonizers, argues Tageldin, were most attractive when they 'spoke' the idioms of Arabic, Islam or Egyptianness; when they were perceived to have translated themselves into imitations of their colonial targets.[227] The seduction plot that Tageldin describes begins with the colonizer "translating himself" into Arabic but ends with the with the colonized not only translating Europe's literature and culture into Arabic but also translating himself and his culture into European terms.

[225] Ibid. 76.
[226] Ibid. 10-14.
[227] Ibid. 37.

The colonizer is captivated by the colonizer's language only when they were able to imagine it as confirming their own beliefs about their language and culture. Using Muṣṭafā Luṭfī al-Manfalūṭī as an example, Tageldin describes the dynamic of translational seduction as an implicit, nearly inaudible articulation of longing and desire. She quotes 'Abd al-Fattaḥ Kīlīṭū who says: "every one of [al-Manfalūṭī's] pages whispers the same question: how do I become European?"[228] Echoes of this question can be heard in the stories of al-Shaykh's protagonist Lamis as she searches for belonging and ultimately assimilation into British culture. Lamis relationship to Nicholas becomes a key component in her search of assimilation.

Lamis and Nicholas's relationship captures the dynamic of the seduction plot described by Tageldin. Nicholas's infatuation with the Arabic language and culture heightens his affection for Lamis even as she works to distance herself from the Arabness that for her is always a reminder that she does not belong in London. Ultimately, Lamis falls in love with the image of herself that she sees through Nicholas's eyes and comes to terms with her multilingualism. Lamis' process of linguistic reconciliation mirrors the deepening of her relationship with Nicholas. Her own multilingualism makes possible her ability to envision a future with Nicholas. Her arrival in London and budding relationship with Nicholas confirms her feelings that England is inherently forward-looking: a place of possibility and transformation. Ultimately, it is through Nicholas's appreciation of Arab culture that she comes to value her culture once more. Ironically, it is Nicholas's orientalist gaze that encourages in Lamis a renewed sense of appreciation for Arab cul-

[228] Ibid. 1.

ture.[229]

Innahā constructs a reversal of the narrative established by Soueif's *The Map of Love*; Anna and Sharif represent a chiasmus of Lamis and Nicholas's relationship. The former is an Englishwoman who falls in love with an Arab and the latter is an Arab woman who falls in love with an Englishman. Both Anna and Lamis are foreign to the country they call home – Anna moves to Cairo from London and Lamis moves to London from Dubai by way of Iraq and Lebanon. The men they fall in love with do not strive to learn their lover's language. As I argued in the previous chapter, Sharif al-Baroudi rejects English because it represents the British colonial oppressor. In al-Shaykh's novel, while Nicholas works as an art dealer specializing in Oriental artefacts, he does not have any knowledge of the Arabic language.

Prior to meeting Lamis, Nicholas's exposure to Arab culture occurs only via his role as an Oriental art dealer. He does not have any connection to the Arab immigrant community in London nor does he work to establish one. Unlike Anna in Soueif's *The Map of Love* whose dedication to learning the Arabic language is a means through which she is brought closer, both politically and emotionally, to her lover Sharif, Nicholas makes no effort to learn Arabic. When he finds himself attracted to Lamis after their initial encounter on the airplane, Nicholas must resort to calling his secretary in Oman to ask her about the meaning of the name Lamis in Arabic (46).

[229] One way of reading the relationship between Nicholas and Lamis in *Innahā* is to situate it within the erotic projections that the generation of Arab writers from the nahḍa period developed towards the West and its cultural systems. Writers such as Al-Manfaluti and Tawfiq al-Hakim exemplified this romanticism of the West in their writings. As El-Enany argues, for this generation of writers the "occident" becomes both "an object of love and hate, a shelter and a threat, a usurper and a giver, an enemy to be feared and a friend whose help is to be sought" (2).

Towards the end of *Innahā* as Amira attends her best friend Nahid's funeral we glimpse the reality of a multilingual consciousness. Reflecting on the torrential rain of that morning, Amira describes the weather in both English and Arabic saying "It was raining, as the English say, cats and dogs, and as the Arabs say, hard enough to split the sky in two" (239). Rather than collapsing the languages into one seamless expression the two languages cohabitate and it is this cohabitation that brings to light the tension that is central to the novel's story. The moment of Amira's reflection is also significant because it occurs at the same time that Nahid's body is being laid to rest in an English graveyard – an occurrence that is loaded with tensions and ambivalences. The relentless rain makes the carrying of Nahid's shrouded naked body difficult for those carrying her as the gravedigger struggles to empty buckets of rain water from her grave. Amira remarks, "It's as if God doesn't want to take Nahid back" (240). Although the scene takes place in the graveyard where Nahid will inevitably be buried, the question of whether the English graveyard is her rightful resting place remains unanswered. Amira recalls a conversation with Nahid's parents in Egypt who dismissed the idea that Nahid's body be returned to Cairo saying, "Don't go to all that trouble, sweetheart. Bury her near her friends. All of you are her family now" (240). The scene of Nahid's funeral juxtaposes multilingualism with a dual sense of belonging to different geographies and the passage in effect stages a reality where monolingualism is no longer an option.

Importantly, Amira's reflections on the questions of language and home are not resolved in al-Shaykh's *Innahā*. Nahid is buried in London, yet we sense that the language, customs and soil of England are not a resting place for her. The linguistic duality that characterizes Soueif's *The Map of Love*, Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis* and al-Shaykh's *Innahā*

Landan yā ʻazīzī remains open-ended, refusing to offer a sense of either linguistic or geographic fixity.

Translating *Innahā*'s Arabic Dialects

Reviews of al-Shaykh's novel in English translation underscored its fluidity noting that "reads like an original work in English" (Woffenden). Al-Shaykh's Arabic text incorporate many English words (some transliterated and others appearing in English script), whereas the English translation, in keeping with Arabic to English translation practices, includes no Arabic words other than a handful proper nouns, all of which are transliterated using English script. The English words that appear in the original Arabic text simply reappear as English words in the translation without any trace of the cohabitation of the two languages that appears in the original.

Al-Shaykh includes several Arabic dialects in *Innahā* which distinguishes it from the work of writers of her generation who tend to prioritize *fuṣḥā* and often do not incorporate multiple dialects in the same text. The ways in which the various accents are described in the Arabic and English texts provide a window into the strategies that Cobham applies, which as I argue largely function to suppress variance in dialect rather than highlight its significance. Although Cobham makes certain references to Lamis' Iraqi accent obvious in the English text, she often omits to indicate instances in which Lamis' Iraqi dialect is used. For example, upon entering her ex-husband's flat in London, Lamis, in seeming disbelief that she has returned says, "I've just arrived in London" (19). In the Arabic text, the reader is introduced to Lamis' Iraqi dialect because she uses the word توّي which is a diminutive of the word توًا which means "right away, at once or immediately."[230] In its more

[230] Wehr 98.

informal usage, the word توّي unmistakably belongs to the Iraqi dialect. While the meaning of the word is translated in the English text, its distinctly Iraqi usage is not apparent in the translation.

The nuances of accent in *Innahā/London* are treated differently in each text. The significance of dialect in the English translation is minimized not only in reference to the multiplicity of Arabic dialects that comprise the narrative and dialogue in *Innahā*, but also as they relate to some of the characters' struggle to obtain a British accent. For example, Cobham's translation overlooks the importance of the English classes that Lamis takes. We learn early on in the novel that Lamis speaks English very well, having previously lived in London for more than a decade. In *Innahā*, al-Shaykh makes clear the fact that Lamis' English tutor is assisting her with her *accent* rather than her English language skills, referring to her lessons as "دروس اللهجة" (265). Cobham's translation on the other hand, describes the lessons as "English classes," suggesting to the reader that Lamis is seeking to improve her English, when in fact she is attempting to rid herself of her Arabic accent in an attempt to assimilate more fully into British culture (179). While Cobham's use of the term "classes" accentuates language learning, al-Shaykh's use of accent classes highlights the depth of Lamis' struggle to remake herself into an Englishwoman.

The brokenness of Samir's English provides another instance in which each text deals differently with the texture of accent. In one passage, Samir meets a police officer named John, who first encounters Samir as he is weaving in and out of cars that are stuck in a traffic jam, dressed in red boots and a purple boa. Speaking about Samir, John exclaims to his colleague: "Bloody hell […] did that witch just fall out of the sky?" (*London* 147). In the English text, Samir replies to the police officer by saying "Witch? Me? […]

Don't say that, mama. But you're a very beautiful policeman. I'd go to prison for you!" (147). In the Arabic text, on the other hand, al-Shaykh includes Samir's response in Latin script, and spells his broken English phonetically, allowing the reader to get a clear sense of his accent in English. Samir replies: "Witch me? no say Ma ma you boutiful police-man, you very boutiful I eccept go prison for you! (*Innahā* 216). In these two passages, Samir's English is portrayed very differently in each text. In the Arabic original, the brokenness of Samir's English is very explicit, whereas in the English translation his English pronunciation is smooth. In effect, whereas the Arabic original emphasizes his accent, the translation masks it.

While Cobham tends to minimize the significance of dialect and accent in her translation, there are a few instances in which she departs from the original text in order to provide the English reader with additional information in an attempt to contextualize the difference in accent. For example, Cobham gives Amira's acquired Egyptian accent a different treatment than al-Shaykh. Addressing her friends with whom she has been reunited in London, Amira says, switching her Moroccan accent to an Egyptian one: "وحشتوني موت كانت سفرة مهببة" and in the English translation: "I've missed you all like mad. It was a lousy trip" (35). Cobham follows this by explaining that Amira's attraction to the Egyptian accent stems from her admiration for the glamorous Egyptian movie stars that she idealized as a child (35). In the Arabic text however, al-Shaykh explains that Amira's use of the Egyptian accent is related to the sense of nonchalance and carefreeness that it inspires in her, saying:

"تُبدّل أميرة لهجتها المغربية إلى لهجة مصرية تستأنس بها، و تجعلها تشعر أن الحياة كلها لعب و مزاح" (54).

Cobham's translation of the passage is: Amira switch[es] her Moroccan accent to an Egyptian one. Ever since she'd watched Egyptian films as a child, with their crafty and

coy and glamorous film stars, she'd felt that life with an Egyptian accent would be infinitely more fun" (35). The additional information included in the English translation here offers the reader, albeit, a limited understanding of the cultural context in which Amira was exposed to the Egyptian accent while growing up in Morocco. It gives a sense of this context that al-Shaykh assumes the Arabic reader will already possess. This example stands out as one of the few moments in which the importance of accent and dialect are maintained in the translation.

In *Innahā*, language, accent, and dialect bring into focus the precariousness of the immigrant experience whereas in Cobham's *London*, the subtleties of accent and dialect are diminished. In the Arabic text, the diversity of dialects (Iraqi, Lebanese, Egyptian, Saudi) serves to de-center *fuṣḥā* as the only acceptable form of literary Arabic. In the English text however, both registers of the Arabic language – the *fuṣḥā* and the dialects – are muted. In her focus on dialect, al-Shaykh challenges the homogeneity of the Arabic language but this effect is largely lost in Cobham's translation. Rather, Cobham produces a translation that suppresses the variance in dialect that is central to the narrative.

CHAPTER 3
Linguistic Cohabitation in *Awrāq al-narjis*

Somaya Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis* (hereafter referred to as *Awrāq*) is a pseudo-autobiographical story that contains what Samia Mehrez has characterized "multiple layers of narrative" where the protagonist Kimi is constantly seeking to understand the Arabic and English worlds that she occupies[231] Kimi's quest is one of failure because she refuses to abide by the rigid boundaries of belonging to one nation or language – boundaries that are set for her by her family. Scattered between Dublin and Cairo, Kimi feels that she belongs "everywhere and nowhere" at once. In her dorm room in Dublin, Kimi hangs what she refers to as a map of exile and not of her own homeland, Egypt. This map is of an "imagined homeland" and refuge – she has posters of Gauguin, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, a painting of a Chinese woman with a confused head at a crossroads, and a picture of an old man looking out in hopeless regret at the sea. Ramadan weaves into her narrative elements from the works of Samuel Beckett and James Joyce in particular. Her choice to reference these authors was not random; rather, the fact that they are two Irish writers who themselves sought to disrupt not only purist notions of the English language but also its dominance over marginalized languages like Gaelic thus extends these same connotations to *Awrāq*.

In this chapter, I will examine the inclusion of English-language words in Somaya Ramadan's Arabic novel *Awrāq,* as well as how the meeting of Arabic and English is expressed in Marilyn Booth's translation of the novel, *Leaves of Narcissus*. Rather than a mere insertion of English terms into the Arabic novel, Ramadan's use of English is a cre-

[231] Mehrez, "Myriad of Leaves" n.pag.

ative gesture that challenges the partition between English and Arabic, bringing about a textual space in which both languages cohabitate. In this chapter, I argue that the use of English in *Awrāq* is an example of linguistic cohabitation that challenges the notions of Arabic and English as discrete languages. The theme of homelessness, borderlessness and non-belonging figure prominently in the novel, and I also consider how the textual elements of the novels mirror this thematic emphasis. My analysis of the novel's emphasis on geographic borderlessness engages Hoda Elsadda's understanding of Ramadan's text as an example of what she calls "postcolonial nomadic novels" – texts that focus on identities that challenge the confines of nation, gender and language. In *Awrāq*, the challenge posed to linguistic boundaries is achieved not only through the cohabitation of Arabic and English at the level of the text, but also through the narrative, in which the confines of subjectivity and geography are questioned.

In analyzing the cohabitation of Arabic and English in *Awrāq,* I draw on an argument that Michelle Hartman makes about French-Arabic "interanimation" in Lebanese novels. For Hartman, the process of "interanimation" is one whereby languages do not merely "mix" but interact in ways that influence and shape each other. My argument in this chapter highlights the ways that *Awrāq* works to reveal the ways that Arabic and English cohabitate in a single text and I build this analysis by considering Marilyn Booth's translation of *Awrāq* as *Leaves of Narcissus*. My goal in reading the original Arabic text alongside its English translation is to gain a deeper understanding of how Arabic and English cohabitate in both texts and how the process of interanimation works in both of them.

More specifically, I compare instances of linguistic cohabitation in the Arabic text

with their correlating moments in the English translation and offer an analysis of the methods that Booth employs in translating them. I argue that through Booth's attempt to capture the linguistic dynamics written into the Arabic novel, her text's relationship with Ramadan's text as well as her own relationship with Ramadan complicates Gayatri Spivak's theorization of the "First World" feminist translator and the "Third World" women's text as a native informant.[232] In understanding the dynamics between Booth's positionality as a translator situated in the "First World" and the Ramadan as a writer in the "Third World," I rely on Shaden Tageldin's understanding of "translational seduction."[233]

Awrāq al-narjis and the Mahfouz Medal

Born in Cairo in 1951, Somaya Ramadan is a writer, translator and critic. She obtained a BA from the English department at Cairo University and earned a PhD in English literature from Trinity College in Dublin in 1983. After publishing two collections of short stories – *Khashab wa nuḥās* (Wood and Brass) in 1995 and *Manāzil al-qamar* (Phases of the Moon) in 1999—she published her first novel *Awrāq al-narjis* (Leaves of Narcissus) in 2001.[234] She has also published numerous articles in English and in Arabic and has translated Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* into Arabic. Ramadan is one of the founding members of the Women and Memory Forum, a non-profit organization based in Cairo that focuses Arab women's history. Ramadan currently teaches English and translation at the National Academy of Arts in Cairo. Appearing in Arabic in 2001, *Awrāq al-narjis* is Somaya Ramadan's first novel and was awarded the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for

[232] Spivak, "The Politics of Translation" 201.
[233] Tageldin 10.
[234] Elsadda 167.

Literature.[235] The medal seeks to acknowledge and celebrate the best contemporary literature published in Arabic, but not yet translated into English.[236] The award guarantees translation into English of the winning novel along with its promotion and marketing in both languages by the American University in Cairo Press, the same body that administers the award. In 2002, *Awrāq* was translated into English under the title *Leaves of Narcissus* by Marilyn Booth. Born in Cairo in 1951, Somaya Ramadan earned a PhD in English Literature from Trinity College Dublin. She published two collections of short stories, *Khashab wa nuḥās* (1995) and *Manāzil al-qamar* (1999), along with several articles in both Arabic and English. She also renowned for her Arabic translation of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, published in 1999 under the title *Ghurfa takhuṣṣ al-mar' waḥdahu.*

Ramadan's *Awrāq* is a richly intertextual novel that weaves Arabic literary conventions and traditions with Greek Mythology and Irish literature.[237] For example, the novel is written in the stream of consciousness style made famous by James Joyce and interacts directly with Joyce's novels *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and the author himself appears in her narrative as a speaking, thinking character, if only in the hallucinatory episodes of the novel's protagonist Kimi. The novel attempts to expand the conventions of literary Arabic not only in its unique use of English transliteration throughout the text, but also in the extent of its intertextuality. Ramadan weaves a number of literary references from English and Arabic literature into the narrative, while

[235] Ghazoul 465.

[236] The American University in Cairo Press established the Naguib Mahfouz medal for Literature in 1996 on the occasion of Mahfouz's eighty-fifth birthday. For more information on the prize see Mehrez's chapter "Children of Our Alley" in *Egypt's Culture Wars.*

[237] Elsadda argues that Kimi's multiple identities are "inscribed through intertextuality in an amalgam of East and West" referencing Ramadan's inclusion of James Joyce, W.B. Yeats, Shakespeare, Salah Jahin, and Arab and Western folktales (173).

recounting the story primarily against an Irish backdrop. Egyptian literary critic Sabry Hafez situates Ramadan's novel within a new wave of women writers in Egypt that deal with reflexive narratives and fractured identities. He says that *Awrāq* is one of the very few novels of her generation to treat the "once-classic" theme of interaction with the West.[238] The novel casts doubt on the idea that languages belong to one place or one people and ultimately tries to make the case that home is something that exists internally as opposed to an external already-made nation or language.[239]

Nationalist Disinheritance and the Mastery of Arabic

The attention garnered by the Naguib Mahfouz medal exposed the novel to criticism. According to Mehrez, it was criticized by some in Egypt's literary establishment for its mixing of Arabic and English and for fusing Western and Arabic literary conventions.[240] As Marilyn Booth mentions in her article "On Translation and Madness" upon being awarded the Mahfouz medal, Ramadan was accused of being "an elitist and Westward-gazing" author.[241] Ramadan's novel was decried as signaling the downfall of Arabic literature and was called the "death certificate" of the famed prize.[242] The Mahfouz medal, named after the writer whose work has become perhaps the most unequivocal symbol of modern Egyptian culture, is itself entwined in the ideological struggle to produce an Egyptian response to the dominant English literary canon.[243]

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[238] In his article "The New Egyptian Novel" Hafez surveys the development of the modern Arabic novel with a focus on Egyptian novelists and locates Ramadan within a new genre of literature that "rejects the linear narrative of the realist novel" popularized by Naguib Mahfouz.

[239] The novel was criticized by the literary establishment in Egypt for its mixing of Arabic and English and for fusing Western and Arabic literature according to Booth ("Madness" 48).

[240] According to Anwar, Ramadan's text was criticized by literary critics in Egypt because of its anti-Nasser politics.

[241] Booth, "Madness" 48.

[242] See Mahmud Khayrallah's criticism in Mehrez, *Egypt's Culture Wars* 50.

[243] Ibid.

One of Ramadan's critics is Mahmud Khayrallah, a prominent literary commentator and poet in Egypt who describes *Awrāq* as "beginner's literature" because according to him the novel is riddled with Arabic "grammar mistakes."[244] Khayrallah goes as far as to accuse Ramadan of being anti-nationalist and cites *Awrāq*'s linguistic interplay between Arabic and English as evidence of her substandard command of the Arabic language rather than an expression of the linguistic experimentalism that stems from her fluency in both languages.

More telling is the fact that Ramadan's national loyalties were called into question at the same time as her mastery of the Arabic language is criticized. The claim that Ramadan's novel is "anti-nationalist" further underscores the weight of the ethno-nationalist rhetoric that situates women as the gatekeepers of cultural identity and positions them as the most susceptible to foreign incursion – Khayrallah's formulation demonstrates the extent to which the slippage between patriarchy and nationalism are often acute.[245] As the bearers of national culture, women are closely tied to nationalist self-imagination,[246] and in the case of formerly colonized nations, where women come to symbolize cultural continuity, the integrity of the national identity and also resistance to Western influence.[247] In *Egypt's Culture Wars,* Samia Mehrez examines the contentious reactions to the granting

[244] In her chapter "Children of Our Alley", Mehrez investigates the discursive construction of the Mahfouz medal and her analysis includes a survey of responses to Ramadan's receipt of the medal in 2001. In particular Mehrez cites criticisms made by Egyptian literary critic Mahmud Khayrallah (*Culture Wars* 50).

[245] Elsadda argues that there is a slippage between patriarchy and nationalism. For a similar argument, see Hasso.

[246] For more on the connections between nationalism and gendered images and discourses of nation see Elsadda; Mehrez, *Egypt's Culture Wars*, in particular, Part I of her book titled "Inside the Literary Establishment: Power Struggles and the Dreams of Autonomy"; Amireh and Majaj; Majaj, Sunderman and Saliba. For non-literary critiques of the ways that women and nation are collapsed see Baron and Pollard, who both examine the constitutive aspects of gender in the formation of modern Egypt and underscore the dynamics through which men and women were reimagined and remade as national subjects.

[247] See Malti-Douglas, *Men, Women, and God(s).*

of the Mahfouz medal to *Awrāq*.[248] Mehrez suggests that because Ramadan's text relies heavily on the Irish-Egyptian consciousness of her protagonist Kimi, the novel was considered a cultural intruder by virtue of its "hybrid profile" thus disproportionately placing the burden of linguistic and cultural authenticity on women writers.[249] Perhaps it is no coincidence that *Awrāq* was charged with many of the same allegations of linguistic miscegenation originally leveled against Joyce's *Ulysses* and that both novels suffered significant popular criticism.[250] Echoes of Joyce's own position as a critic of British linguistic and cultural domination in Ireland can be detected throughout *Awrāq*, where Ramadan conjures a cacophony of languages and identities that struggle to coexist in the cultural limbo experienced by the novel's protagonist.[251]

As Kimi narrates her struggle with mental illness, the disjointed structure of the novel shapes our experience of both text and protagonist. The novel's chapters and sections invoke scattered "*awrāq*" – leaves or papers – that are dispersed against the landscape of the protagonist's life in Cairo and Dublin. The recounting of Kimi's life occurs within the framework of a series of non-linear sequences written in a densely rhythmic language that often reads like a prose poem. Divided into eighteen chapters some of which consist of only one paragraph, the impression of finality or closure at the

[248] In her chapter "Children of the Alley," Mehrez chronicles and compares the reception of Algerian writer Ahlam Mosteghanemi and Somaya Ramadan—both recipients of the Mahfouz medal. Mostaghanemi, the first woman to win the prize was awarded the medal in 1998 for her novel *Memory in the Flesh*. Mehrez argues that while the awarding of the prize generates critique within the Egyptian literary establishment annually, Ramadan and Mostaghanemi were subjected to an increased level of "post-award antagonism" (*Egypt's Culture Wars* 51). Mehrez frames her analysis of the reception of these two women writers by examining how the gatekeepers of Arabic literature in Egypt allow writers to be part of Mahfouz's "alley", which is a direct reference to his novel *Awlād ḥāritnā.*

[249] Mehrez, *Egypt's Culture Wars* 51. See also Amireh, "Framing Nawal al-Saadawi"; Booth, "Author v. Translator"; Hartman, "Gender, Genre"; Mehrez, "Translating Gender".

[250] For more on the reception of Joyce's *Ulysses* in Europe and America see Morris; Segall.

[251] In her interview with Yasir 'Abd al-Hafiz, Ramadan reflects on Joyce's influence on her work (10).

end of the chapters is resisted, replaced instead with an open-ended liminality that reflects Kimi's emotional, linguistic and geographic un-rootedness.

Nomadicism in *Awrāq*

Fragmentation, displacement and disintegration are ideas that dominate the thematic as well as the structural elements of *Awrāq*. The narrative centers around the life of a young woman named Kimi, raised in Cairo in a conservative upper-middle class family. Kimi travels to Dublin to pursue a graduate degree and this experience forms the basis for a deeper engagement with questions of identity and belonging that recur throughout the novel. Kimi confronts and contends with a multiplicity of boundaries that constrain her: linguistic and geographic delineations are blurred alongside the distinction between madness and sanity. There are three main spheres through which Kimi challenges notions of fixity. Linguistically, she hovers between English and Arabic, geographically, she finds herself unable to claim a home in either Cairo or Dublin. Through the interior monologue that forms the main thread of the novel, we follow Kimi as she moves between the realms of madness and sanity.

Unable to find sanctuary in either Cairo or Dublin, Kimi is torn between her Cairene and Dubliner identities as well as the languages spoken in each city, both of which she speaks fluently. Kimi resists the concept of belonging, often citing her sense of being doubly alienated, feeling an equal disconnection from both Cairo and Dublin and from both English and Arabic. The non-linear events of the novel parallel Kimi's fragmented relationship with her surroundings, both physical and linguistic. The narrative abruptly switches between Dublin and Cairo; between Kimi's childhood home, her room in the college dormitory, and the mental institution in Dublin. These shifts mirror the psychological

and linguistic breaks that Kimi endures. As she struggles with the multiplicity of narratives that compete to define her, the theme of language emerges as an element with the potential to both constrain and free her. Kimi oscillates between feeling utterly betrayed by language and at the same time completely dependent on it as a saving force.

Hoda Elsadda's analysis of *Awrāq* in *Gender, Nation and the Arabic Novel* situates the text within the framework of what she calls the "postcolonial nomadic novel" – a categorization that she uses to describe certain texts that emerged in post-1990s Egypt. Elsadda points to the series of texts published during this time that call into question "confined" and "fixed" notions of identity and place as indicative of this postcolonial nomadic existence. Ramadan's text according to Elsadda, participates in her categorization of the postcolonial nomadic novel because it challenges "fixed formulas of identity and belonging that have been prescribed by previous generations, by the state, by social mores or by idealized representations of gendered roles."[252] Elsadda reads *Awrāq* as a narrative of estrangement and exile, and understands Kimi's character as possessing a "dual consciousness" because she lives "on the edge of languages and cultures in a postcolonial global context."[253] Kimi's travels between Cairo and Dublin produce in her a profound sense of displacement.

Estranged by both language and location, Kimi moves between alienation from her family in Cairo to the cultural and social alienation of Otherness in Dublin: "I carry on my back my ethnicity and my religion and all the Egyptian, Arab, and Muslim passports, marked by what I imagine others have learned to imagine about my country in jokes and carica-

[252] Elsadda 165-166.
[253] Ibid. 168.

tures" (*Leaves,* 48). Situated between two poles, Kimi "belongs everywhere but nowhere."[254] *Awrāq* encompasses the postcolonial nomadicism described by Elsadda by constantly moving between locations and by resisting geographic loyalty. Kimi's perpetual self-consciousness about her multiple identities is "an effect of her being a postcolonial subject" according to Elsadda.[255] She questions her own impulses to embrace any identity saying: "My passport is Egyptian. I defend it. What is it that I am trying to defend? Whatever loyalties I have are judged suspicious in advance. What am I defending? My passport? My language? My faith?" (76). Kimi's reflections call into question the logic of belonging and demonstrate her resistance to fixity. Rather than describe Kimi's experience as a search for a fixed identity category, the concept of nomadicism allows for the possibility of movement between places as being itself constitutive of identity. Ramadan explores multiple boundaries in the text – what does it mean to be nomadic? It means traveling, it means everywhere and nowhere are possible as a home at the same time, but it also resembles a kind of resilience, because it suggests that it is possible to create a home anywhere and everywhere. Ramadan herself has described Kimi's rejection of sedentary existence by saying that Kimi is not searching for "an identity, nor does she need to choose one out of the possibilities available to her" but rather, that Kimi encompasses a multiplicity of identities and histories that are "all integrated inside her."[256]

Importantly, the novel does not represent Kimi's experiences in Dublin as uniquely alienating; it is not a simple tale of feeling at home in one location and abroad in another. Rather, the alienation that Kimi feels in Dublin is consistent with the alienation she feels in Cairo, even among, as she puts it, "her own folk". The intensity of the outsiderness

[254] Elsadda 168.
[255] Ibid. 171.
[256] Ramadan, "Interview" 10.

that she experiences when in Cairo seems even more acute, contrasted with the fantasy of filial belonging that her family casts around her. “Why did I feel this powerful estrangement among my own folk” asks Kimi upon her return to Cairo, “ – when my own folk consisted of everyone I know?” (27).

”لماذا أشعر بكل هذه الغربة وسط أهلي، و أهلي الناس جميعاً“ (30).

Observing the ease with which her family shares connections with each other, Kimi wonders how they are able to “so easily enjoy and effortless mutual understanding, so easily chatting the nights away, exchanging laughter” (27). The intense alienation that Kimi feels from her family is starkly represented by the fact that we never learn her last name. Her father and mother are largely absent as characters in the novel, present only through their looming presence as an entity from which Kimi is estranged. While her father and mother never appear directly in the narrative, it is clear that her relationship with them is fraught. Sensing that she is the scapegoat for their unarticulated sorrow, Kimi asks “What did they find so painful in me that they needed to isolate me in that way?” (27). Kimi’s pain stemming from what she experiences as abandonment by her family is soothed through her relationship with Amina, who offers her care as her nanny, but who also embodies for Kimi a deeper sense of kinship and belonging. Interestingly, the novel begins with a chapter titled ربما and ends with the same word. This word speaks directly to the theme of linguistic and geographical indeterminacy that Kimi experiences throughout the novel. Very seldom revealing a sense of identification with any home or language, Kimi doubts everything around her, including her own perceptions of reality.

Madness and Linguistic Cohabitation

The linguistic borders between Arabic and English constitute another delineation that is

explored in the narrative. Importantly, the cohabitation of English and Arabic in the text gives textual voice to the theme of linguistic permeability that Kimi explores. Kimi's linguistic home both belongs to and is displaced by her relationship to Egypt and Ireland, a relationship that for her defies national belonging. The cohabitating dimensions of her English and Arabic are expressed in her use of English expressions and words that are often transliterated in Arabic script.

In *Native Tongue, Stranger Talk*, Michelle Hartman investigates how the Arabic and French languages "interanimate" each other and can be understood within the framework of "writing *as* translation" within nine French-language literary texts by Lebanese women writers. Building on the work of G.J.V. Prasad, she shows how Lebanese women novelists employ strategies to display literary languages parallel to those used in translations that privilege foreignization or resistant translation. Hartman defines language as necessarily flexible and argues against attempts to see multiple language use in literary texts as one language "indigenizing" another, because this implies imposing rigid distinctions between languages.[257] In particular, Hartman argues that the use of Arabic in French literature by Lebanese women writers should be understood beyond the framework proposed by Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin in their important 1989 text *The Empire Writes Back* in which the proliferation of postcolonial novels is offered as evidence of a resistance to cultural and linguistic imperialism.

While Hartman agrees that postcolonial texts are indeed bringing about a reconfiguration of the genre of the novel, she disagrees that the use of non-colonial languages in colonial-language texts necessarily constitutes a disruption of colonial discourse.[258] Sig-

[257] Hartman, *Native Tongue* 55.
[258] Ibid. 25.

nificantly, she argues that postcolonial texts may incorporate the colonizer's language into them without having the effect of undermining colonial relations of power. "Indeed," writes Hartman, "such disruptions may not be counter-hegemonic at all, depending on the context of the language mixing and the particular politics of language use in different locations."[259] In contrast to the framework proposed by Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin, Hartman suggests a framework of linguistic "interanimation" in which texts produce new languages. She understands the phenomenon of interanimation as distinct from the concept of "language mixing" which implies the inherent distinctness of language. Hartman writes, "languages are not necessarily […] discrete systems that are inherently different to begin with, and thus one does not 'indigenize' the other by being mixed with it."[260] The interanimation of languages focuses on how the relationship between languages is dynamic and that languages mutually shape and affect each other. This approach to language underscores processes of travel and exchange and seeks to "undermine the simple labeling of texts" calling into question that certain ideas, languages, or systems of thought can be somehow "indigenous or pure, untouched by processes of travel and exchange."[261] For Hartman, interanimation avoids an appeal to authenticity and linguistic purity and informs my readings of *Awrāq*.

In one of the novel's most significant chapters, titled بيت أبي (My Father's House), we follow Kimi on her return to Cairo after a long period spent in Dublin. The longest chapter in the novel, it explores the ways in which Kimi is overwhelmed by a sense of

[259] Ibid.
[260] Ibid. 55. Hartman takes up Chantal Zabus' argument in *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel* where Zabus claims that the use of African words and concepts in texts written in European languages necessarily makes the latter "their own" and there indigenizing them. For more, see Hartman, *Native Tongue* 26.
[261] Ibid. 27.

homelessness in both Cairo and Dublin. Unable to distinguish between her room in the college dormitory and her bedroom in Cairo, Kimi stares at the wall and reflects on the sameness of her experience of place in each city. Remembering her bedroom wall's "ri-val" in Dublin, she says, "that one is blank too. Walls without maps, here and there. And I am no longer here, nor there. I stand in a purgatory from which no exit can be hoped, not even in one's imagination" (59). For Kimi, nationalist attachments are meaningless, even hypocritical, and her ten years spent in Dublin are no more of an exile than her return to Cairo is constitutive of coming home. She says:

> The map of exile fixed to the wall was not a yearning for the homeland. There was no exile. All there was, in that place, was another homeland, another nation. A nation inhabited by its own images, its own brand of hypocrisy, its own deliberate silences and its own pretense, that it alone existed and that anything east of London or west of Boston had no real place in the calculations of geography (Booth 59).
>
> خريطة المنفى على الحائط لم تكن حنيناً إلى الوطن :و لم يكن هنلك منفى، كان هناك وطن آخر :تسكنه صوره هو، نفاقه هو و مراءاته هو، و صمت تظاهره هو، بأنه و حده قائم وما كان أبعد من لندن شرقاً أو بوسطن غرباً لا يدخل في عداد الجغرافيا، كم مجهول، من الأفضل أن يظل مجهولاً .وكان الشرط الوحيد هو الصمت و التظاهر بأن هنا هو كل شيء (62).

Explaining her sense of being neither here nor there, Kimi abruptly begins a sentence with the word "limbo." In the Arabic text, "limbo" is transliterated as:

"ليمبو، كلمة أوفى لوصف تلك المساحة التي تتخلق عندما يتداخل عالمان" (61).

What Kimi describes is not only the limbo or purgatory of not belonging in either city, but also the limbo of not belonging to any language. The transliteration of the word limbo mirrors the linguistic crevice that Kimi inhabits. In English, Booth translates this section by adding that limbo is "that space which is made when two worlds intersect *and partly merge*" (emphasis mine 59). The word limbo both in its English definition and its Arabic transliteration stands in not only for Kimi's geographical and psychological state of lim-bo, but more importantly, for the ways in which she interacts with English and Arabic as

two languages that cohabitate but that also "partly merge."

The transliteration of limbo into Arabic complicates the distinctions between Arabic and English as discrete languages because it suggests that it is possible for the two languages to occupy the same literary space. Significantly, Ramadan takes up the question of Arabic's translatability by exploring the different effects of translation and transliteration. Using the example of the word "limbo", we can consider how the two processes might produce results that entail altogether different meanings within the text. Despite the fact that equivalents to limbo exist in Arabic,[262] Ramadan chooses instead to transliterate in order to better describe the impossibility of linguistic belonging that Kimi experiences – indeed, part of the significance of the word resides in the fact that it is transliterated. Though 'limbo' is not an Arabic word, Ramadan's decision not to translate, but rather to transliterate, preserves the complex and crucial meanings of the English word.[263] In English, 'limbo' is a multivalent term, describing temporal and spatial ambiguity as well as religious or moral uncertainty. The fact that such a term, with the aforementioned connotations, appears in English transliteration in an Arabic text reflects and calls attention to the ways in which language itself manifests these same uncertainties.

Hartman's arguments resonate here, for example thinking through the strategy of bringing Arabic and French together within the context of a single narrative described as

[262] The definition of limbo in Arabic, according to Baalbaki's dictionary, is نسيان؛ إهمال؛ سِجن؛ الأعراف؛ اليَمْبوس. (530). Significantly, the 8th-10th century Islamic school of thought known as the Mu'tazalites believed that the fate of Muslims who were not considered believers (*mu'minīn*) nor considered non-believers (*kāfirīn*) was the "intermediate position" between the two or what they term as "al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn." The concept of al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn is the closest Arabic term to the English concept of limbo. For more on Mu'tazilite definition of al-manzilah bayn al-manzilatayn see Martin, Woodward and Atmaja 26-27, 65-66.

[263] The OED defines limbo as "an uncertain period of awaiting a decision or resolution; an intermediate state or condition."

"writing *as* translation." For Hartman, novels that are written to read *as* translations use "strategies analogous to those used to produce resistant or foreignizing translations, in that they also resist the tendency to mask the identity of "foreign-sounding" words.[264] The example of the transliteration of "limbo" into Arabic can be read as a moment of "writing *as* translation." This moment exemplifies a process of mapping one language or linguistic system onto another, revealing the ways in which languages interact and cohabitate in order to produce new meaning.

Transliteration also figures in the novel from other languages in addition to English. Words like "paresseuse," "méchante," "imbécile" are transliterated rather than translated and their transliteration demonstrates the depth with which Kimi experienced these words in their English and French original – the two most dominant colonial languages. The Europeanness, particularly of words admonishing Kimi, is indicative of Kimi's trauma that is caused by the repetition of linguistic colonialism. Ramadan's transliteration creates the effect of showing how these terms were markers of alienation for Kimi. When, in the Arabic text, Kimi's math teacher berates her for her unwillingness to work at understanding mathematics, she says to Kimi "يورستوبد" – "you're stupid" in transliterated English (13). Transliteration in these instances suggests that the language of imperialism retains a certain currency as a linguistic location of primacy from which injury and humiliation can be dispensed.

The presence of the French language takes on a different significance in Ramadan's text than it does in Soueif and al-Shaykh's novels. While French remains a language of authority in Ramadan's novel, it is used by Soueif as a way of creating a linguistic space of neutrality; a kind of level playing-field between Anna and Sharif.

[264] Hartman, *Native Tongue* 28.

Whereas Ramadan offers an implicit critique of the imperial authority of the French language, Soueif incorporates it rather uncritically, celebrating its potential to offer a means of fluid communication between an Englishwoman and an Egyptian nationalist. In al-Shaykh's text however, the vestiges of French language dominance in postcolonial Morocco emerge as markers of variance in dialect between Amira's inflections and those of the Saudi prince. Amira's French-influenced pronunciation of the word television is ultimately what gives away her identity as an impostor in the eyes of her Saudi punter. In contrast to Soueif's portrayal of French as a "neutral" language, in al-Shaykh's text, Amira's French accent in Arabic is what explodes the concept of pan-Arab unity.

Kimi/Amna and the Limits of Belonging

Kimi's relationship to her nanny Amna demonstrates another dimension in the novel where boundaries are challenged. Kimi's close relationship with Amna demonstrates another threshold whose limits Kimi pushes particularly in relation to their class differences. The chapter "ربما" / "It Might Be" closes with a sequence in which Kimi articulates the obscurity of the boundaries between herself and Amna and gives voice to the conflicted relationship between them. Kimi says "*Her:* she might be this one of the pair, or perhaps she's the other one. She might transform herself in the familiar ways she does, to dupe me by becoming both at once. Killer or killed. I command her: Di – ana!/Die – I – *ana*!/Or, am I saying:/Die Amna!" (7). In the Arabic text, Di – Ana appears as a combination of the transliterated English word "die" and the word for self which is "ana." In the English text, Booth translates the second line "Die – I – ana" from the Arabic "موتي يا آنا". The final question "Or, am I saying Die Amna" indicates the complexity of Kimi's relationship with Amna which is one that combines desire, identification, jealousy and

mistrust. In the Arabic the full passage reads:

"داى آنا! موتي يا آنا! أم تراني أقول: موتي يا آمنة" (12).

In analyzing the translation of this passage, Booth's attentiveness to Ramadan's interplay between Arabic and English on the one hand and the blurring of Kimi's identity with Amna on the other comes through. Ramadan's choice to use wordداى is significant because this is a very ambiguous word that can have multiple meanings. In translation, Booth decides to translate this word as die, yet her choice still does not foreclose the possibility of reading this word in a multitude of ways.

This passage shows how Ramadan's text is perpetually operating on the cusp of Arabic and English. The word داى could be the Egyptian colloquial demonstratives 'this' and 'that' which is "دى" and "دا" and here what is intriguing is that even visually these words work together in a way that if combined together would make the word داى. This short passage exemplifies the commitment of both the author and translator to the text. The respective insertion of the "م" and the "m" into the Arabic word for "self" – *ana,* shifts the meaning of the passage entirely, highlighting the deep conflict that encircles Kimi's relationship with Amna. Here, the lines between matricide, suicide and murder are blurred, as Kimi wonders whose death she is calling for: Amna's or her own. This pivotal moment in the text cannot be overlooked as a merely coincidental choice on behalf of the author and translator. Ramadan and Booth, both drawn in this example to the very cusp between the English and Arabic languages, reveal attentiveness not only to every choice of word, but in this case, to each letter. Their work challenges notions of linguistic purity, suggesting instead that languages are fluid, mobile and subject to the same trajectories of mobility as the people who speak them.

Kimi's interior world to which the reader is privy is one that is shaped by the stifling tendencies of those around her – her experience of place, identity and language are shaped by her memories of them as being constricting. In Dublin, Kimi finds the same oppressive and constricting reality she tried to escape in Cairo. In order to cope with the madness of the external world, Kimi ends up in a mental institution and her madness becomes symbolic of her resistance to conformity as opposed to a deterioration of her mental ability. As Elsadda argues, Kimi's madness is "a metaphor for [an] alternative space that does not operate according to established rules of representation and perception" (187). Just as Kimi tries to escape the confines of the "fatherland" she also tries to resist those of the "mother-tongue" and those of imperial monolingualism. Kimi refuses to fall into the traps created by nostalgia for language and home (63). The last sentence of the novel itself repeats this idea: "Being demands that we erase and return to writing and life once again, a writing and a life that might be" (111).

Ramadan draws a powerful depiction of Kimi's madness by exploring the rupture between Kimi's struggle to define her identity as an individual and the demands and expectations of the collective that surrounds her. Kimi views herself as a canvas upon which her family projects their ideas and emotions about her rather than as a whole person with her own desires, ideas, volitions and difficulties. In contrast, the relative freedom that Amina enjoyed in Egypt because of her socio-economic status is alluring to Kimi, and she embodies certain aspects of Amina as a way of tasting this freedom: "I am a fallah! An Egyptian peasant from Copenhagen" she asserts (82). Significantly, Kimi's social status is confirmed by her idealization of the life of her poor nanny and that she has gone abroad to study, both prominent markers of her class privilege that also serve as the

means through which she is able to escape, at least to an extent, the pressures of the social context from which she came.

In contrast to her mother's absence, Kimi's relationship with her nanny Amna is central to the narrative. Amna is the only character whose role in Kimi's life is constant. She and Kimi at times share the role of narrator because the reader always encounters Amna narrating a story in the novel and also the boundaries between their respective experiences and identities are often unclear – it is not clear when Amna is narrating and when Kimi is narrating. Amna's force in Kimi's life is both literally and figuratively grounding. Even Kimi's name, derived from *kemet,* the pharaonic word for Egypt, literally means Black Soil.[265] This is mirrored by the name associated with the socio-economic class to which Amna belongs, *fallāḥ*, which means "one who tills the earth". Kimi's desire to inhabit the world that Amna describes is crystallized in her psychotic episodes during which Kimi herself adopts Amna's attributes. "I am a fallah!" exclaims Kimi during one such episode (82). Where Kimi's parents are absent, Amna fills Kimi's world and keeps it "from crumbling" (15). Her relationship with Amna represents the source of deep internal conflict. On the one hand, Amna fulfills a maternal role replacing her mother who is barely present in her life. On the other hand, Amna is despised by Kimi's mother whose name we never learn – so pointed is her absence. In moments, we wonder whether Kimi's mother is jealous of Kimi's connection with Amna, one that she herself is unable to have with Kimi. Amna is consistently present throughout Kimi's childhood and early adulthood and significantly, is the first to greet her upon her return to Cairo from Dublin.

[265] Maalouf explains the origins of the word *miṣr* saying: "Inhabitants of Pharaonic Egypt called their country Kemet, 'Black Land', meaning fertile land. The name survived in the Coptic word Kimi, which we find again in the earliest Greek texts as Khemia."

Reminiscent of Taha Hussein's protagonist also named Amna in *Du'ā' al-Karawān*,[266] Amna's role as a storyteller is related to her ability to articulate social and political critiques through the stories that she tells. Taha Hussein's protagonist is also a storyteller whose tales are a vehicle through which critiques of patriarchy and class disparities are voiced.[267] The impact of the class differences between girl and nanny in each narrative is explored. Hussein's Amna says of her relationship to Khadiga, the girl for whom she cares: "I was to be with her in her play, but not play with her; to accompany her to the *Kuttab,* but not learn with her; to be present with her when her private tutor came before sunset, but not to follow her lesson."[268] Restriction on Amna's ability to obtain an education is also a common thread in Ramadan's novel. She recalls to Kimi how her father prevented her from obtaining an education: "God forgive him, my father […] He used to send folks after me to fetch me back when I was on my way to school. If I'd gotten education I would have been something else. *W'allahi*. I would have been something else indeed, madame – *ya Sitt* Kimi" (15). Kimi laments the distance between herself and Amna not only in relation to their levels of literacy and education but Kimi also resents the distance that is created between them when Amna calls her *ya Sitt* "I wish she had not called me "madame"; why did she have to choose *ya Sitt*? […] something about that title doesn't sit comfortably with her words, or with the scowl on her face or the anger in her voice as she opened the door to me then, returning from my day at school […] I like her

[266] Translated by A.B. As-Safi as *Call of the Curlew*, 1980.

[267] In her analysis of the emergence of the trope of the *fallāḥ* in Arabic letters, Selim argues that prior to the nineteenth century, the *fallāḥ* was not a fit subject for high literature in Egypt and it was only after the reformist social and political nationalist movements in particular those belonging to the Urabi movement against Ottoman and British regimes in Egypt that the *fallāḥ* came to signify the "authentic embodiment of the nation" (*Novel and Rural Imaginary* 86). Selim shows how the "sharp-witted" *fallāḥ* emerges as the voice of the rebellious subaltern constantly "critiquing the corrupt languages of power through irony and parody" (49).

[268] As-Safi, *Call of the Curlew* 10.

better when she flings insults at me" (15). Kimi recognizes the potential of "something else" in Amna and this recognition feeds her inability to accept the conditions of their class and educational disparities. While both Hussein and Ramadan offer sympathetic depictions of the fellaheen in their respective works, as Samah Selim argues in *The Novel and the Rural Imaginary*, these representations still rely on tropes of classed bodies in order to advance their messages about unequal power dynamics in interpersonal relationships that focus on gender, class, language and literacy as critical elements.

Through her stories, Amna narrates a world for which Kimi can only long: a world of excitement and freedom that is devoid of the filial constraints that Kimi finds so suffocating. For Kimi, Amna seems to embody the possibility of freedom through narration, as she easily imagines and narrates the experiences of others. One of the most significant stories that Amna narrates to Kimi is the story of the King of the Atlas Mountains. In many ways, Amna is the Atlas of Kimi's world: holding up the sky to keep it from falling and providing order and security to Kimi's life. Together with Joyce's *Ulysses*, and the work of Samuel Beckett, Oscar Wilde, and Salah Jahin, the story of the Atlas King shapes Kimi's own narrative through her over-identification with the themes of those texts.

The blurring between Kimi and Amna is mirrored by a parallel blending between languages in the novel. Trapped amidst and between divergent worlds, Kimi contends with the dualities and binaries that govern and shape her life. The suffocating world of her upper-middle class family is contrasted with the liberating presence of her nanny Amina, who comes from Egypt's poor fallah class. On the one hand, Kimi feels oppressed by her family's expectations of her, and their attempt to shield her from the challenges and difficulties of

the real world. Amina provides breathing room for Kimi, who feels strangled by the infantilizing protection enforced on her by her family. In describing her family's relationship to her, Kimi reflects:

> Once upon a time, in days present, there lived a maiden of intelligence, quick and clean and innocent, sometimes to the point of naïveté. She read many books but was we absolved her from all temptation and all tests, and we did not permit her to feel pain. We gave her amply of all life's byways, indeed, we left her in luxury (Booth 58).
>
> كان يا ما كان في حاضر الأيام فتاة ذكية، سريعة و نظيفة، بريئة إلى حد السذاجة أحياناً .قرأت كتباً كثيرة، لكنا أعفيناها من التجربة، فلم نسمح لها أن تتألم .ووفرنا لها كل سبل العيش في رغد (60-61).

Collaborative Translation and the Translator's Visibility

In her translator's note to *Leaves of Narcissus*, Marilyn Booth describes her relationship with Somaya Ramadan as one based on friendship and collaboration. Booth acknowledges Ramadan's role in the translation process saying "Together we have gone where the novel would take us" (vii). In saying this, Booth positions both herself and Ramadan as integral players in the text's life in its Arabic and English incarnations. Yet, Booth recounts that when she was asked to translate *Awrāq*, she experienced "pleasure mingled with concern about the ramifications of translating the art of an author who is herself a skilled translator, and who has rendered Virginia Woolf in Arabic" (vii). Rather than guide or create the text, Booth suggests that it was the text in whose wake she and Ramadan followed, indicating a departure from approaches to writing and translation that positions the author or translator at the centre of the text's life.

Booth's documentation of the process of translating *Awrāq* sets it apart from the other translations being analyzed in this dissertation. Indeed, this process is only documented from the translator's point of view which while illuminating can also be limiting. However, as readers, we also have insight into the author's role in the translation. Although

her method of translation is marked by deference both to the original text and its author, Booth makes clear that for her, the translation is a new text in its own right. Echoing Lawrence Venuti's contention that translations must be regarded as texts unto themselves, and not as mere renderings of the original,[269] Booth describes the collaborative process of translation as one that brought about "a new text, this English-language novel" (vii). Significantly, Booth comments on the differences and similarities between the two texts, indicating that while they share a common foundation, the texts themselves are not perfect mirrors of each other. She writes: "...those who compare the Arabic novel and this English novel will find that their paths diverge in some particulars, though not in trajectory or destination" (vii). Booth's introduction to the text makes clear that her work is not "merely" a translation, but is the result of a collaborative creative process in which a new, but parallel text has emerged.

In "The Politics of Translation," Spivak discusses the importance of developing critical intimacy when translating literature into languages like English. This critical intimacy is marked by a departure from Orientalist methods of translation that are defined, as Issa Boullata has argued, by the translator's detachment from the language and the culture of the source text. In "The Case for Resistant Translation," Boullata investigates the circumstances surrounding the translation into various pre-Islamic poems into English. He argues that the very roots of Anglo-Arab translation are intertwined with the colonial projects of the British Empire. Further, he suggests that the impulse to translate was born not of a benign curiosity about this body of literature, but rather was the result of a growing need on the part of British colonial administrators for information about the culture that

[269] *Translator's Invisibility* 17.

they sought to colonize.[270] Using Lawrence Venuti's theory of resistant translation, Boullata argues that the integrity of original texts should not be compromised for the sake of fluency. For Boullata, fluency here denotes not only the smoothness of the text, but also the ease with which the English reader can appropriate it. In translations that are not critically engaged with the source language, the target reader's experience is given precedence – in the case of Arabic as Boullata argues, the cultural values of the English language are imposed and privileged.[271] Boullata explains that the reasons for a practice of resistant translation are twofold. Firstly, he cites the need to accurately convey "Arab culture" to English readers. Secondly, he argues that there is a need to "decenter Anglo-American insistence on fluency to please English-speaking readers."[272] Boullata's intervention echoes the concerns raised by Spivak in her call for an ethics of translation.

Elaborating on her own experience of translating Mahasweta Devi, Spivak describes translation as the "most intimate act of reading."[273] Of the translator's responsibility in relation to the text, Spivak writes that "the task of the translator is to facilitate love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay."[274] The critical intimacy described by Spivak can be understood as an attempt to pave the way for the elaboration of an ethics of translation. Spivak continues: "the politics of translation from a non-European woman's text too often suppresses this possibility (of critical intimacy) because the translator cannot engage with or cares insufficiently for the rhetoricity of the

[270] Boullata, "Case for Resistant Translation" 29.
[271] Ibid. 31.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Spivak, "The Politics of Translation" 201.
[274] Ibid. 201-202.

original."[275] Yet in thinking about Booth's relationship to Ramadan's text, Spivak's insistence on the colonizer versus colonized paradigm does not capture the dynamics that figure in the reflections that Booth herself offers in analyzing translation between Arabic and English. While Spivak's argument that translations ought to privilege the rhetoricity of the source language in translation, her critique of the "First World" / "Third World" dichotomy is complicated by Booth's own politics related to the translation of Arabic – a critical arena in which Booth has played a significant role in advocating for "ethical" translations much in the same vein as Spivak.

In a similar style to Spivak's critical reflection on translating Devi, Booth's "On Translation and Madness," is an attempt to develop a theoretical frame through which to engage with some of the challenges of translating Ramadan's *Awrāq*. In a passage reminiscent of Spivak's reference to the work of uncovering "traces" of the other in the self, Booth reflects on her position as the "translating narrator" of the text.[276] Booth recounts an incident that occurred during the translation of *Awrāq* in which she struggled for some time with the Arabic transliteration of the words "Delft mug." At first not realizing that it was a transliteration of an English term, Booth's impulse when encountering the term was to apply the Arabic triliteral root system to understand its meaning. Deriving "m-j" from the transliterated word for "mug", Booth remained puzzled. Finally realizing that Ramadan had transliterated the word mug, Booth says, "I resorted to one facet of my own identity, Cairene colloquial speech, j as g, and realized that this was no obscure classical noun to be ferreted out of Lane's Lexicon, but rather the English word 'mug'."[277] In con-

[275] Ibid.
[276] Booth, "Madness" 48.
[277] Ibid.
[277] Ibid.

sidering the meaning of this incident, Booth asks, "what did it mean about my own life's map that I (...) confronted a puzzle in the Arabic transliteration of Delft mug?"[278] Here, Booth struggles to understand a word with English origins and highlights her own trajectory and how this impacts her reading of the word. Booth's reflections here situate her in relation to Ramadan's text in addition to her trajectory as a translator of Arabic.

In *Disarming Words*, Shaden Tageldin offers a critique of translation that is deeply connected to seduction. Building on Spivak's theorization of the ethical transformations that a translator undergoes as an act that constitutes "one of the seductions" of translation, Tageldin argues that Spivak's argument does not connect "the seductions of translation to the operations of cultural imperialism."[279] One of the problems with Spivak's analysis for Tageldin is that while the former addresses the geopolitics of translation, she only does so by way of condemning the "First World" feminist translator who for Tageldin approaches the "Third World" women's text as a native informant. Tageldin's analysis of Spivak's argument allows us to analyze the dynamics between "First world" / "Third world" translations that do not fit neatly into the spectrum outlined by Spivak. For Tageldin, Spivak's theorization limits us to only those translations that are unaware of the text's rhetoricity, texture of the source language and its literary context and "attentive only to the anthropological information that it can deliver about the presumed plight of the non-Western or nonwhite female subject."[280] According to Tageldin, this is why Spivak valorizes foreignization in translation in which the translator "surrenders" to the "alien signifiers of the original" in order to "channel their manners of

[278] Ibid.
[279] Tageldin 11.
[280] Ibid. 12.

meaning."[281]

Tageldin's analysis is helpful in understanding Booth's relationship to Ramadan's text and to the translation without the confines of an East vs. West paradigm. Booth's reflection on her encounter with the transliterated words "Delft-mug" in Ramadan's Arabic text speaks to the dynamics of linguistic cohabitation between Arabic and English that would be missed in an analysis that pits Arabic against English. Booth's example allows the reader insight into her process as a translator and as a learner of Arabic – it also begs the question, what do we do in a context where the translator is not "unaware of the text's rhetoricity" or "texture of the source language"? In mining the meaning of "Delft-mug" Booth calls upon three registers of language in order to arrive at the translation: first she thinks of the word's meaning in Arabic but quickly realizes that "m-j" does not mean anything since diliteral roots are uncommon in Arabic. But before Booth figures out that the word is "mug," she thinks of the word in Cairene colloquial which pronounces the "j" as "g" before she realizes that the word is an English one. As Booth admits, Cairene colloquial speech is "one facet" of her identity and in this case, the rhetoricity of Arabic and English together was crucial in this translation moment. Tageldin's approach to translation which is not centered on a postcolonial studies framework that posit domination and resistance in direct opposition to one another allows a nuanced understanding of Booth's relationship to the Arabic language that lies outside of the confines of a manichean dichotomy between Self and Other.[282]

In her article on translating the Saudi novel *The Girls of Riyadh*, Booth discusses her concerns around having lost the linguistic ambivalence that is present in the original.

[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid. 24-25.

Where the original allows for the "Arabenglish" of the main characters to exist, Booth's attempts to translate this linguistic interplay between Arabic and English were not retained by the editor, who favored instead a "purely English" text devoid of word play, broken English (which Booth calls Arabenglish)[283] and transliterations. Booth argues that this decision reflects the editor's and author's project of producing a domesticated translation that would fit easily into the chick-lit genre. She further suggests that the absence of these moments of linguistic interplay between Arabic and English result in a novel whose characters are more easily digestible as foreign Others, as opposed to the complex, cosmopolitan women of *Banāt al-Riyāḍ*.

Resistance to order is represented early on in a chapter titled "درس الحساب", translated as "A Lesson in Reckoning Sums" in the English text. Interestingly, Booth's translation of the title reflects Kimi's psychic rejection of order and coherence in a way that might otherwise have been lost on the English reader had she chosen to translate the title more literally, perhaps as "Math Lesson." Kimi's dislike of mathematics is represented through the emphasis on her conflict with order and structure. The use of the word "reckoning" in the translation is indicative of a process as opposed to something finite, like math, thus creating a contrast between the two concepts. While reckoning of course refers to the act of calculation or estimation, it also invokes the concepts of atonement and reparation. The word "reckoning" aptly describes the process of coming to terms with structure and coherence – characteristics of mathematics – in which Kimi engages in the chapter. The translation of this title is evidence of a linguistic trajectory from the Arabic to the English, bringing to light the creative potential of translation as a process that can move beyond the simple reproduction of words.

[283] Booth, "Celebrity Author" 168.

In the English translation, Booth captures the nuance of transliterations of demeaning words used against Kimi by specifying that the teacher has snapped at Kimi "in English" (8). Later in the text, when Kimi describes how Amna would scold her only in French, the insults "You paresseuse! Méchante! Imbécile!" are again included in Arabic as transliterations of the French terms (20). Once again, Booth retains the French in translating this section, translating not only the words themselves, but the significance of their appearing in French (15). Booth's inclusion of the French spelling in her translation stands in sharp contrast to Catherine Cobham's translation of the word "television" in al-Shaykh's *Only in London*. Cobham flattens the translation in one of the novel's key moments, the instance when Amira's French pronunciation gives her away to the Saudi punter. Cobham's translation de-emphasizes in this example the importance of dialect and accent that I argue are central components in al-Shaykh's novel. Cobham's English translation of Amira's French pronunciation of the word further minimizes the dynamics of colonialism and linguistic imperialism that ultimately determined Amira's fate the night of her linguistic slippage.

Ramadan's *Awrāq* urges us to reconsider the usefulness of the categories set out by Spivak in "The Politics of Translation." While the categories of "First World" translator and "Third World" woman writer are critical in elucidating the unequal power dynamics inherent in the English translation of Arabic, the case of *Awrāq* and *Leaves* pushes the boundaries of these categories. Spivak's conception of the "Third World" woman writer inaccurately describes Somaya Ramadan as a writer whose perspective oscillates between northern and southern geographies. This oscillating perspective is precisely what informs the protagonist in *Awrāq* and thus Ramadan cannot be categorized simply as an Arab or

"Third World" writer. Similarly, Booth's translation cannot be understood strictly by using Spivak's framework. Despite Booth's position as a First World translator, her reflections on the process of translation in "On Translation and Madness" as well as the translation of *Awrāq* which suggests that Booth does not wholly fit the profile of a translator who is "unaware of the text's rhetoricity."

The concept of linguistic cohabitation interacts with the recurring theme of homelessness in Ramadan's novel and urges us to consider the creative possibilities inherent in embracing this de-homing of language. The concept of linguistic cohabitation is a way of thinking through the proximity of English and Arabic in the original text and I have argued that this creative gesture functions to interrupt the delineation between Arabic and English. The textual proximity of the two languages is mirrored in their combined existence in the protagonist's psyche, which further works to challenge the discursive construction of English and Arabic as distant and opposing languages. Kimi gives voice to the overlapping nature of the linguistic, geographic and psychic exile that she experience when she says: "All homelands are mine and so I am without a homeland or nation. All languages are mine and so I have no language" (62-63). The geographic borderlessness that figures prominently in the text underscores the novel's resistance to the confines of nation, gender and language. The psychic trajectory of the protagonist further joins together the linguistic and geographic nomadicism with the boundlessness that characterizes Kimi's psychic crisis. The boundaries of language, geography and subjectivity are all simultaneously blurred and questioned in Ramadan's text. Leading Kimi to conclude that hers is "a map fit only for the mad" (63).

CONCLUSION

The three novels examined in this dissertation combine a textual intermingling of Arabic and English at the same time as they thematize the issues of translation and language learning. Through the self-conscious enactment of their multilingualism, these works demonstrate the permeability of linguistic boundaries and give voice to the in-betweenness of postcolonial linguistic spaces. I have suggested that the focus on the relationship between the Arabic and English languages in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, Hanan al-Shaykh's *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī*, and Somaya Ramadan's *Awrāq al-narjis* elucidates the complexity of the linguistic interaction between Arabic and English geographies in a globalized postcolonial context. Rather than enforcing the rigidity of linguistic boundaries between languages, I have argued that these texts represent the linguistic relationship between Arabic and English as a continuum of transit which effectively challenges the reductive effects of dichotomous conceptions of East/ West, Arabic/English and foreign/domestic. The notion of a continuum of transit does not reduce or minimize the political dynamics inherent in the discursive construction of English and Arabic as oppositional languages. Instead, I argue that challenging the fixity of language categories enhances the visibility of the unequal ways in which both the English and Arabic languages are imagined, read, written and translated.

My method of analysis began with a reading of the original texts of the novels alongside their translations. By isolating key moments in the original texts which complicate the boundaries between languages, I then compared the correlating passages in the translations, asking whether and how those instances of linguistic ambivalence were rendered in translation. I further engaged with the strong thematic presence of language and

translation across all three novels, investigating the ways in which static notions of language were challenged through the trajectories of the characters as they negotiate linguistic acquisition as it relates to belonging, identity and geographic fixity. My methodology therefore combined an analysis of the texts at both the narrative and textual levels.

I further reviewed the fields of translation and postcolonial literary theory and the ways these fields intersect with the study of Modern Arabic Literature. I have shown how in the study of Arabic literature in/and translation, postcolonial translation theory is a crucial point of departure for examining the political dimensions of multilingualism between Arabic and English as well as French because the multilingual consciousness that pervades the three novels examined in this dissertation is not one devoid of tensions.

In Chapter Two, I examined the role of language and linguistic difference in Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* and Fatma Musa's *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb*. I compared scenes and excerpts in both texts that focused specifically on translation, language learning and language choice. In doing so, I argued that acts of linguistic negotiation and resistance in *The Map of Love* are defined by the protagonists' acute awareness of the asymmetrical power dynamics between Arabic and English. I argued that the mitigation of linguistic difference underlies all of the relationships that the characters forge, where language functions as a reminder of difference as well as a means through which the characters negotiate their closeness to one another, and express loyalty and love. In looking at intercultural romances that form the narrative thread of the novel, I argued that the framework of linguistic seduction provides a more nuanced framework for understanding the East-West / North-South dynamics central to the text.

In Part Two of Chapter Two, I compared key excerpts in *Khāriṭat al-ḥubb* with *The Map of Love* and argued that the translation minimizes the centrality of deep-language learning that is explored in the original text. In particular, I focused on the ways that the matrix of the Arabic language, a key element of the original text, is not explained in Musa's translation. Soueif's novel highlights the inevitability of multilingualism in postcolonial Cairo and shows how English and Arabic cohabitate without necessarily fitting easily alongside each other, a dynamic that is diminished in the translation. The possibilities suggested by multilingualism are not limited only to the challenge that it poses to rigid conceptions of language. In Soueif's novel, multilingualism also points to the possibility of not choosing a mother tongue or of having one's mother tongue change as one moves through different times and places.

In Part Three of Chapter Two, I analyzed the inclusion of a twenty-page glossary in Soueif's text and argued that the glossary not only functions to mitigate multilingualism within the text, but further shows Soueif's own resistance to offering a resolution between the two languages, preserving as it were, the linguistic tensions that define the cohabitation between the two languages. I also argued that the glossary's presence in the English text and absence in the Arabic translation confirms Anglo-American cultural and linguistic hegemony. In their respective translations, resolution between the two languages is often resisted, preserving the linguistic discord that colours the stories.

In Chapter Three, I argued that the opening scene of turbulence aboard the plane carrying Hanan al-Shaykh's protagonists from Dubai to London in *Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī* mirrors the linguistic turmoil and uncertainty experienced by the Arab immigrants in the text. I also argued that the elements of accent and dialect in the novel work to disrupt the

imagined cohesiveness of language in the postcolonial landscape of the British capital. In this vein, I argued that the rigid notions of language initially held by the protagonists about what constitutes Arab/Arabic and Britishness/English are challenged through their use, acquisition and manipulation of different accents in the text. I also compared key passages in *Innahā* that focus on accents and dialect with Catherine Cobham's translation *Only in London*. I argued that much in the same way that Fatma Musa minimizes the centrality of deep-language learning of Arabic in her translation of *The Map of Love*, Cobham's translation omits the nuance of accents and dialect that are central to the theme explored in the original.

In Chapter Four, my analysis of Somaya Ramadan's novel *Awrāq al-narjis* and its English translation by Marilyn Booth explored the intimacy of linguistic cohabitation in the Arabic and English translation and offered an analysis of the methods that Booth employs in translating them. I argued that through Booth's attempt to capture the linguistic dynamics written into the Arabic novel, her text's relationship with Ramadan's text as well as her own relationship with Ramadan complicates Gayatri Spivak's theorization of the "First World" feminist translator and the "Third World" women's text as a native informant.[284] Rather than a mere insertion of English terms into the Arabic novel, Ramadan's use of English is a creative gesture that challenges the partition between English and Arabic, bringing about a textual space in which both languages cohabitate. I argued that the use of English in *Awrāq* is an example of linguistic cohabitation that challenges the notions of Arabic and English as discrete languages.

[284] Spivak, "Politics of Translation" 201.

The six texts examined in this dissertation give voice to a tension between translation on the one hand, and deep language learning on the other. Spivak's call for deep language learning of non-European languages is a response to what she understands as the linguistic dominance of European languages which is endemic to the field of comparative literature. In *Death of a Discipline*, Spivak calls for the end of an "old" approach to comparative literature that grounds its focus in Europe and the US. Instead, she advocates for an approach to comparative literature that is "planetary" in scope, and that positions "deep language learning" at the center of its pedagogical project. In Spivak's formulation of the term, deep language learning is distinct from translation in that it overcomes the pitfalls of domestication altogether. It further complicates the easy consumption of world literature, in favour of the intimate task of learning other languages.

Against the backdrop of Spivak's call for deep language learning, how can we understand the foreign status so often attributed to the Arabic language? The history of colonialism has left behind an Orientalist vocabulary that limits and shapes our study of Arabic literature in translation. While the foreignness of original texts always presents itself as an issue with which the translator must contend, it is also true that different languages bear the weight of foreignness in dissimilar ways. The vestiges of Orientalist scholarship and discourse impress themselves upon the study of contemporary Arabic literature such that the foreignness of the Arabic text precedes its translation into the English language. Even before the question of translation emerges in relation to the text, the categories of domestic and foreign already function to yoke it to one category and not the other. It is already interacting with these categories outside of the realm of translation – politically, militaristically, and culturally.

As a possible response to this question, we might consider the poem that concludes *The Map of Love*. Soueif ends the novel with a poem by Ismail Sabri written in Arabic and transliterated in English script. The extensive glossary that provides definitions for the Arabic words that pepper the novel is of no assistance to the non-Arabic speaking English reader in deciphering the poem. Included in the novel without definitions and without corresponding entries in the glossary, we might think of Soueif's inclusion of the transliterated poem as a gesture of resistance; one that highlights the untranslatability of the poem, and perhaps of the Egyptian nationalist sentiment that it expresses. Non-translation and deep language learning emerge as responses to the concluding poem, and Soueif's intervention might be a call for language learning as a central component of an ethical translation practice. Envisaging an ethical translation practice with regards to Arabic literature involves not only developing a more expansive lexicon for the analysis of Arabic texts, but also involves altering how we teach, learn, and study these texts. More specifically, we might imagine an ethical translation practice to consist of a broader pedagogical shift in which the project of translation takes the shape of a political intervention rather than the aspiration to equivalence.

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